

Memoirs of

Lieutenant Colonel Stanley Wyndham Woodward

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Curriculum Vitae (SWW ~1952)

Birth 18 July 1911 • King's Norton, Worcestershire, England

Education

1920-1925 West House School, Edgbaston

1925-1930 Tonbridge School (Major Scholar)

1930-1934 Cambridge University (Open Classics Exhibitioner, Sidney Sussex College)

1931 1st Class Preliminary Examination

1933 2nd Class Classics Tripos

1934 BA 1st Division of 2nd Class Modern Languages Tripos

1937 MA

1934-5 Manchester University

Intercollegiate Secretary, Student Christian Movement

1936-1940 Master Bishop's Stortford College

1940-1946 Army Service

Gunner Royal Artillery

Intelligence Officer, War Office

North Africa, Italy, France, Belgium, and Germany

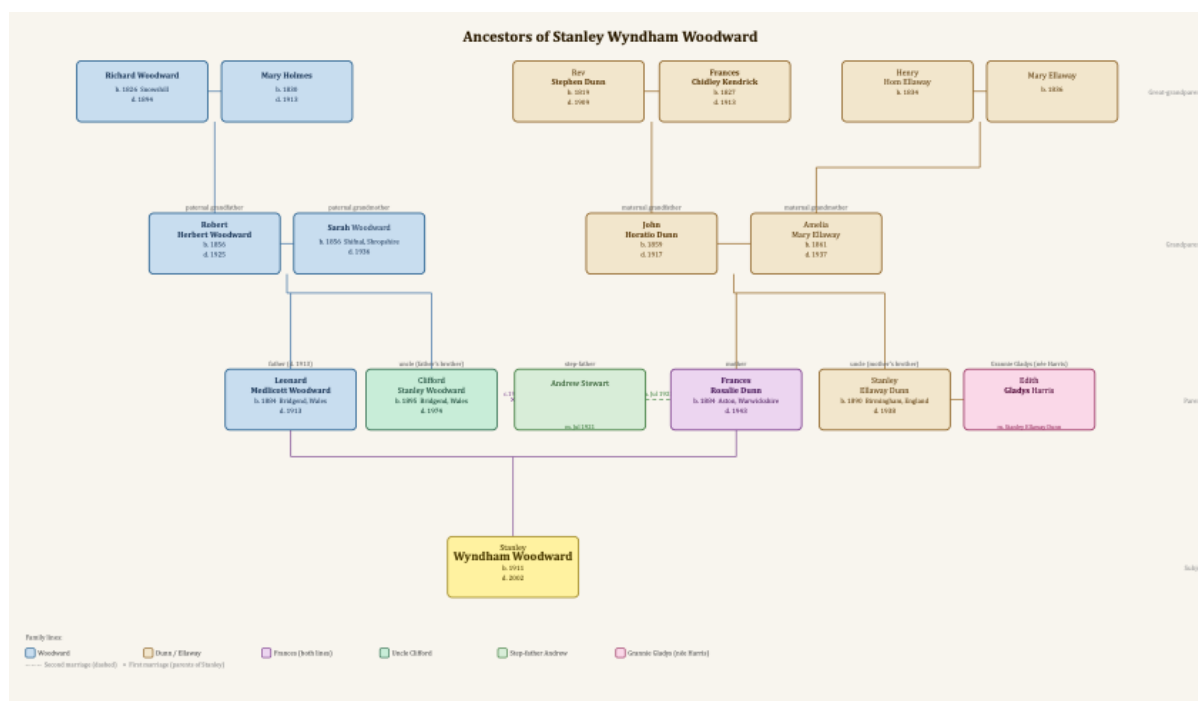
1946-7 Master Bishop's Stortford College

Death 13 June 2002 • Saffron Walden, Essex, England

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Editor's note.

The following transcript is drawn from two documents written by Wyndham, many years apart. I have added, in chronological order, some notes and photographs that he made during the war and in retirement. His first document is dated Gt. Sampford, Essex, 11th January 1979; the second is undated and focuses on his war service. I have retained some of the material that is duplicated in the two documents.



Siblings of Leonard Medlicott Woodward

Forename 1	Forename 2	YOB	YOD
Elizabeth	Mary	1879	1966
Edith	Kezia	1881	1967
Leonard	Medlicott	1884	1913
Lillian		1886	1965
Sarah	Elizabeth	1889	1981
Wyndham	Herbert	1891	1914
Gladys	Elizabeth	1893	1982
Clifford	Stanley	1895	1974
Thomas	Stewart	1902	1975

Preface

Whatever questions children ask of their parents, they often fail to ask enough about family history. Until my own daughters fussed at me to write down what little I did learn, I could hardly refrain from doing my best.

What I propose to write is not for publication, for it may well be far too dull and ordinary to interest outsiders, but I hope the family may find it of some interest. Most of the early material has been collected through word of mouth rather than from documentary sources, so I cannot vouch for its accuracy, though I hope it is reasonably accurate.

Woodwards.

As a child, I lived close to my mother's family and rarely saw my father's. Although I begin with the Woodwards, I know less about them than the Dunns.

They are first heard of at Snowhill, a Cotswold village in Gloucestershire (pronounced Snozzel), in whose churchyard a tomb records the deaths of William Woodward, aged 82, and his wife, Hannah, aged 80, on 3rd February 1870. They may well have been my great-great-grandparents (see family tree for their predecessors).

My grandfather, Herbert (Hubert), was born about 1855. His parents were said to be the Head Gardener and the Head Cook at Snowhill Manor.

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This was a famous Tudor house near the church. The couple named on the tombstone could have been my great-great-grandparents, born around 1783 and 1789.



My grandmother, Sarah (1856/7-1936), is known to have come from Shifnal in Shropshire, where her parents, named Medlicott, kept an inn or public house. It may have been the Unicorn; my uncle Clifford made great efforts with the breweries to find a record. He was unable to decide, partly because of the frequent name changes of the various inns.

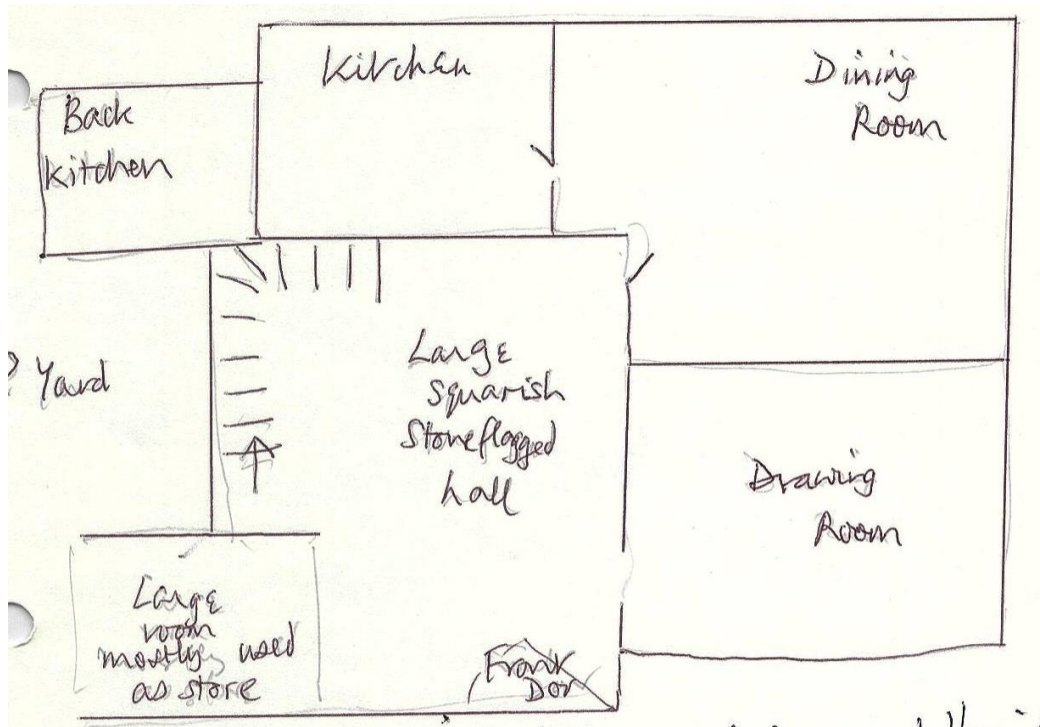
My grandparents married in Pencoed and moved on to Bridgend, a little further west. I knew them at “Endfield”, Coity Road, where my brother and I first stayed, presumably about 1915. The house was on a corner opposite the railway, from which we derived a great deal of enjoyment, registering the green Great Western engine number and, with even greater excitement, engine names.

In the opposite corner lived the Harris family, which explains my uncle Stanley Dunn finding his bride there (Edith) Gladys Dunn¹ (nee Harris), whose photograph, taken in 1900, is below.

1 Edith Gladys Dunn 1889-1986 Born Merthyr-Tydfil Died Tenbury Worcs



I have vague memories of their wedding there in 1916. Endfield had no garden attached, but there was a fairly extensive garden some way behind, and there was a courtyard in which I bounced a tennis ball, keeping a score in some imaginary cricket match.



My brother Noel and I shared a bedroom, I think, over the kitchen with the still-unmarried youngest uncle, Stewart, who must have been in his late teens. I imagine he had recently started work with the family business. He put up with us kindly, as did my grandparents, though I found them somewhat distant.

The Vicar in Bridgend does not answer enquiries, but I learned that Hubert's (Herbert) parents are buried at Nolton Churchyard in Bridgend (source: Auntie Gladys letter of 19 January 1982). Hubert and his brothers and sisters went to school at Ford. In the winter, they took food in a washing basket and stayed at the schoolhouse from Monday to Friday. Their schooling was paid for by the family (source Betty Sugarman's letter of 15 January 1980).

St Mary's Parish Church, Ripple, Worcestershire, has records of a Woodward family in the 16th & 17th centuries. (Enid in Worcester suggests the same dates.) The name is that of an occupation, probably a guard of works on behalf of an overlord. Many villages must have had such families, with no familial ties among themselves or to us. (See Auntie Gladys' letter of 23 November 1979 and press cutting of unknown origin.)

Grandfather Herbert² had at least three brothers and five sisters, one of whom was Liz³. Auntie Gladys' letter of 19 January 1982 suggests that their photographic album and family bible are with John Catto or with the Drakeford family. The Medlicott bible is with Jeoffrey Owen (Enid Sefton's letter of 26 February

² Wyndham Herbert 1891-1914

³ Elizabeth Mary 1879-1966

1980). The dining room had what must have been one of the early electric fires, consisting of whitish tubes rather like modern strip lighting, which I had never seen anywhere else. I think we children mostly ate in the kitchen, though I can only remember bread, butter, and sugar for supper.

I think my grandmother was helped only by her oldest child, Auntie Lizzie⁴, who never married. She had finished at Cheltenham, and we found her very meticulous, inspiring, and sternly kind.

Of my grandparents' other children, Edith⁵ had married Leon M. Godwin and lived in Woking with an adopted daughter, Phyllis, and we hardly ever saw them. Next came Gladys⁶, married to Fitzroy St. Clare Exton, my father, Leonard Medlicott (1884-1913), and then Lily⁷, married to Gethin Hopkin and living in Park Street, where I remember seeing their elder daughter, Betty, in her bath.



Betty & Noel

⁴ Elizabeth Mary 1879-1988

⁵ Edith Kezia 1881-1967

⁶ Gladys Elizabeth 1893-1982

⁷ Lilian 1886-1965

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Elsie, (Sarah Elizabeth or Sarah Elsie)⁸ married to (Andrew) Gordon Catto, lived higher up near the house in Park Street, where my father and mother had lived for a short time on their marriage and where Noel was born before moving to 46 Forest Rd, Moseley.

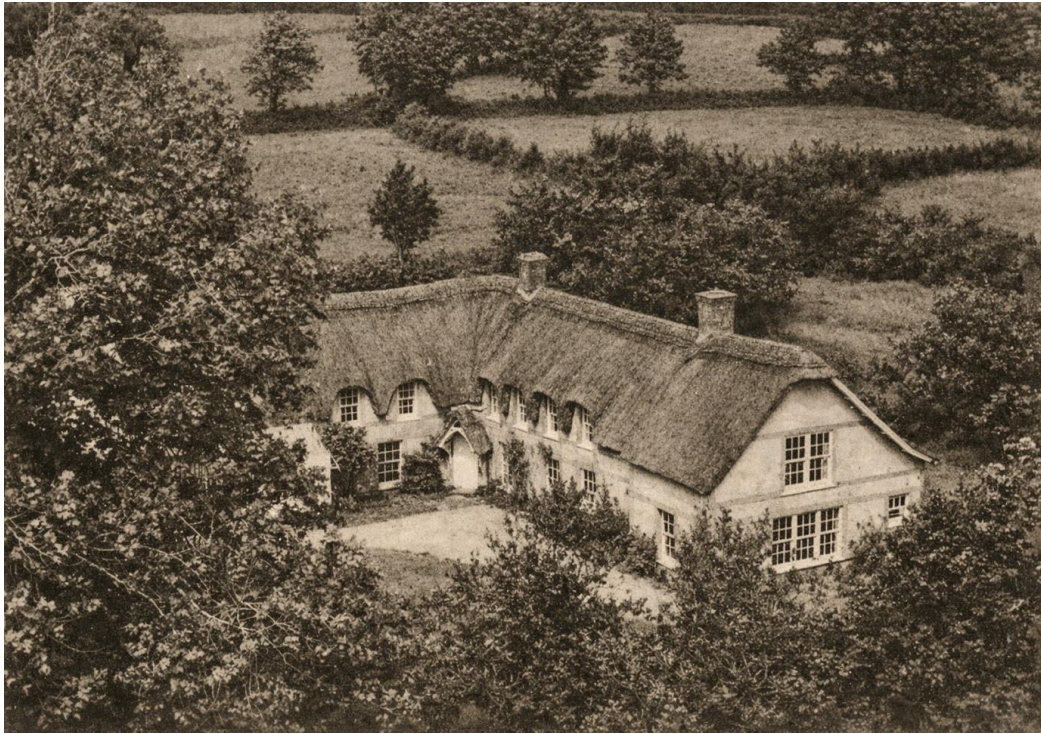
Gladys was the first born in 1895 (also recorded as 1893), then came Wyndham, who died on 5th July 1913, and on 11th Feb 1914, a year after my father, and who also died of diabetes, came Clifford. He must have been at the war when we first remember Bridgend, but he lost a leg, and he must have been invalided out about 1917.

We remember Clifford driving us around in a large Wolseley with an oil pump that you had to turn by hand from time to time. It must have been a few years later that he took Noel and me out to our first hotel dinner in Porthcawl. I can remember bouncing around with excitement when that car reached 60 miles an hour on the way back.

I imagine he joined the family business as soon as he was fit. We were in Bridgend when he was courting Irene Annie Smith, who lived in Gloucester and whose father manufactured matches. We liked her and her sister Stella, who chaperoned her.

After the wedding, they lived at nearby Laleston Cottage, where we stayed and were impressed by his billiard room and indoor vine.

⁸ Sarah Elizabeth (Elsie) 1889-1981



Laleston Cottage

Next came Gladys (1893-1982), who worked for her father during the 1914-18 war, driving up the valleys first in a horse and trap and later in a car. She must have become one of the first lady drivers. She married Fitzroy St C Exton, and they moved to Newport. I last saw Auntie Gladys at her house in Potters Bar, where she died in 1982, with her daughter, Rosalie Gay Porter.

I have already mentioned Stewart, who was named after the Stewart family, though I can't think how this came about. He married Grace, and they lived in Porthcawl, where I stayed when their daughter Susan was a toddler. I corresponded with Auntie Grace until her death and afterwards with her family.

My grandfather's business, H Woodward and Co, Limited, claimed to be the largest of its kind in South Wales. It was mainly wholesale, hence the travelling up the valleys to court retailers, but it had a large retail outlet on the site whose ground floor was subsequently bought by Woolworths. It sold a plethora of articles,

but I remember mostly the toys, including pedal cars, which we rode around on the upper floor. It had an overhead cable system for sending cash to the till and returning change to the customer.

The Glamorgan Advertiser and Weekly News Fri, 16 Oct 1925

Mr. H. Woodward, of Endfield, Coity Road, Bridgend, a director of Messrs H. Woodward and Co. Ltd, one of the founders and senior deacon of the English Congregational Chapel, Bridgend, a prominent Liberal and Freemason, who died on February 21 last, aged 67 years, left an estate value £12,235, with net personal £7,776. The testator left £100 to each of his seven children, Elizabeth Mary Woodward, Clifford Stanley Woodward, Edith Godwin, Thomas Stewart Woodward, Lily Hoskins, Elsie Catto, and Gwendolen Rixton; his leasehold garage at Nolton Street, Bridgend, with stock in trade, book debts, fixtures, etc., to his two sons, charged with an annuity of £100 in favour of his wife; 150 shares in H. Woodward & Co. Ltd, to each of the said two sons; £100 such shares to his daughter Elizabeth, and 50 each to his son in law Andrew Gordon Catto if still in his service, the bequests of these shares charged with an annuity of £100 in favour of his wife for life. The residue of his property he left to his wife.

We had excursions by horse break to Ogmore and Southerndown, a few miles away on the coast, lovely and fairly lonely spots then, but now of course overcrowded. Southerndown, the main attraction besides lovely sand and cliffs, was the castle of the Wyndham-Quinn family, the Earls of Dunraven, whose main seat was, I believe, in Ireland. We were regaled with tales of the famous Earl who wrecked ships on the Tuskar Rock visible at low tide by false lights and collected valuables from the corpses washed up, one of which was said to have been his own son.

My Auntie Gladys had a bungalow in Ogmore for some time, where I was sent to stay after an illness. I must have got wet and was given a mustard bath. Apparently, this was too hot. When I was getting out, I think I fainted in the solicitous arms of my aunt. At the same time, my uncle Stan and my other Auntie Gladys (nee Haring) were staying there in a caravan. Their third son, David, hurt his knee, developed tuberculosis, and was in the hospital for months, and his life was ruined.

The other destination for excursions was the tiny seaside town of Porthcawl by train, with changes, though we had several holidays there. I can remember a man being drowned on one of the beaches near Ogmore and a glimpse of the body being carried away. Daily excitement was caused by the arrival of the Bristol Channel steamer, whose screaming siren caused my young cousin Betty to weep. One holiday I spent there with Auntie Gladys Dunn and her elder son, John. It must have been 1917 or 1918, but he was a baby whom I let fall out of bed and onto his head. This did not prevent his getting a first in chemistry at Cambridge.

Another time when Noel and I were staying at Laleston, we went to bathe at Rest Bay. My uncle Clifford⁹, who by then had a wooden leg, took it off and hopped gamely into the water. We were amused to find that he wore one sock, a suspender, and two drawing pins.

My last memory of Bridgend as a child must have been after my grandfather retired; I was at Endfield on my own again. I went for quite a long walk with him. He also took me to the bowls club, which I somehow connected with his being a Mason. We have a photograph of him in full regalia. I don't think he or my grandmother lived long after that, but I have no recollection of hearing of their deaths, probably because I was away at school or in the army.

Dunns

The first of my mother's family of whom I know is my great-great-grandfather Stephen Dunn, born about 1770, and a broadcloth Weaver at Wiveliscombe in Somerset. He married Hannah, who gave us a connection with the Venn family, about whom a book¹⁰ has been published. I know nothing about their

⁹ Clifford Stanley Woodward (1895–1974) Born in Bridgend, Glamorgan, Wales, on 23 August 1895.

Commissioned as a Second Lieutenant in the Glamorganshire Yeomanry, severely wounded and lost a leg.

After the war, Woodward returned to Bridgend and lived at Laleston Cottage.

Promoted to Major and appointed as a Justice of the Peace (J.P.).

1940s he was Chairman of the local Disablement Advisory Committee and promoted to Lt Colonel.

¹⁰ Annals of a Clerical Family: Being Some Account of the Family and Descendants of William Venn, Vicar of Otterton, Devon, 1600-1621 John Venn London 1904. A member of the family invented the Venn diagram.

eldest six children except what is stated in my rough attempt at a family tree, but the seventh child, Stephen, 1819-1909, was my great-grandfather.



Unfortunately, a large photograph of him as a white-haired old man, which I knew from my childhood in my grandparents' home, seems to have vanished, even though he is in the above 1904 family group.

Stephen married Frances Chidley Kendrick on 13th August 1850 at St Nicholas Parish Church in Gloucester. His father is described as a manufacturer, and Frances' father as a coal merchant.

1850. Marriage solemnized at <i>the Parish Church</i> in the <i>Parish</i> of <i>St Nicholas</i> in the County of <i>Gloucester</i>								
No.	When Married.	Name and Surname.	Age.	Condition.	Rank or Profession.	Residence at the Time of Marriage.	Father's Name and Surname.	Rank or Profession of Father.
40	<i>August 13th</i>	<i>Stephen Dunn</i>	<i>fullage</i>	<i>Bachelor</i>	<i>Gentleman</i>	<i>St Nicholas</i>	<i>Stephen Dunn</i>	<i>Manufacturer</i>
		<i>Frances Chidley Kendrick</i>	<i>fullage</i>	<i>Spinster</i>		<i>Winchcomb</i>	<i>John Kendrick</i>	<i>Coal Merchant</i>
Married in the <i>Parish Church</i> according to the Rites and Ceremonies of the Established Church, by <i>Licence</i> after by me,								
This Marriage was solemnized between us,		<i>Stephen Dunn</i>		in the Presence of us,		<i>William Mott, Vicar</i>		
		<i>Frances Chidley Kendrick</i>				<i>Walter Kendrick</i>		
						<i>Martha Good</i>		

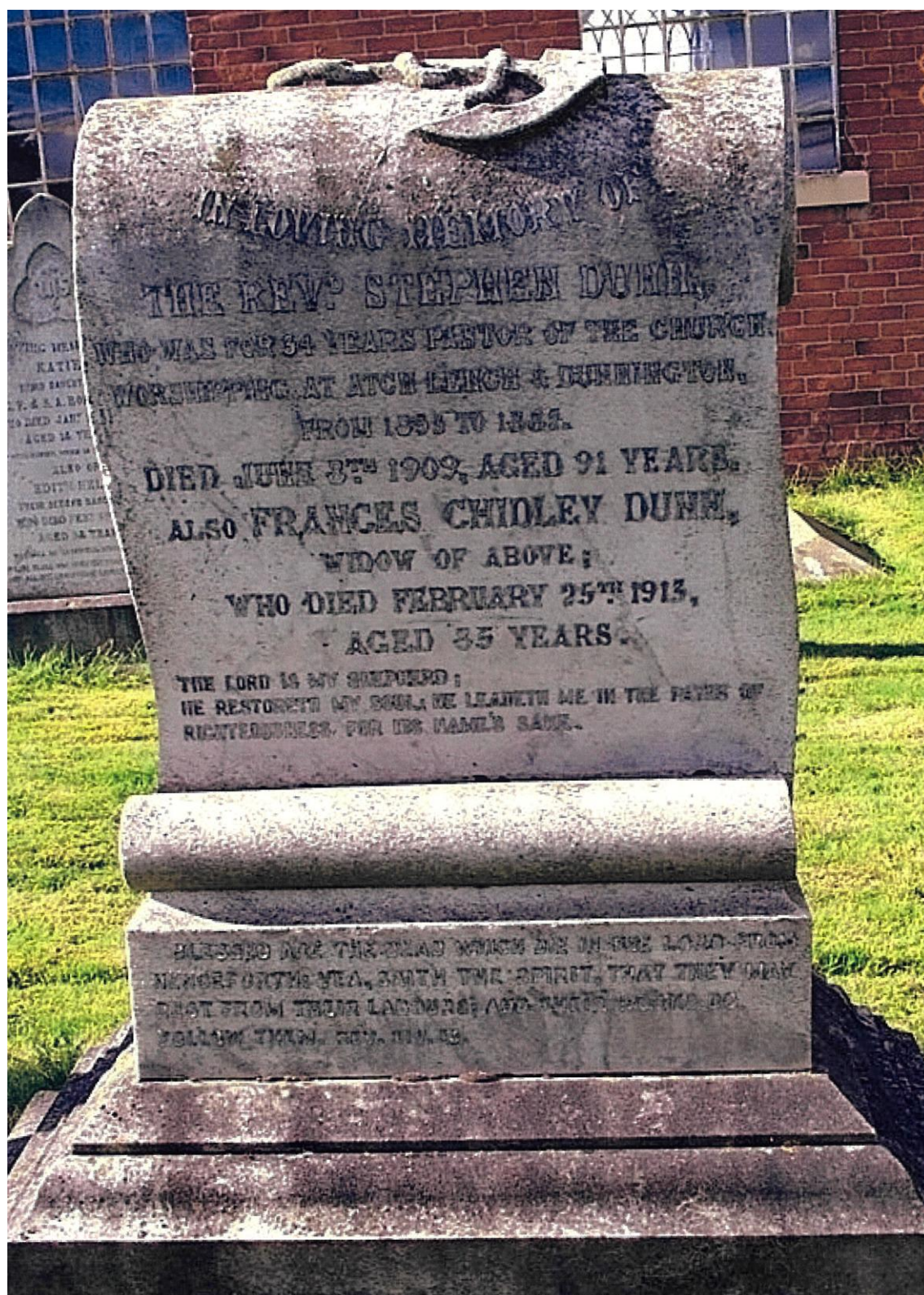
When he married Frances, this gave us a distant relationship with the Bomfords of Bevington Hall in the Vale of Evesham and the Martineaus of Birmingham (Lord Mayors of Birmingham and Harriet Martineau, a sociologist and abolitionist).

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The Bomford family were Baptists and supported the Chapel at Atch Lench for many years. The Baptist Chapel and Manse at Dunnington were built as a result of Bomford's influence, and Raymond Bomford regularly worshipped there. Raymond was the treasurer and deacon of this chapel. The Bomford archive records Stephen Dunn of Atch Lench saying, "*Ray the wit and Ben the singer, Ray was the engineer and Ray the farmer*". This records the farming partnership of brothers Raymond (Ray) and Benjamin (Ben) Bomford, who farmed 4,000 acres around Bevington Hall and Harvington Lodge.

Stephen was a Baptist minister at Atch Lench in the Vale of Evesham, and I think also at Dunnington just over the Warwickshire border. Billings Directory of Worcestershire (1855) lists: "Dunn, Rev. Stephen, Baptist Minister, Chapel House" under Atch Lench





He is buried in the graveyard at Atch Lench. I have taken photographs of his grave and of later family members.

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We used to be shown a lane between Atch Lench and Harvington, and the corner called Dunn's Corner, where he fell out of his trap. I inherited a Josephus from him, along with the chair on which he was said to have written his sermons. And that, sadly, is all I know about my maternal great-grandfather and maternal grandmother.

The father of Amelia (Millie) Mary Ellaway was Henry Horn Ellaway (1833-1887), an alderman of Birmingham and brass founder.



Father of Arthur and Grannie Dunn - Great grandfather of Noel and SWW

**THE LATE MR. H. H. ELLAWAY,
(EX-ALDERMAN.)**

Their fifth child, John Horatio, was my grandfather. He was born in 1859 and married my great-grandmother, Amelia (Millie) Mary Ellaway (1860-1937), about 1883. It was at their house in Rushford, Salford Priors, where I have my earliest memories.



Rushford

The farmhouse was rented from the Bomfords of Birmingham Farm, about a mile away, who farmed the land. As we once received a gift of venison from the Marquis of Hertford, 4 miles away at Ragley Hall, I imagine the Bomfords were tenants of the Marquis. Rushford is not in the village, but a mile away on the Alcester to Evesham Road, and so about midway between Atch Lench and Dunnington, whose Baptist chapels we attended.

John Horatio Dunn



My grandfather started a wholesale business in Worcester Street, Birmingham, near the Bullring, and it was demolished during the 1939-45 war.



My grandparents had lived in the city, but about 1905, they moved to Rushford, which they presumably knew from the Rev. Stephen and the Bomfords.

My grandfather commuted to Birmingham from Salford Priors, which has a station on the line. This meant a drive of about 1.5 miles by horse and trap each way. My brother Noel and I often went with him in the morning, and the gardener Jack Barclay let us hold the reins while Lady Grey walked up a slight rise near Park Hall on the way back.



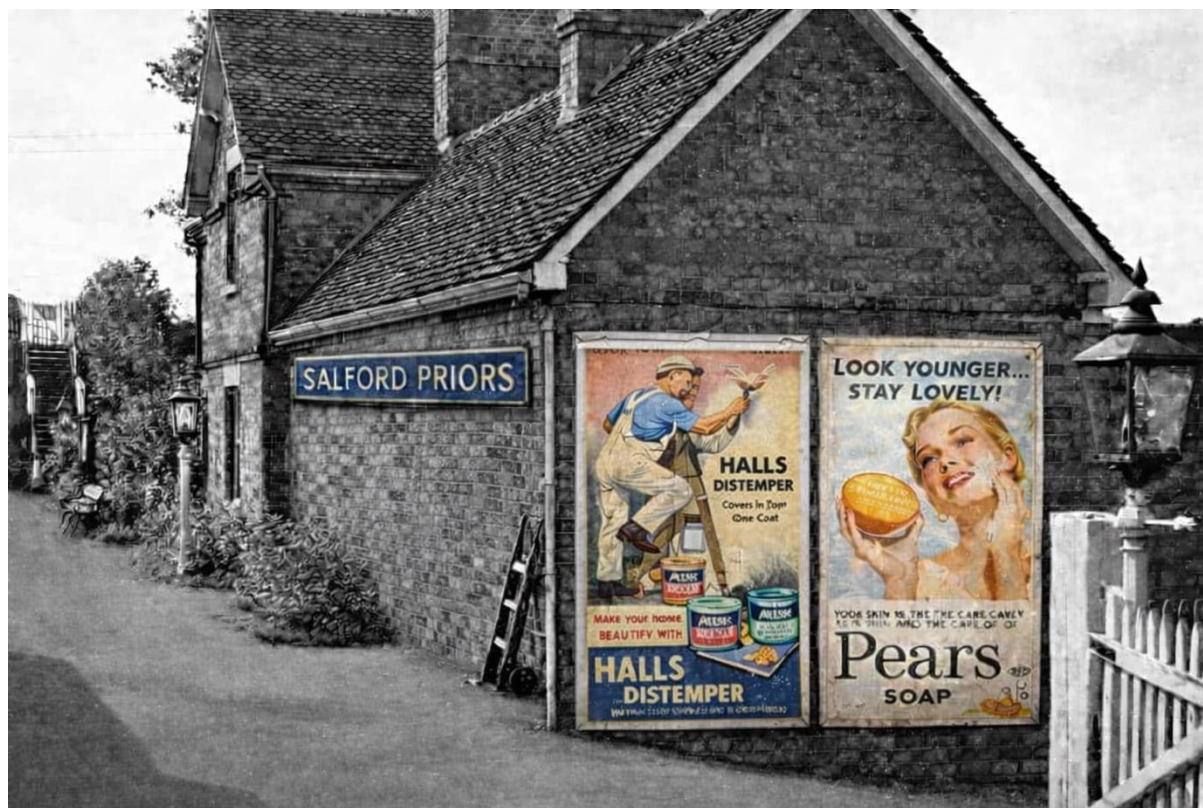
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What a hill it was, when one day Jack was so deep in his newspaper that when Lady Grey broke into a trot, I went on holding the reins for some time before he noticed.

Park Hall was the residence of the Seymours, relatives of the Marquis of Hertford. Over the wall, we could see a most magnificent copper beech. We never went to the garden, but once we went to a cricket match in the field beyond.

In the same lane lived Squire Slatter. I never saw him, but his life must have been an echo of countryside hierarchy or squirearchy. Nor did we ever go into the Salford parish church, though we passed it near the station, except on Toie's (see later) marriage.

The other thrill at the station was that the Guard let us wave the flag to start the train, and he presented us with an old green flag we had for years in the nursery. At the station, we saw our first examples of advertisements that described the countryside, and I think there were Halls Distemper (men with a ladder), and Pears Soap (lots of lather).



But I must explain why we were living at Rushford. My grandparents' oldest child was my mother, Francis (Ros) Rosalie (1884-1943). Through business connections with the Woodwards of Bridgend, she met my father, Leonard Medlicott Woodward. They were married in June 1908, the month of roses, as the parish magazine certainly put it. He was, I think, only a few months older than my mother, but contracted diabetes in the days before insulin and died in 1913. My brother John Noel Leonard was born in 1909, and I in 1911, so I have no memory of him whatsoever.

Leonard Medlicott Woodward

A mixture of shyness and delicacy prevented me from asking my mother about Leonard¹¹ (1884 - 1913), and the following is all I know. They had first lived in Park Street, Bridgend, where my brother was born. They moved to 46 Forest Road, Moseley, where I was born on 18th July 1911. Soon after, they moved to Redding's Road, where my father died. My mother went to work with her parents at Rushford when I was just two. I discovered that the great WG Grace was born on my birthday and died on my mother's birthday, 23rd October.

All I possess of my father's, except for his genes, is a pair of golf cufflinks with an LMW monogram and the Bible he received from the English Congregational Sunday School in Bridgend on his marriage. It contains a concordance and glossary and has always been very useful.

My aunts describe him as a good man. My mother was clearly in love with him and shattered by his early death. She told my wife that he was like me, active and going upstairs two at a time. I have a photograph of him at about three and another, presumably from the time of his marriage. Recently, an aunt unearthed a letter¹² he'd written from Germany, where he went for a few months before his death to be treated for his diabetes.

We English tend to swing between the two extremes of thinking we are a top nation and thinking that every other nation's weather, cooking, or whatever is better than ours. It must have been thought that the Germans were ahead of us in the treatment of diabetes in 1913, but my father reports that it was the same as that he was given by the English doctors.

He seems to have been successful in business, and although he was living in Birmingham working for the Dunn firm, I imagine he kept up the connection with his father's firm in Bridgend, as it was through business that the families must first have met.

Frances Rosalie Woodward

My mother, Frances Rosalie (nee Dunn) Woodward (1884-1943), was educated at Camp Hill Grammar School for Girls, one of the nine schools of the King Edward VI Foundation, and then situated at Stratford Place, Moseley. She was bright, particularly in mathematics, and won prizes. She was then sent to German Switzerland to be finished for a year or two. I don't think she was particularly happy, or that she stayed long enough to master languages.

¹¹ B: 3 Sept 1884 Bridgend D: 5 Jul 1913 Atch Lench Alcester/Evesham

¹² Letter on Central Hotel Berlin notepaper to H. Woodward & Co. dated 14th March 1913.

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Although I remember that when I started German at 9 or 10, she quoted the opening lines of the Lorelei accurately in German “*Ich weiß nicht, was soll es bedeuten, Daß ich so traurig bin*” (*I do not know what it might bode. That I should be so sad*).

She helped my grandfather with the business on Worcester Street after he returned home. It was like the Bridgend firm, wholesale toys, stationery, haberdashery, and whatever else. I think she went with my father to the Leipzig toy fair, a great annual event, after their marriage.

After his death, she sold the house on Redding's Road and moved with my brother and me to Rushford. She commuted with my grandfather back to the job she had held before her marriage, as a secretary at the firm. Jack Barclay drove them both to the station in the trap, with Lady Grey between the shafts. This is a photo of me with Noel, our mother and Auntie Amelia Dunn.



I think that the customs of the time would normally have led my mother to the quiet life of a widow living on a small income left by her husband and spending all her time with the two young children. But she dropped it to go to work to the benefit of our education, and I have always appreciated her self-sacrifice.

Earliest memories

It meant that my earliest memory of my mother was a beloved but rarely seen figure. Our days were spent with Grannie Dunn (1881 photo below).



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She was helped by Auntie Hilda Dunn, Florrie Salisbury, affectionately known as Toie, the maid of all work, our housemaid, Katie Susan, and Jack Barclay, the gardener, later succeeded by Ernest Porter.

One of the earliest songs we sang was “*K-k-k- Katie the girl that I adore when the moon shines on the c-c-c-cornshed I’ll be waiting at the ki-k-kitchen door*” and, of course, the 1914 First World War songs.

I suppose my very first memory that can be dated is 7th December 1913, for then I came down to breakfast in the farmhouse kitchen to see Noel standing on a chair proclaiming he was 4 years old. I can also visualise him in that same kitchen, being carried on the shoulders of the strapping, great German, a friend of my mother's brother, Uncle Stan, brought back from a stay in Germany. Am I merely visualising what I was told later, or can I be sure? That must have occurred before the 1914 war.

The other fixed date is during the war that started in August 1914. I recall it had been going on for some time. Noel and I were halfway to the garden when Grannie stopped us to say Kitchener had been drowned.

Life at Rushford.

The large walled garden was a delight to us. I remember the long gate on which we could swing, the gravel path to the front door circling round a weeping ash tree under which we could hide from visitors. The standard roses, loganberries, and the peach tree against the wall.

In one corner was a low building which contained a three-seater lavatory used exclusively, I think, by my brother and me, a great delight, which emptied ingeniously into the farmyard muck below.

Beyond the garden was a field in which there was a tennis court, though there was a small one on the front lawn between the house and the lilac trees, around which swung a hammock. We spent more time amongst the farm buildings, the stables, the saddling room, the farmyard, the enormous barn where the trap was kept, and the lane leading down to the brook and along the meadow. Opposite the house was an orchard and some climbable Elm trees.

One of the outhouses was called a cartwheel by the farm workers. It was some years before I interpreted



Rushford Farm front

this as a house or shed for a cart.



It must have been about 1914 that we started walking up to Bevington Hall to have lessons with Dick Bomford from Miss Perkins. I was proud that at the age of three I knew my three times table and could tie my own bootlaces. The only other memories of Bevington are of water wagtails on the lawn; most people called them pied wagtails, and the sand table depicting the map of Palestine in the schoolroom.

Of Mrs Bomford, I remember nothing, but her husband, Uncle Ray, intrigued me. We sat behind him at Dunnington Chapel, and the crease at the back of his neck convinced me that his head had come off and been sewn back on again. Their older sons, Norman and Douglas, were already grown up. Somehow, they were distant figures occasionally seen on horseback, but Dick was only a little older than us. He was rather fat. I'm afraid I laughed when he fell in the brook at Rushford, but I wept standing in the whole foot of water when I fell in myself. The anxious Noel fetched even more frightened women from the house to rescue us.

Other Bomfords lived around. The nearest was Miss Mary at the Pitchill Farm, just a few 100 yards away. There, the family had an engineering workshop to mend their ploughs and ploughing engines.

We loved watching the blacksmiths at work and, during threshing time, with the cruelty of youth, beat mice to death as they ran from the diminishing ricks. One had its revenge by getting up the sleeve of my jacket and frightening me to death. I can still smell the odour of strained potatoes, which must have been prepared for animal fodder.

Other Bomfords lived at Salford Lodge and Harvington Lodge, also on the Evesham Road. I think the Bomfords owned the land up to No Man's Bush on the outskirts of Atch Lench at the top of the wood. This was the local landmark, consisting of a tall tree and a short one that looked like the small letter "h".

I was told the Pitchill was so named because Cromwell pitched his camp there before the battle of Evesham. As this took place some 350 years before his birth, I preferred to think it was the battle of Worcester, some 15 miles to the West.

The lane leading up to the wood and hill was Can Lane, presumably a corruption of Camp Lane. It was our route for the annual primrose picking.

The Bomfords were experimental farmers, though their ploughing method was not unusual. We particularly enjoyed watching the two ploughing engines at each end of a field, which pulled the plough "to and fro" on a cable. There were signs in some of the fields of an attempt to attract rain by means of posts and wires, presumably electrified, which had proved a failure. At the end of the War, the half-funnels of two redundant ships appeared in the farmyard at Rushford; this was the first form of silage.

They also had land in Hampshire, and the engineering firm of Bomford and Evershed was presumably partially owned by their family. Dick, however, after Bromsgrove School, went to Wadham College, Oxford

and became a physician at The London Hospital¹³. I never met Dick again, but by coincidence, it was to him that our family doctor sent my wife on one occasion at The London Hospital. He also did a spell as Radio Doctor.

There were two fixed weekly events: the Baptist Chapel, to which we drove in the trap, but from which we walked home with Katie before the sermon.

Next door to the Baptist Chapel was a Hall in which I vaguely remembered two events: one was a lantern slide lecture by my grandfather on Russia, which he presumably visited before the war for business reasons. The only tangible souvenir of Russia was a wooden napkin ring with a picture of houses and a sledge, which was still in use.

The second event was my first appearance on stage, when I had recited: *"I was sitting on the doorstep eating bread and jam."* I collapsed in tears and was withdrawn.

A walk of a mile and a half or so was nothing in those days, though it is a fearful distance for the modern car-borne generation to contemplate. The second walk, barely half a mile each way, took us just beyond the Cross to a wooden lean-to shop where we spent our weekly pocket money.

The penny (old style) bought a lovely bar of cream chocolate or four Farthing Buns. The penny, by the way, also bought a beautiful red stamp for letters, or a green half penny was sufficient for a postcard, which arrived the next day. In the 70's, it cost 40 times as much for a postcard to reach its destination by first-class post the next day. 9p is worth, in monetary terms, 43.2 old half-pennies. In 1981 it was 14p, in 1984 17p.

This was still the horse age, but the internal combustion engine was just beginning to make itself felt or felt literally. We had tricycles, and Noel ventured into the road outside the Rushford and encountered a motorbike, but he got nothing worse than bloody knees.

The first car I can remember was a T-model Ford with a single forward and a single reverse gear. This belonged to the Flemings, friends of Auntie Hilda. I puzzled for some time as to how it had made the journey from Sweden. It later transpired that it had only come from Swindon, in whose soccer team Harold Fleming was one of the most famous wings of the day.

13 When the editor (DJR) was a junior medical officer at The London Hospital in 1976, I examined and admitted the retired Dr Richard Bomford under the care of my boss, Sir John Ellis.

Amelia Mary Dunn¹⁴ and Hilda Mary Dunn

During these first five years, Grannie and Auntie looked after us with the help of servants. My mother went to work in Birmingham with her father.

My Grannie was born in 1860 in the Horse Fair in the centre of Birmingham. She could remember kinsmen picking blackberries in the fields where the Corporation Street was later cut through. Her father was on the City Council. I always understood from Grannie that he was Lord Mayor, but I could not find his name on the list, and Noel's cousin Sidney said I got it wrong. Perhaps he was only an Alderman. Her brother, Uncle Arthur, later became an Alderman too.

Arthur was the rich uncle whom we rarely saw. He lived with his Swiss wife, Aunt Marguerite, rather grandly in Edgbaston at 10 Ampton Road, just about next door to the house where I recently read that Lawn Tennis was invented.

Their only son, Norman, was older than us, and clothes were passed on. He went to West House Preparatory School, then to Oundle and Oriel College, Oxford. Later, he tried for years to qualify as a doctor but was never successful. His mother found a Swiss wife for him, and he died rather young. It was Aunt Marguerite who steamrolled my parents into naming my brother Noel because he was born in December, and she thought it was close enough to Christmas. Noel is now almost universally known as John.

My grandmother had a sister called Clarie who lived in Cotton Lane, Moseley, with her accountant husband Will Evans. They had no children; we only saw them occasionally.

We saw more of her half-sister Jessie, "Auntie Jack", whose husband, Uncle George, ran a fur business in Leeds but later moved to Edgbaston. Their son Sidney, an only child, went to King Edward's and then to



6 and 8 Valentine Road

¹⁴ Amelia Mary (1861-1937) was the wife of John Horatio Dunn. Their daughters were Frances Rosalie (1884-1943) and Hilda Mary (born 1887). Stanley Ellaway Dunn (1890-1938) was their only son.

Wyndham Woodward memoirs

Queen's Oxford. He was twice married, as his first wife died, but they had no children. We still exchange Christmas cards; as of 1995, he is well into his 90s.

In those days, it cost a whole shilling (5p) to make a long-distance telephone call at night. It staggers me to find that Sidney telephoned his mother from London every night. What extravagance! What affection!

Auntie Hilda never married, so she lived with her parents at Rushford. I rather think she had a sweetheart who was killed, presumably in the 1914 war. She was very kind and indeed a second mother to us. We were also very fond of Toie



and later of her husband, Alan Bloxham, whom she married when he returned from the war in Salonika.



Wyndham Woodward memoirs

Alan was a local lad who lived at the Lodge on the way to Pitchill, some 200 yards from Rushford and from the cottage where Toie's parents lived opposite. Alan worked in the engine shop at Pitchill and sometimes in the fields too, for I have a vague memory of the walk back from Pitchill across the fields towards Bevington with Toie carrying lunch to workers in the fields. There, probably at harvest, we chased mice occasionally with success, and rabbits never, as they escaped us from the dwindling centre of the cornfield. We were very conscious of the war, but it hardly affected us. Noel and I used to walk around the farm at Rushford pretending that the stinging nettle was Little Willy, the tall son of Kaiser Bill. But when German prisoners of war arrived at Pitchill to help with the farm, we made friends with them and laid no blame on them. It must have been towards the end of the war, when I was 6 or 7, and could read, that I decided we would win by gradually taking all Germans prisoner. I used to scan the Birmingham Post every day to tot up the score.

In 1916, my mother bought a semi-detached house at number 6 Valentine Road,



Kings Heath, in Birmingham, just around the corner from 29 Ashfield Avenue, where my friends' parents had lived, and they rented it out when they moved to Rushford.

I think her motive was to be near a suitable school for Noel and me. So, at five, I went to a private school, then on the corner of School Road and Oxford Road in Moseley, about a 10-minute walk away. It was soon

to be moved to Green Hill Road, about the same distance. It was run by Mr and Mrs Niblett and called



Moseley Modern School.

We were proud of our green caps with the letters MMS, but National School children passing by used to jeer us as the Moseley Muck Sweepers.

I think I learned quite a lot there and was usually happy. The art was uninspiring. I can remember nothing about it except having to pick a laurel leaf on the way and then draw it. I was incompetent and bored. In break time, we played in the garden. I suppose there were about 30 or 40 of us, girls and boys. I once got into a fight and was winded by a punch in the solar plexus, but usually it was the most peaceful games, like gathering nuts in May.

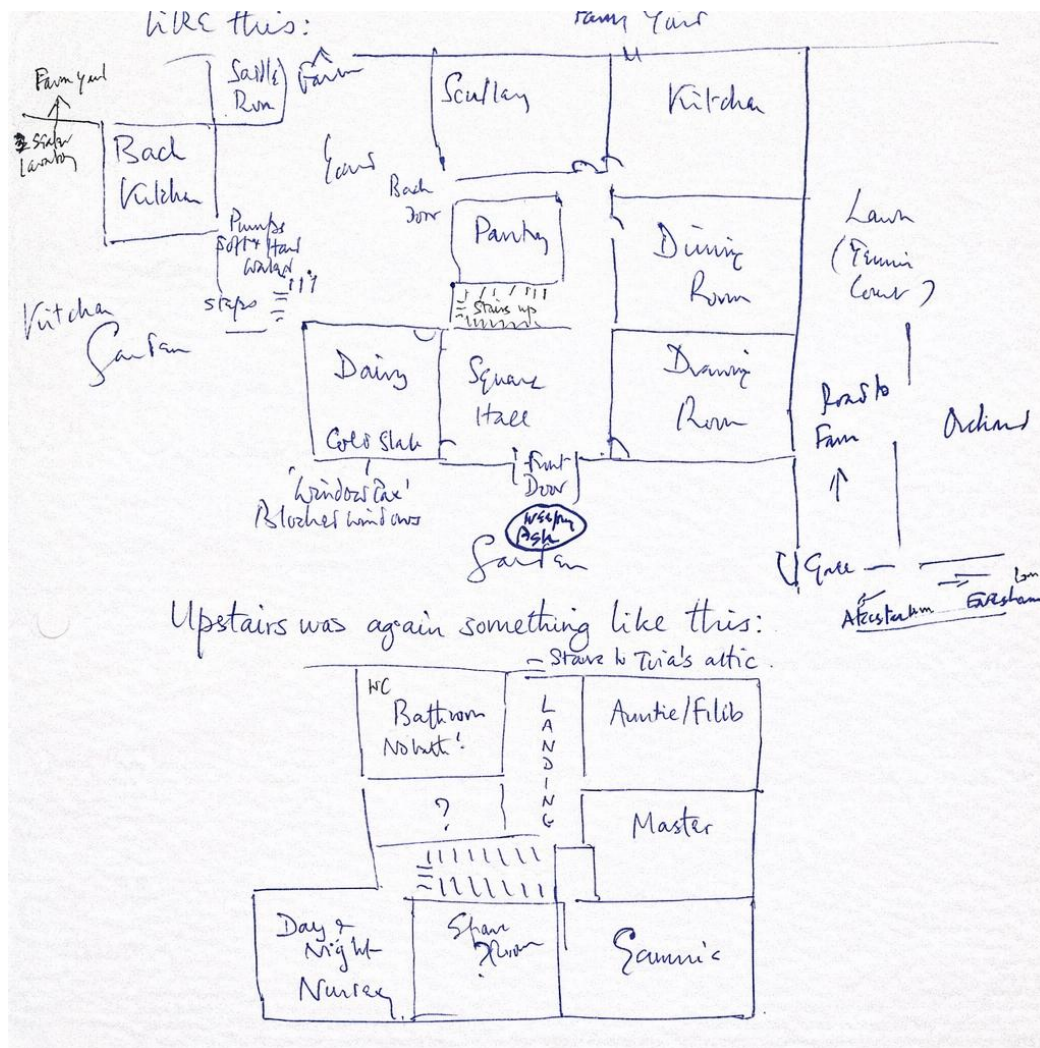
One day, I wept in class, I think only because I could not do some work and was sent out of the room till I stopped crying. A few minutes later, a boy came into the hall to summon me back, but I hadn't managed to stop my tears. I replied. Mr Niblett came out in a fury and rebuked me for disobedience. I never forgot that injustice.

But usually, he was kind and apparently thought enough of my work to come round and ask my mother to keep me on and let me try for a scholarship to King Edward's at 11. I remember being rather embarrassed by the presence of Bonnie, my mother's Pomeranian, complete with illicit puppies in a basket.

She refused, having decided that we fourth-class boys with a working mother should go to boarding school. I left at Easter 1920 and followed Noel to West House, St James's Road, Edgbaston, the leading prep school in Birmingham, and no doubt recommended by great uncle Arthur, whose son Norman had been there.

Odd memories of Rushford

I have a few more fleeting, disconnected memories of Rushford that may be of some interest. It was a square house planned, something like this.



The bathroom was a bit of a laugh as there was no bath in it! It was just a lavatory and a big space. We, children, used the bathtub at the front of the kitchen fire. I remember one expedition to Evesham. Were the six miles still done in the trap? We saw our first film, Charlie Chaplin, and another trip to Stratford to see a play. Was it Twelfth Night? This was in the old theatre before it was burnt down in 1917.

Which reminds me that our first experience of modern architecture, and probably many people in the Midlands, was the new theatre. For us, it was in the early 30s, a plain factory-like monstrosity compared with the Victorian Edwardian fussiness that we were used to.

Other delights included walks across the meadows from Salford Priors church to the lovely weir and footbridge on the Avon and up to the bank to tea at Cleeve Prior for boiled egg and honey in a cottage belonging to Mrs Goole.

We went to tea with two old ladies who lived near Wixford Station by the bridge carrying Icknield Street. I think they were Bomfords, and they were the last people I knew who wore the old bonnet and ribbons. Wixford was the second station from Salford Priors, Brom Junction being in between and on the way to Alcester and Birmingham.

Brom Junction, we only went once, when there was a tree across the road at Park Hall, and Jack Barclay had to turn and hurry my Grandfather to Dunnington to catch his train there.

There was a jingle attributed, of course, to Shakespeare, which mentioned Wixford *“and the drunken Brown and papist Wixford.”*

Grannie and Auntie Hilda returned to Birmingham in 1921. She gave Lady Grey to Ernest and was furious when he sold her, as she was to enjoy her retirement.

We still went to Salford Prior, staying with Toie and Alan in their brick-built, modern cottage. There was no bathroom, and the lavatory was at the bottom of the garden. It was here that we learned the skill of listening to the wireless by adjusting the cat's whisker on the crystal.

1920 West House School

It must have been a great sacrifice for my mother to pay the fees for full-boarders. I think she need not have worked if she had sent us as day boys.

I appeared as Woodward WS minor 8.9. It was only later that it was discovered I was really Woodward SW. I was in Form 5b under the Reverend A. L. Lloyd and started Latin and French.

I had a meteoric career, won first prizes in five successive terms: 5b, 5a, 4b, 4a, and 3. I was only second in 2, by which time I was working with much older boys.

Modesty prevents me from going into too much detail. My hoarding instinct makes it unnecessary, as I have preserved the W. H. S. prospectus and the memorial pamphlet to the founding headmaster, A. P. C. Field, and all my reports.

It was an excellent school; its headmaster was C. P. Aubrey, but halfway through my five years, Dudley Field, the founder's son, returned from the Navy and became the joint head. He inherited his father's Christian motivation, and the school's tone was excellent. So were most of the masters.

Perhaps most admirable was H. L. Nichols, who taught history and was an excellent games coach. We admired the three Cs of his Corpus Christi College, Cambridge, blazer.

The house master of Woodbourne was H. A. Morris, who taught geography and was strict but fair. My best subjects were maths (except geometry and trigonometry, taught by Miss Henderson), and Latin and Greek. The last time I took it up was late, after some time learning German, as it was decided I should try for a classical scholarship. German was taught by Mr B. A. Stone, inevitably nicknamed Stein. We sang *“Röselein”*, one of the world's simplest and greatest poems, until a master next door banged on the wall.

During my last two years, we were taught classics by a new young master, Roland Launcelot. He took an interest in me, and I owed him a great deal. Unfortunately, I was never to see him again after I left.

He once called on me in Cambridge but found me out. He was then at Ely Theological College. Many years later, he wrote to me for advice that I, as a headmaster, could offer. But one of the minor tragedies in life

is that I did not fully appreciate that we should show our thanks to those who helped us in our youth, and often have no opportunity to do so in later years.

I had a rival in Ia, Anthony Seymour Jones, son of a Birmingham ENT surgeon. I was second in my last term, but I happened to beat him and so spent it as Head Boy. Seymour Jones won a scholarship to Shrewsbury. I only saw him once again when we were both parents of girls at Saint Mary's School, Calne. He was some sort of specialist nearby. Specialists are now called consultants.

The grounds of Woodbourne, the boarding house, adjoined the school. We had breakfast and supper there, but lunch was in the main school dining room with some of the day boys. The food wasn't good, though I don't think it was any worse than most schools in those days.

I think it was then that Marmite first came to market. I remember being given some to spread on the biscuit, but with a rusty penknife, I could not bring myself to eat it for decades. Now I enjoy it and no doubt profit from the vitamin B.

I remember we kept small bottles of Worcestershire sauce in our pockets to pour surreptitiously onto the meat, much as our medieval forebears used spices to mask the taste of rancid meat.

Building extensions were added during my time, but we tended to be cold in winter, huddled miserably against ineffectual radiators. The games were good. As youngsters, we played on a small field adjoining the school. In my first term in 1920, my top score in cricket was 23. I can still hear the crash as I pulled a straight ball to the boundary fence.

We played against other schools: Packwood Haugh, then in the Warwickshire countryside but now in Shropshire, Lickey, Handsworth Wood, and the RC Oratory, then in Edgbaston. It was a great day when Noel, who is left-handed natural off break, bowled out the Duke of Norfolk.

I got into the First Eleven and eventually won a cricket bag for being at the top of the averages. I also got onto the soccer eleven, but I was not a very effective forward.

Hockey was my best game. It was most unusual for a boys' prep school to play this game at all.



We had to suffer the indignity of playing against Edgbaston High School for Girls and the Church High School for Girls. They were much older and taller than we were. We were too gallant to extract the ball from between their skirts, nor were we allowed to hook their sticks as was allowed in men's hockey.

Our standard must have been fairly high. One of the boys who left just before my time, HCA Tom Gaunt, went on to get his half-blue at Cambridge, and Bobby Whitlock, a contemporary of mine, was the regular England centre forward before the Second World War, in which he was killed. Tom Gaunt, I met several times as Headmaster of Malvern and a Canon at Winchester.

GA Strasser played amateur soccer for England. Archie Warr played rugger, I think for England, and became a master at Harrow. Another contemporary was Joe Leslie Blackham, who wrote to me when he was a retired Admiral. He had read a short article I wrote in the WHS magazine.

A hero to us boys, ET Hewetson, who played cricket for Warwick and was considered the fastest bowler in England. I met him once, years later, when we were both parents of boys at Packwood School.



The school was also strong in shooting and regularly ranked high in international point-22 competitions. Noel was an excellent shot, but I never graduated beyond the 10-yard air gun range. I enjoyed this, though I had a moment of anxiety when I accidentally fired a shot while Mr Dixon was changing the targets. The pellet hit the fat clergyman in the calf, and he jumped. I'm glad to say that there was no audible oath, and he wasn't very angry.

After the first year or two, we drove in horse-drawn cabs to Richmond Hill in Chad Valley, about one and a half miles away, to a splendid field. When proficient, we were allowed to cycle. All the main games and sports were held there. In the latter, I tended to come second or third and won quite a lot of silver and bronze medals; the long-distance half-mile was my best.

At school, we played a marvellous game of hockey on the hard playground and also had gym lessons. The master for this, Mr Lansdowne, was elderly; indeed, he had taught my mother dancing in his day. We performed on parallel bars, but his forte was on the high horizontal bar. I was very small, and the bar was higher above my head, out of my reach, however hard I jumped. Mr Lansdowne put his hand on the nape of my neck, and I sailed easily up. I've never discovered the explanation for this seeming break in the laws of gravity.

I have many other memories of a happy five years at West House School. The Sunday afternoon walks were rather limited. We usually chose one of only three possibilities, Edgbaston Park, privately owned, I believe, by a knighted Smith, who made bedsteads, with the circumambulation of his lakes. The Botanical Gardens, with its small collection of animals, were quite near. The reptile house particularly fascinated us. We used to love watching the crocodiles, or were they alligators, as a succession of skins rolled back to reveal their eyes. The Art Gallery was the third choice. I particularly remember Epstein's Einstein and the Pre-Raphaelite pictures of Birmingham's own Burne-Jones.

Other joys were walks to the Warwickshire County cricket ground, where international hockey matches were played in the winter on the superb turf. C. L. Spackman, the Englishman back in his immaculate kid gloves, was my particular hero. In the hot summer of 1921, I saw Warwick play Armstrong's all-conquering Australians there. Most spectacular was CE Pellew's fielding as he cut off many a boundary opposite our stand.

My Warwickshire hero was fourth in the batting order of Calthorpe, Bates, Charlesworth, and Quaife. The Honourable Fitzroy Somerset Gough Calthorpe gave his name to 4 roads in Edgbaston, and it was appropriate in those days that the county should be captained by an aristocrat, an amateur, of course, who came out of a different gate from his opening partner, the immaculate Bates, son of the groundsman, and of course a professional. But little W G (Billy) Quaife was a joy to watch, though he had to score most of his runs behind the wicket. I think that if I looked up Wisden, I should find that he made 30 against the Australians and was caught behind on the last ball before lunch. I think he was at the top of the average in 1901.

On one memorable occasion, Dudley Field lent us two membership tickets, and we were allowed to go down on our own. We called in at his Edgbaston house on the way. I think this was the first occasion that I donned headphones to listen to the wireless.

We walked regularly in the summer terms through some rather shabby streets to the Bristol Road and the Kent Street baths. The instructor walked across a plank, holding a belt looped around our tummies as he surreptitiously lowered his hand; we found ourselves swimming unaided.

On Sunday mornings, we walked across the road to Saint James' Church, which was high and boring, though I suppose the glorious prose of the Anglican liturgy sank into my subconscious unforgettably. Noel had a good ploy; he fainted at the smell of incense and missed the sermon. But on Sunday evenings, we were allowed to sit in the drawing room at Woodbourne and were read to or laughed our way through the bound volumes of Punch.

About 1988, some old boys started a Society, and my name was given, I think, through Dudley Field's sister, and I joined. I wrote a piece for the magazine about the school from 1920 to 1925, and later attended the school's 90th anniversary and the rededication of the war Memorial.

Mr A. P. C. Field had been a boy, or had some connection with Oakham School. Mr Hodge, the headmaster, had turned this local grammar school into a public school, just as Thring had done with Uppingham a few years earlier, a few miles away. His son, H S Vere Hodge, was a housemaster at Tonbridge, and to his house went a succession of West House boys at that time. They included HCA Gaunt, two Hudsons, two Boswells, JM Wright, and Michael Field, Dudley's young brother. I followed two years later in 1925. I treasured, and have preserved, my first telegram from Mr Brooke, the secretary to the head of Tonbridge, "*Second Judde scholarship £100 congratulations Brooke*".

My mother had taken me down there for the exam, and in spite of nights disturbed by traffic in the front room of the Tonbridge Rose & Crown Hotel, I had done well enough to come second to JGW Davies.

£100 was then enough to go a long way to provide even the boarding fees. I returned to West House School for my last fortnight, wearing my first pair of long trousers.

Dudley Field gave me a final “pi-jaw” - to use the early 20th century term, in which he told me that I had too keen a sense of justice. I was not aware of this, and wondered what I was supposed to do about it!

Several school lists, most term reports and the West House Chronicle, started whilst I was there, have been preserved for anyone interested.

1916-1925 years before Tonbridge

Before I write about Tonbridge, let me mention a few events over the last nine years that were unconnected with school.

Number 6 Valentine Road was an ordinary “semi”; the only distinguishing feature of its garden was a splendid Greengage tree. We had a succession of housekeepers to look after us during the day, as my mother commuted for two and a half pennies (1p) each way by tram to her father's business in Worcester Street.

The only housekeeper I can remember was a rather splendid one, who we had to call “*Auntie Mary Biddle*”. I can remember discussing the world situation with her at the age of about seven. She thought that if the nations got together and worked out how much of each commodity the world needed and who was to provide what, future wars would be avoided. How right she was!

A great event was Scarlet Fever, which Noel and I both caught. It was a very serious affair in those days and took several weeks to recover. Only Grannie was allowed in through the heavily curtained door of our bedroom. We had to talk to Mother through the window. The worst thing was that our toys and books had to be burnt afterwards.

In 1917, our grandfather died, and we were certainly not at Rushford then. He was kind, though occasionally fierce, as I am to my grandchildren, but his life as a commuter had meant that we saw very little of him.

In 1918, we were given the day off school on 11th November. I remember milling about in the crowds in Victoria Square in the heart of Birmingham to celebrate the Armistice. In the same square, we bought our first War Savings Certificates (15 shillings and 6p, which equals 77 1/2p), rising to a pound in five years. If I remember correctly, we had to climb onto an army tank to do so.

The other summer holiday visit was to Llandudno or Colwyn Bay next door. My mother and father had spent their honeymoon in 1908 at Ilfracombe, but she never took us there for obvious reasons.

But we still enjoyed Rushford. One of those soft bricks of the house, built, I suppose, about 1800, had worn away. It was about a foot above ground level. Noel and I were convinced that the house would tip over. So we got some putty and inserted an incomplete yellow-white brick. It stayed for years. Above it was one of the kitchen windows which looked out on the yard. Here, swedes were left for the animals, which

we pinched for human consumption, and an occasional pig, which we killed and were introduced to chitterlings.

About 1921, my grannie bought her first car, an American Overland, for the vast sum of £500. Auntie Hilda drove it.



It was like a superior Ford, and its inflated price settled down to about £250 after the war. After the Second World War, 1939 to 45, prices went up, then came down again.

In 1921, after eight years of widowhood, my mother married Andrew Stewart (1862-1935), also widowed, at Kings Norton. He was a Stewart of Appin, but most of the family then lived in the Glasgow district. The Stewarts were said to have been the stewards of the Royal Stuarts. He ran the office of the Aberdeen

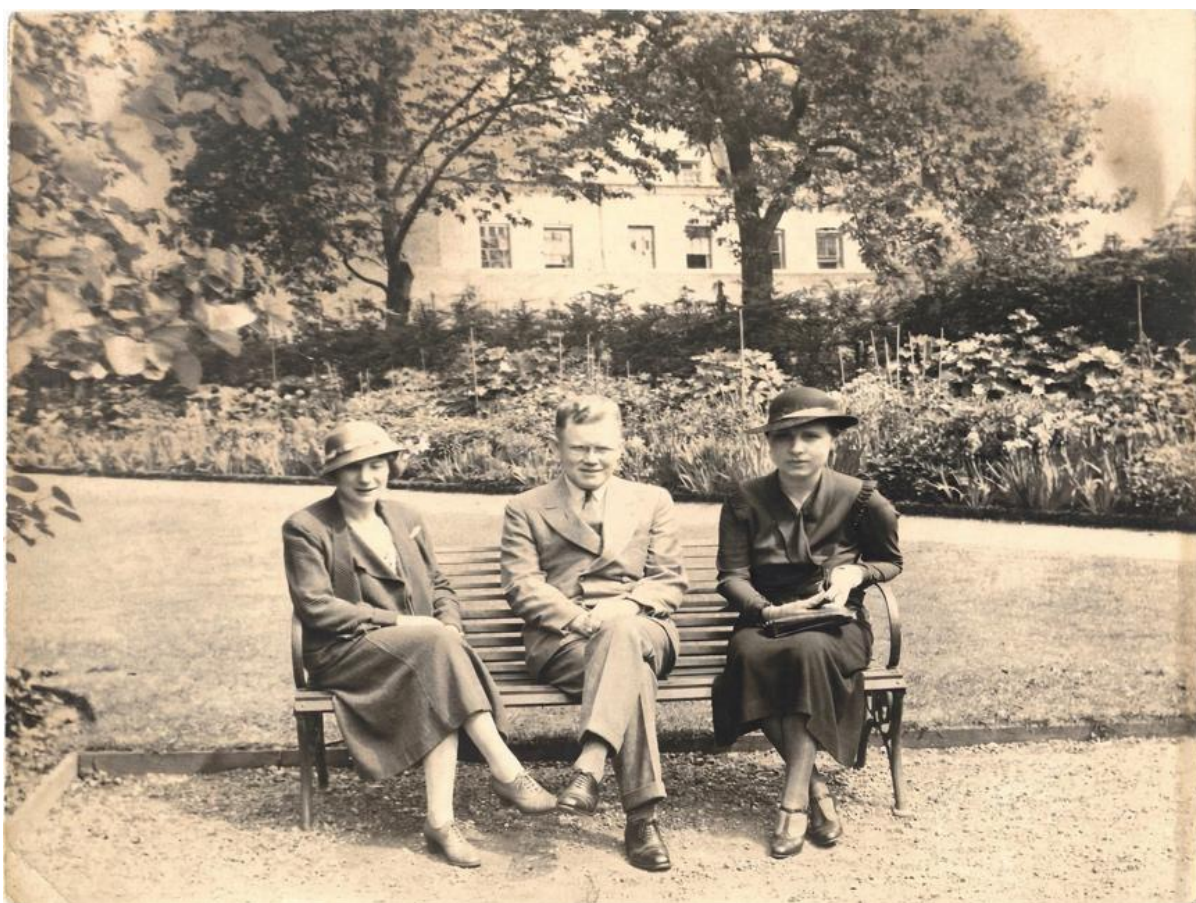
Combworks Co (S.R. Stewart & Co), in Carrs Lane, Birmingham, near the famous nonconformist Chapel. He lived at 23 Ashfield Avenue, three houses away from my grandparents at 29.

He and a Mr Bond were trustees for my father's estate, and I presume had become friendly with my parents when they visited Ashfield Avenue. I was not a very good stepson, but he was always kind and patient.

Of his three children, Katherine (Rena) McAllister Bell had graduated from Glasgow University and went out to teach in Canada, then in New Zealand. Rena was a pioneering geography teacher who altered local curricula to emphasise regional economic and agricultural interconnectedness. There, she married a prominent dairy farmer called William Pool Bell of Townhead Farm, in Tauranga. I never saw her again. Noel met some of her children when they visited England. When William died suddenly in 1943, Rena took over Townhead Farm with the assistance of her sister, Marie Stewart.

1929 New Zealand Visitors

This is a photo of Rena and her husband visiting my mother around 1929. For many years after, during rationing, they sent us gifts of butter.



The second daughter, Marie, took up poultry farming and worked at Crewkerne in Somerset and at Barley near Royston, Hertfordshire. Marie was not very much at home and soon emigrated to New Zealand. I think she farmed successfully and became herself a notable poultry breeder, but never married.

Leslie Davidson Stewart¹⁵, their third child, was born in 1902 (1902-1972) and went on to read chemistry at Birmingham University after attending Camp Hill Grammar School for Boys. When we moved to number 23, we shared a room with him. It was a difficult time to find work, but he was eventually appointed to the Frederick Crane Chemical Co. in Bordesley Green, on the other side of Birmingham. This firm dealt in paint, and we got used to the smell of pear drops. That firm was soon taken over by Alfred Mond, and later, after a posting to Brazil with Imperial Chemicals, Leslie ended his career as a director of ICI.

Leslie was a keen rugby player, and we used to watch him play for the Camp Hill Old Edwardians. My stepfather was a convinced atheist and had some publications of the Rationalist Press Association, but Leslie took me to the Sunday School of the English Presbyterian Church in Moseley. I think it was a happy experience, though all I can remember is winning a box of chocolates for lighting a candle 60 times with the same match. I've never scored more than 20 or 30.

Soon after we moved to number 23, my Grannie and Auntie Hilda gave up the lease of Rushford and came back to 29. I went first with my mother, then with Grannie, to the splendid 1880 Gothic Baptist Chapel on Oxford Road, Moseley.

My ecumenical leanings are therefore explicable. I think the Woodwards were Anglicans at Snowhill and Dissenters when they moved away. As we saw, my father served the English Congregational Church in Bridgend. The Dunns were Baptists, the Stewarts were Presbyterians, and my wife was brought up as a Methodist but revolted, mainly for aesthetic reasons, at about eight. I went to a school at age 8, where I attended an Anglo-Catholic Church, and from age 14, I had an Anglo-Catholic tutor.

I became a middle-of-the-road radical Anglican. I wasn't confirmed till I was appointed a master in 1947. I did not want it to be thought that I considered "*Paris is worth a Mass*" at a time when Anglicans had a certain advantage in public appointments.

My stepfather bought the same model Overland at the same time as my Grannie, and we enjoyed motoring not only the 20 miles to Rushford, but also to holidays. When Leslie reached 45 miles an hour on the street to Dunnington, the Overland was going flat out. It was a very comfortable car, except when it rained, as windscreen wipers had not been invented, nor trafficators, and cars still had running boards.

One holiday we went to visit Marie and stayed at a guesthouse in Barley, or somewhere near Royston. I think it was during that trip that I first saw Audley End and Cambridge. I remember a particularly prodigious farmhouse lunch before visiting Ely Cathedral. We had one other East of England holiday at Lowestoft, where we got up early to see the fish landed, and where we first learnt that car wheels don't like sand.

¹⁵ Obit Times December 1972

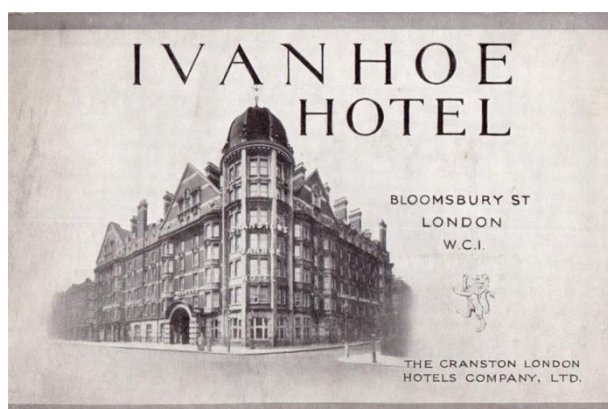
1924 Holiday in the Peak District

West House gave us a long weekend from Friday to Tuesday during the Whitsuntide period. In 1924, we had our first touring holiday, staying at the Buxton Haddon Hall Hydro. We saw the guest houses and superb scenery of the Peak District. I was amazed by the plethora of tiny fields, all in good condition, surrounded by stone walls and containing only grass.

1925 The Empire Exhibition

In a similar holiday in 1925, we did a tour of the Wye Valley, Symonds Yat, and the Monmouth Chepstow Road, which made a great impression. It's odd that these three or four days have stuck so long in my memory, or is it a normal case of irrational selection of events?

Leslie took Noel and me on our first visit to London for the Empire Exhibition, when we stayed for a day or two at a small Earls Court hotel. The perfumes of the East in the India pavilion made as much of an impression as anything!

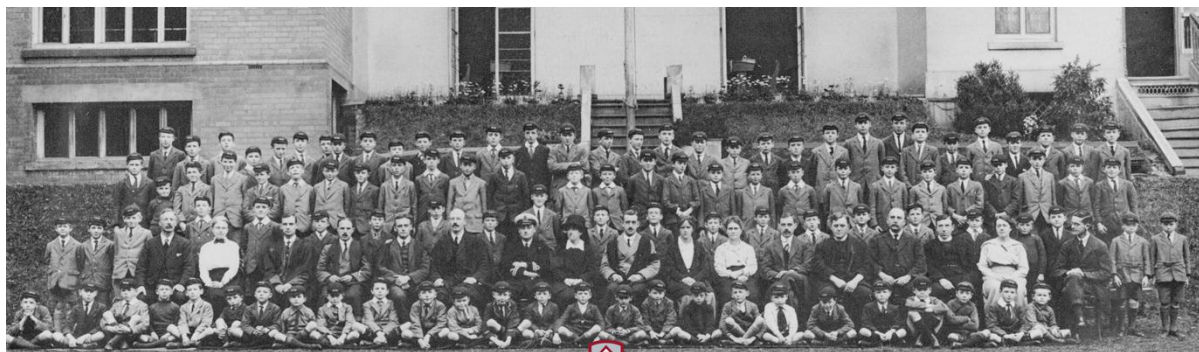


On this visit, possibly a later one to the Ivanhoe hotel in Bloomsbury, where the family always stayed, another deep impression was made by an apparent triviality. The shiny blackness of modern road surfaces is not caused by traffic volume. Not even a massive increase in traffic produces this effect.

Noel had gone to Bromsgrove School, as did many West House boys. He was at Elmhurst House, which I never visited. By coincidence, I was reminded on two occasions, much later, that the housemaster, Wallace Hadrill, had a son with whom I came into contact during the 1939 war. One of my many Spalding old boys. Brian Underwood was appointed to the Bromsgrove staff and lived there. Noel persuaded Mother to let him leave school when he was 16, and he started work at Lloyds Bank, not far from home, I think in 1925. It must have been about this time that we both had a holiday with Leslie at Llandudno and found ourselves chaperones. He was courting Hilda Cork, who turned up there. "*Autres temps, autres mœurs*".

1925 Tonbridge

To return to Tonbridge, in September 1925, I travelled, I think, for the first three years, till he left, with Michael Field, by the 2:30 train from New Street Station in Birmingham to Euston.



By the time we got there, it was 4:35; the train had not sped up since the turn of the century and would not do so for many years. We had a splendid tea, toasted tea cakes and a slab cake for a few pence. We then took a tube to Charing Cross, where on the first occasion, we discovered that it came out by the river, and the Strand was the station for the main line. The Southern Railway got us to Tonbridge by about six. Then there was a 20-minute walk to Hill Side.

The first time I got to Charing Cross, I surrendered my suitcase to a porter who put it on the train, and I never saw it again. Later, I was pulled out of class by a railway policeman for an interview. I think we got partial compensation.

I do not propose to expatiate on the school, as I possess a couple of its histories and a complete run of issues of *The Tonbridgian*. It was, I suppose, in the upper-middle rank of such schools, coming after Winchester, Eton, Harrow, Rugby, and Marlborough, along with many others such as Shrewsbury, Charterhouse, Uppingham, Repton, and Sherborne. It had one of the richest endowments, which enabled the governors, the Worshipful Company of Skinners, to keep the fees down. My hundred-pound scholarship went a long way to covering the fees.

Hill Side was unusual, as the boys had studies in their first term, although at first I found myself sharing with two others. There were two or three dormitories for juniors, but we soon graduated into cubicles. Hugh Sydenham Vere Hodge had been Housemaster since, I think, 1915. A Carthusian, he was a classical scholar of Trinity. He was a bachelor but employed a resident lady housekeeper, Miss Wright, a gentle, middle-aged person whose main topic of conversation, when she asked us to tea, was Bournemouth. She was known for some reason as "*Mater Bumpf*" or "*Mater B*".

Much more popular was the matron, Miss Perry, whom the Praepostors ventured to call "*Tom*".

Vere Hodge, who it was alleged was called "*Vera*" on the stock exchange, was called by us simply the "*Old Man*". He commanded the Officers Training Corps during the war. Now his main task was the Classical Lower Sixth. He set a very high standard, and also took a few English lessons with the Upper Sixth form.

He brought out a slim volume of poetry, later wrote a biography of the school's founder, Sir Andrew Judde and a long epic poem. He also translated Dante. He was an excellent schoolmaster and housemaster. He kept his own side of the house and left discipline to the Praepostors.

The only time I was beaten by him was with three or four others in the dormitory. It had been newly decorated, and a dirty mark appeared on the wall about 6 feet high. It had, in fact, been made by a projected banana skin.

We might have got away with it, but the perpetrator suggested it had been done by the maids who were making the beds. This unlikely defence was too much, and we suffered.

I think I was once beaten by the head of the house for an offence I can't remember. The brutal behaviour described in school stories up to 1914 was largely a thing of the past by then. Only the Head of House was supposed to administer beatings, and then only with the Housemaster's permission, but you will always get seventeen or eighteen-year-olds whose power goes to their heads.

Fagging was still a strong feature; for the first year, we had an individual praepostor as Fag master, whose shoes we cleaned, whose books we carried to school. His OTC uniform was the biggest chore. All fags had to answer the call of Kid, Boy or Fag.

There was some differentiation in these calls, which escapes me now. Usually, the last to arrive, but not inevitably, was given the task. Although fagging has ceased everywhere now, it was not an entirely evil system. Praepostors often spent a good deal of time working for the house in various ways, and we regarded it as just, at least by the time we were ourselves praepostors, to have something done for us.

Mention of school stories reminds me to correct the false impression most leave of the post-war period in the 20s. Such books are almost always written by rebels against the establishment, and their attacks on the system are often not justified by the facts.

The view that such schools were centres of philistinism did not apply to Tonbridge. Although several of the masters owed their position to wartime appointments and were laughingly incompetent, others were both cultured and able to pass on their culture to the boys. For instance, there was an excellent production of Shakespeare every December, in which the producer "Hoffy" Arnold was assisted by the well-known dramatist and author of the day, Clemence Dane (Miss Winifred Ashton).

In the two Winter terms, five classical music concerts featuring nationally known performers drew large audiences. The chapel choir was highly trained, and many boys learned a wide variety of musical instruments.

Unfortunately, art was not taught in many forms, and the art master was incompetent.

Nor was the importance of games excessively stressed; certainly, it was usual in those days to know and respect members of the school XV or XI, but the members were mostly neither "*Muddied Oafs*" nor "*Flannelled Fools*". The Head Boy, unusual as a day boy in my first year, T. L. (Leslie) Rowan, was in the XV and in the XI and the star of the hockey XI. He hit a six on his first ball at Lord's against Clifton College.

He later captained England on many occasions and was an Under Officer in the O.T.C. He won an open scholarship in modern languages to Queens' College, Cambridge.

Leslie Rowan eventually became Principal Private Secretary to Prime Minister Winston Churchill during the war, and to Attlee afterwards. I remember asking him at an Old Tonbridgian Dinner the year Jack Davies was chairman. I asked him what the difference was in working for two distinctly different prime ministers. He replied that there was none.

I believe he became Second Secretary at the Treasury, and at the time of the dinner, he was the chairman of Vickers. He died at the age of 59. He was knighted and is mentioned in Churchill's memoirs.

He was an example of what I've often noticed, the apparent injustice of the Almighty, in giving both brains and skill in games to some and neither to others.

The chapel still played a large part in daily life, with 15-minute services every day and morning and evening services every Sunday, the latter with visiting preachers. I was still a nonconformist, so I did not attend confirmation classes. These were admittedly like the OTC "*voluntary compulsory*" for Anglicans. The teaching stuck with some, and there was respectable attendance at the voluntary 8 am Holy Communion.

There were three chaplains; two were dead losses, but the third, Reverend Sydney Harvie-Clark, was excellent, although too High Church for some, and described by the father of one of my contemporaries as "*Damn Jesuit*".

I was lucky to have him as a tutor. We had a system of going round, in small groups, to a master's house during prep one evening a week for an hour or so. Although I always argued against his theological views and ritualism, he was a great civilising influence on me. He was a mathematical scholar of Trinity. In those days, Maths and Theology often seemed to go together, but he had wide interests.

Although I went to the OTC camp at the end of my first summer term, thereafter I only went at "Birdie" Clark's invitation, to the school mission camp held at school for a week at the beginning of the summer holidays. This is when boys from Tonbridge Club in St Pancras came for a holiday. The other master there was KT "Gus" Gemmill, for whom we developed admiration and affection.

It was to this club that Vere Hodge took a few of us for a weekend during term time. Although the St Pancras area did not look particularly slummy, it was said to be one of the poorest areas in London.

A sandpit left to the school by its founder, Sir Andrew Judde, had become an exceptionally valuable asset, from which the school derived a substantial income. This enabled the school fees to be kept comparatively low. That story about Judde's will is not corroborated by recent histories of the school.

During these weekends, there was always a visit to the orators at Hyde Park Corner and, on Sunday, to the Middlesex Street (Petticoat Lane) market. Jack Davies and I were placed in Classical Middle Fifth under "Bo" Herman, a rather scruffy old Etonian and Housemaster of Judde House. I took a rather long time to settle and only came eighth at Christmas, which disgusted Vere Hodge as Jack came top, and we moved into the Upper Fifts.

Of course, we were competing with boys several years older. One was Alec Hill, who was Head Boy the following year and later became famous as an international amateur golfer. He must have been about 17 when I was only 14.

I did a little better in the spring term and became second. I moved to the Upper Fifth for the summer term under G.P. Hoole, who was a kind master. He had a very long career at the school, ending as librarian many years later.

We took the school certificate in eight subjects at the end of term, and had to get five credits to matriculate. In particular, I got six, but I failed French and Divinity, subjects I later taught!

In the summer holidays, I had an appendicectomy, spent a fortnight in the nursing home on Pershore Road in Edgbaston, and then another fortnight in bed at home. Nowadays, it would be a couple of days.

So I went back at half term, not allowed to play games. I found the Classical Lower Six very hard. Vere Hodge was the form master who presided over a room in the tower above the gateway. We spent most of our time trying to construe Latin and French authors or writing prose and verse in both languages.

As for games, I was rather too small for rugby but enjoyed it. In the spring term, I came into my own on the hockey field. I was reasonably good at long-distance cross-country running. I also played fives. At cricket, I was in the Junior Colts under Birdie, but I did not make the grade and ever after played in the House leagues, despite a top score of 83.

As for personal relations, we were confined in those days almost entirely to our few contemporaries in the House. As we grew older, we became closer friends with people in Hill Side. My greatest friend was John J. Nottidge¹⁶, who was one of the top two scholars the year after me. Hill Side got more than its fair share, a tribute to Vere Hodge. I stayed with John in Essex, and he came to Scotland with my parents, and we had a walking tour together. I met him at Oxford, where he was a closed Sir Thomas White scholar at St John's. This was open to Tonbridge students, but I did not win the prize. I went to his wedding to Helen in the early part of the war. He was killed flying for the RAF, a fate shared by many of my Hill Side contemporaries.

Outside the house, I met Gerald Goodban in the Upper Fifth, and he has remained my greatest friend these last 55 years (as at 1981). He will feature in these memoirs later on.

In my third, fourth, and fifth years, I was in the Classical Upper Sixth under J. E. Taylor. It was fashionable then to appoint a young man, fairly well straight from Oxbridge, to such a position. The theory was that he would be up to date with the Don's requirements for classical scholarships.

The JET was a most conscientious but uninspiring teacher, with whom Gerald and I remained friends till his death. He followed his father as Headmaster of Sir Walter St John's School, Battersea. Iris and I once

¹⁶ John Jepson Nottidge (1912-1941)

visited him for a school play. He then went on to a large grammar school in Bedford, with an odd name: Bedford Modern School. We visited him there, too.

We still had Latin and French verses with Vere Hodge. Gerald, Jack Davies and I would go to his dining room at Hill Side one evening a week, when he scratched out our efforts with multicoloured chalks. Milton was his great love, and when I once complained that some lines of his were obscure, he remarked in shock tones. "*Woodley, you must approach Milton on bended knee*".

I had this nickname from a recent play, "*Young Woodley*" by John Van Druten, in which the hero falls in love with his housemaster's wife. As Vere Hodge was a confirmed bachelor, he was not embarrassed by my nickname. It was said of him, and he himself may have been the source of this, that when he retired, he would have two pillars to his gate, inscribed respectively NBB and NBW (*no bloody boys and no bloody women*).

Although I did not fall in love with his non-existent wife, Michael Field did fall in love with Mary Sloman, the Head's wife. I think he must have blurted it out to the Head himself, who behaved very sensibly. I had to go to tea with Mrs Sloman as a kind of chaperone for Michael, and all passed off calmly.

Sloman was a Classical Scholar of Rugby and Balliol, but impressed us as being able to teach the Modern Upper Sixth as well. He had published a translation of some Maupassant stories.

He was rather cold in his outward manner and never courted popularity. He was famous for passing the buck with his remark, "*That's not my pigeon*". I had a short interview while enduring the entrance scholarship exam. He must have taught the odd lesson during my first year. I never forgave him for accusing me of having a Birmingham accent.

He taught us occasionally in the Upper Sixth. He had school praepostors to dinner when we were instructed in the use of finger bowls.

It is often said that a school is only as good as its Headmaster. In public schools, then, and I imagine today as well, the Housemaster had far greater influence on the boys.

The other master who took us in the Upper Sixth was D. C. Somerville, who might be described as the school's statutory eccentric.

David was a tall man with a small head, which nonetheless had room for a large brain and an inimitable squeaky voice. He always wore a very faded green woollen tie and several pullovers. He would enter the classroom and remark, "*It's very hot in here*," then remove several pullovers, leave the bottom one on, and put the others back on. He also wore the statutory cloth cap, worn by horsey gentlemen, stable boys, and school masters. He once left it behind and came back moments later, quoting Shakespeare, "*it's a poor thing but my own*". We often quoted this, changing the last two words to '*Minoan*'.

He was a distinguished populariser of history. I remember his "*Disraeli and Gladstone*", innumerable little red books used for "special periods" in the school certificate history course, and his famous potted version of Arnold Toynbee's Magnum Opus, "*A Study of History*," on the rise and fall of civilisations.

He taught us two periods of modern history and let us choose the subject. One year, we did American History, which must have been a rare subject in those days. He instructed us, "*The intelligent boy will inevitably read 'Siegfried - America comes of age'*", so we did. America, he said, was the only country to become decadent before it had become civilised. Was this the original by Bernard Shaw, or by whom?

We also went individually to his house to read an English essay to him about once a fortnight. I have preserved my efforts with his pithy comments. He often took boys on a walking holiday. In one year, he invited Jack Davies, the younger Hunter Browne, and me to Snowdonia, which was an exciting experience.

Here are a few random memories of life at Hill Side. When I first went there, the dormitory cubicles on the third and fourth floors were over the studios, ground and first floor, and several yards short of the present building, leaving a small yard on the way to the lavatory block. Here we played yard cricket with a softball, and the fire escape was a marvellous hazard.

There were no showers then, just a weekly hot bath and a large square bath known as the Toe Fug, into which half a dozen boys at a time would clamber after rugby. In the room was a gas ring, upon which we brewed up for the praes and later for ourselves.

The other favourite game was *Hot Rice*, which was played in the orchard on summer evenings, "Jet-outs" for about 20 minutes between first and second prep. This was also played with the tennis ball, which one threw at the "*piggy in the middle*", who must have had, I'm vague about this, some sort of stick to ward it off.

Then there were OTC Field Days, which were inevitable farces from the military point of view, but a welcome break from the daily routine.



We went to Ashdown Forest and Knole Park at Sevenoaks, amongst other forgotten places, and invariably failed to make any contact with the enemy. We had blank cartridges in our Short Lee-Enfield Mark II rifles. These came in handy for blowing up the uneatable sandwiches and the gristly pies. I can remember one occasion when I had reached the dizzy rank of Sergeant or Company Sergeant Major, sending a message to Gerald Goodban, "*I have lost all my platoon (or company), but I'm carrying on*".

My other trip to Sevenoaks was by bus on Sunday morning, after Chapel, for lunch with Grannie, who was staying with the Frame family. They had a house there on return from the Belgian Congo, where Uncle Will had been a Baptist missionary. Auntie Daisy was actually my mother's cousin and had brought up six children.

We had met these only once during a holiday at Croyde Bay in Devon. One of them, Peggy, I was to catch up with later in Peterborough, where her husband, John Mowat, was an English master at the King's School. Grannie also came to Tonbridge for a Sunday Chapel service.

Mention of Sevenoaks recalls the famous walk led by Birdie Clarke. When in company with one or two others, we started from behind Hill Side, had a good view of Ightham Mote, went onto One Tree Hill, then visible from the Hill Side dining room, and through the park of Knole House to a well-earned tea provided by Birdie at Sevenoaks Hotel, then a bus for the 7 miles home.

Halfway through my time, Vere started the Hill Side Letter, of which I have kept every copy. I was privileged to contribute to the hundredth issue, so anyone interested can read more about my life there, or in The Tonbridgian.

At the beginning of my third year, I went into the Classical Upper Sixth, along with Jack Davies and Gerald Goodban. In the first year, we sat at the back and watched Humphrey Ellis (HFE of Punch) bait JET, along with others senior to us. I recall a boy called Samuel being upbraided, "*Samuel, Samuel, speak Lord, for thy servant heareth*" (1 Samuel 3:9).

1930 School Exams and Prizes

We took the Higher Certificate (cf. GCE Advanced level) in Latin, Greek, and Ancient History three times, in 1928, 1929 and 1930. This was not as soul-destroying as it seems. There were different set books, periods of history, harder prose and unseen passages of English poetry to be turned into Latin and Greek verse. We had time for a little English Literature and Modern History, as well as Divinity.

I also worked during the holidays and won special prizes, which involved, for instance, a close study of the Epistle to the Romans, undoubtedly the most influential letter ever written. I also studied some fine English novels, among them the works of Arnold Bennett and George Meredith, as well as Shakespeare's Othello.

In my fourth year, I was a House Prae, and in my last year, Head of House or School Prae. I had some success in the cross country "*Cras*", some 5 1/2 miles, but never got beyond a more modest level at Rugger. I got into the hockey XI and was given colours by John "Grummitt" Crofton. We beat Cranleigh and

Wellington as far as I recall, but our standard was not as high as the outstanding hockey schools of that era, Marlborough, The Leys, and Saint Lawrence College Ramsgate. Hill Side won the house cup six times, largely through its contingent of West House boys.

In my last term, I finally earned two distinctions in the Higher Certificate, even though I had always passed three subjects in the two previous years. I was granted a leaving exhibition with £75 in the previous winter. I had failed to get a Closed Sir Thomas White scholarship at St John's College, Oxford, but won an Open Classical Exhibition at Sidney Sussex College, Cambridge, worth £40.

In those days, these two sums went a long way toward covering my expenses at Cambridge. My mother did not have to pay very much at all for the first few years. However, when I switched to modern languages in my third and fourth years, the weeks I spent in France and Germany during the Easter and Long Vacations significantly increased the costs.

That summer, 1930, I went abroad for the first time. Two Hill Side friends, Dick Stevens, Dudley Dinnis and I had the most enjoyable holiday in the Black Forest. After Trinity, Cambridge, Dick Stevens became a geriatrics specialist on the south coast. Dudley Dinnis was ordained and was for many years Chaplain at Wellington.

We went by train to Strasbourg, across the Rhine on foot, to Kehl, where we met our first example of German officiousness at the frontier. Then through Freiberg to the wilds of the forest, and the joys of the Jugendherbergen (youth hostels) at about one Mark (~5p) a night. In the holidays, I also had my last four Mission camps at Tonbridge and a “tete-a-tete” dinner with Vere Hodge, which made me feel very grown-up.

1930 University of Cambridge

In October, I went up to Sidney, C4 Hall Court, on the top floor, with roof access, for about £4 per term. I was diligent in attending lectures and tutorials with Reginald Hackforth, Sidney's classical fellow, who, like JE Taylor, was a conscientious but far from inspiring tutor. He was afterwards Lawrence Professor of Ancient Philosophy at Cambridge.

I did win a prize of quite a lot of books, chosen by myself, for a First in “Mays”, which is the Tripos preliminary examination.

1932 France and Germany

In 1932, I only got a Second in the Classical Tripos Part I. The class was not divided into two divisions. I did not like the prospect of further specialising in Philosophy or any of the other Part II options, so I got permission to switch to the Faculty of Medieval and Modern Languages.

They decided that I should omit Part I and spend two years studying French and German literature. This covered 17th and 19th century French literature and 18th to 19th century German literature. I was tutored in

Wyndham Woodward memoirs

French by Thomas S Wyatt, Fellow of Sidney, and in German by Roy Pascal of Pembroke, a communist who later became a Professor at Birmingham.

It was hard work, as I had to learn the languages before I could read the extensive literature at any speed or with any real understanding. I obtained a 2:1 in 1934; this was probably the only instance during my studies that I had such dual qualifications.

During the long vacation of 1932, I spent about six weeks each in France and Germany, staying at addresses provided by the Faculty. In France, I lodged with the Curé-Doyen of Briennon-sur-Yonne, a small town or large village in Central France.

The Curé was old and not a born teacher, but he corrected my prose. Since he did not speak English, my French conversation improved fairly rapidly. Each evening, the two of us, along with two others, played bridge. One was his blind organist, who managed very well with pricked cards, and the fourth was his other lodger, who worked all day at a tanning factory, whose essence we could not ignore.

I had a bicycle and explored the rather dull countryside, often bathing in the neighbouring river. One particular memory is of the Curé celebrating his golden jubilee as a priest. He kindly invited me, along with his colleagues from miles around, to a special lunch, my first experience of a four-hour French meal.

I think I must have gone home for the SCM Swanwick conference, then went out to Wiesbaden to stay with Frau Behmanburg and her two sons at 20 Nerotal.



I remember coming out of the station and not realising it was a side entrance, so I could not find a taxi, even though there seemed to be lots of nannies and soldiers. I ended up taking a horse-drawn cab. “Mutti”

Behmanburg, a very kind war widow, insisted that I take some medicine labelled “*Blut*,” thinking I was anaemic.

*Wiesbaden 1932
Behmanburg family*



Her sons were keen Nazis, and I even had my photo taken wearing their uniform. I had no sympathy for them, of course; in fact, we took the Nazi-Communist strife rather light-heartedly. On walks, when we saw a member of the Hitlerjugend, we would raise our fists and shout, “*Heil Moskau!*” I spent hours sitting in the shade in the garden, trying to master German grammar, with twenty-nine examples of a rule to which there were thirty-one exceptions, or vice versa, depending on which book we used.

We took walks in the Taunus Forest. I spent a night in Heidelberg with a long-forgotten relative of my Swiss great-aunt Marguerite, where I experienced for the first time the enormous, thick bed coverings that were, I suppose, the forerunners of the modern duvet.

1933 Back to Cambridge¹⁷

In my second year, I was the college secretary of the Student Christian Movement, then one of the strongest organisations at many universities, a counterpart to the prominent established Christian Unions.

I was also the college hockey secretary. This allowed me to stay in college. In those days, there was only room for second- or third-year scholars and games officers. I had a large room on the B staircase. I was able to take my turn entertaining the Lunatics, one of several Sidney Sunday-night play-reading groups. I was vetted for this at a tea party and apparently passed muster. We were proud that the Master, the saintly George Arthur Weekes, later a successful Vice-chancellor, had been a member in his undergraduate days.

We also had Tom Wyatt and Robert Angus, an engineering don and rowing coach, to give us respectability. We had coffee and beer sent up from the buttery and enjoyed ourselves without breaking anything, and also read really good plays.

The hockey secretaryship, however, was a blessing in disguise at a small college where perhaps only 20 or so played hockey, and some also played rugby. With usually two inter-college matches a week, I would post the team, only to find several last-minute scratchings. So I used to wander around in the mornings, trying to find substitutes, and this may well have affected the quality of my classical inputs, though I don't wish to make excuses and never regarded myself as a strong candidate for a First in any case.

The SCM involved study groups in colleges, breakfasts at the Dorothy Café, where a distinguished speaker would hold forth, but always stopping in time for the 9 o'clock lectures, as well as committee meetings of all the college representatives. The president was Oliver Tompkins, whom I first met at a pre-terminal conference at High Leigh Christian Conference Centre, Hoddesdon. To my surprise, I was elected to succeed him and took office in the summer term, ready for serious work in the autumn.

As I was also President of the Baptist Society, the Robert Hall Society and college hockey captain, I was pretty busy in my third year. In my fourth year, I moved to 1 Carlyle Road with Brian Thynne. I had fewer distractions.

I had an excellent secretary, Derrick Underwood, and a senior Australian as treasurer. The college reps included Alan Youatt, later a neighbour in Shropshire, where he was Head of Whitchurch Grammar School, and Eric Briault, who became head of the Education Services in London.

I often went to the Union debates on Tuesday evenings to hear undergraduates, many of whom later became well-known in politics and other fields. There were visiting cabinet ministers and other

17 Ed. A ticket shows SWW takes a Russian ship Felix Dersinski on 26th September 1933 from Hamburg, 2nd class on the to Hull.

distinguished speakers. I remember the crime writer Edgar Wallace making a hash of a speech on the motion “*Delenda est Chicago*.” I also went regularly to performances at the avant-garde Festival Theatre.

In my first long vacation, I joined the well-known fruit-picking campaign at Wisbech, led by Wilfred Knox. My name had been passed on by Birdie Clarke, as they were both members of the Oratory of the Good Shepherd, whose house Wilfred ran in Cambridge.

You went to tea with rock buns once a term and then had a private chat with Wilfred Knox. He was as high an Anglo-Catholic as Bertie, yet he refrained from trying to convert me from my Baptist upbringing. He was one of the four famous sons of a low-church Bishop’s of Manchester. His brothers were, respectively, Evoe, an atheist editor of *Punch*; Ronnie, a Roman Catholic convert and the most well-known Roman Catholic priest in England; and Dilly Knox, a cryptographer who helped decode German signals at Bletchley Park in 1939.

Wilfred regularly took a party of undergraduates to look after the Cockney Fruit pickers at Wisbech. My job was to serve soft drinks in the evenings, though other, more experienced men helped to intervene in knife fights and other fracas.

In subsequent long vacations, I naturally went to the SCM conferences at the Hayes Centre in Swanwick, Derbyshire.



Several hundred students attended, divided into two groups, with a few days in between to allow the staff and student leaders to recover. The men slept in tents, while the women stayed in the house. At that time, most of the Bishop’s on the Bench and the Free Church leaders had been through the SCM. It subsequently went through a sticky period, being nobbled by politicians, but is now, in 1982, on the rise again. It was sometimes affectionately known as “*Students Correctly Matched*” or the “*Society for Courtship of Marriage*”, and it certainly lived up to its name in my case.

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For the rest of my second long vacation, I went to Paris to continue my French studies, then on to Hamburg for German. My memories of Paris then are rather vague; I stayed at the YMCA and enjoyed simple fare. I also attended a Cambridge-run vacation course at Easter, and eventually came to know Paris quite well. I heard about the Hamburg family, the Hagedorns, through my Sidney friend Brian Thynne, who had stayed with them the previous year.

It was in the summer term that I taught for a few weeks at the now-defunct public school, Weymouth College. It was at the invitation of the headmaster AG “Podgie” Pite, whom I had met at a SCM conference. It was to test my vocation. In the middle, I had to dash up to Glasgow to be with my mother when my stepfather died suddenly whilst visiting his Laing relations.

Frau Hagedorn, like Mutti Behmanburg, was a war widow. She lived in a large house in Eppendorf, at 142



Ericastrasse, with a garden that went down to a small lake, the Muhlenteich, now a public park.

She supported herself and her two sons, Egmont and Hans Hermann, by taking in paying guests. One of the others was a Nazi schoolmistress, and as Hitler had come to power that year, 1933, we had to be careful about what we said. Soon, I became friends with the two boys and have kept up with them for over 50 years¹⁸.

Hamburg was a lovely city, and it was a great joy to take the steamer from Eppendorf through the Outer and Inner Alster lakes to the city centre and harbour. We had Sunday expeditions down the Elbe to Blankenese and Finkenwerder and by train to Bismarck's house. I was most impressed by the size of Bismarck's thigh boots; he must have been a terrifying man. I also worked hard at my German, going for lessons to a school friend of Egmont's, Leseberg, who was a Jew and very poor. Later, he managed to escape to England. We only saw him once at his house in Epping Forest, but Egmont visited him there many times.

I got a 2:1 in part two at the tripos in 1934 and started looking for a teaching job. Vere Hodge had kindly written to Winchester, Rugby and Shrewsbury on the off chance of a vacancy. I stayed the night with the Headmaster of Rugby and lunched with the Head of Shrewsbury, but nothing came of it.

In any case, I was off for a two-year appointment as intercollegiate secretary of the Student Christian Movement at Manchester University, and the then College of Technology, now UMIST. I lived out at Toc H, Victoria Park. We paid what we could afford, in my case, 35 shillings a week out of the salary of £180.

The SCM was rather weak, and I was not very successful in promoting it, though I did achieve some results. Robert Mackie, the General Secretary, was very helpful. I ran a mission. One of the speakers was Father Groser, a famous left-wing Anglo-Catholic from East London who had been left lying in the gutter with his head cracked during the 1926 General Strike. I tried to get the Professor of History, the well-known EF Jacob, to speak, but he seemed to lack a sense of humour and refused when he heard that the title was to be Henry Ford's famous remark, "*history is bunk*".

We had a Senior Friends Committee, which met once a term under the chairmanship of Bishop's Guy Warman. He gave me valuable insight into how to run a committee. He seemed to have successive meetings at three, four, and five o'clock, and each ended precisely on the hour in time for the next one.

I enrolled as a student so I could join the union and play hockey. I was too busy to attend many of Professor John Stocks' philosophy lectures. Stocks himself had been a hockey player, but he died young. His widow later became well known as Baroness Stocks and an educationalist.

I was befriended by the Vice Chancellor Sir Walter Moberly's wife, Gwendolen, Lady Moberly, who used to invite me to take a tete-a-tete lunch at their house, the Firs in Withington nearby.

¹⁸ Hans Hermann Hagedorn became an established artist. His painting of Sue & Clare Woodward hangs in our hall.

I played hockey for the university, mostly against clubs in the northwest. I remember my first glimpse of rural Shropshire while playing in Market Drayton, watching lambs being born just beyond the touchline. We also played other modern universities in cup ties. I got as far as the semi-final, when we were beaten by Bristol.

The universities combined to form the University Athletic Union, and I was chosen to play for the combined team against Oxford Occasionals and Cambridge Wanderers. I had a final trial at Cambridge, but did not get a Blue and was compensated with membership of the Wanderers.

The Oxford match was scratched, but at Cambridge I put in a feeble shot which somehow dribbled past the goalkeeper. This was described in the Manchester Guardian as an “unstoppable shot” and gave me an insight into journalistic accuracy. I played occasionally in Lancashire trials and afterwards for Hertfordshire. For the Wanderers, I once scored four goals against Felsted, but I was really out of my depth in top-class hockey.

My counterpart at Liverpool University was Alan Booth, who later became Director of Christian Aid, and we exchanged visits. I met other colleagues from the North at the North of England Council in Newcastle. My wife and I must have met briefly in 1934, but we did not acknowledge each other's existence until the 1936 conference.

The Newcastle secretary, F. E. Baguley, (“Baggs”) brought Iris to the conference, convinced that either Alan Booth or I would fall for her. He was right in my case, and after three days, my mind was made up. I employed the time-honoured ruse of taking photographs, which gave me the excuse to send Iris the prints. She wrote back to Manchester. We arranged to meet when I found some excuse to drive to Newcastle in the family's Austin 12, which I had borrowed for a day out to the Roman Wall. That was sufficient for me, although Iris always claimed that I had made no formal proposal but had simply taken our marriage for granted. For the actual proposal, we had to wait another three and a half years.



Between the two summer Swanwick conferences, we both enjoyed a work camp. The women cooked for the men who went to level waste ground in a village a mile away to make a playground. The men slept in tents at Swanwick in those days and were also fed in camp. I particularly remember trying to grow a beard in competition with Robin Woods, slightly junior to me in Cambridge, who became Dean of Windsor and Bishop's of Worcester. We never met again until Robert Mackie's 80th birthday party in Dunkeld in 1979.

Iris and I went to Hamburg together, landing at Cuxhaven and staying with the Hagedorns. We exchanged visits between Gosforth and King's Heath. I leave her to write about her own family and early life.

Throughout the spring of 1936, I was still working in Manchester and had begun looking for a teaching post. Several interviews were fruitless because of high unemployment, and positions went to those with experience. It was not until June that I secured a job through the Cambridge Appointments Board at Bishop's Stortford College, teaching modern languages. By an extraordinary coincidence, Gerald Goodban was appointed through the Oxford Board to teach classics there.

We were always in touch, of course, during the four years at university and during the two years with SCM. He was President of Oxford in the year I was President of Cambridge, and later served as a travelling secretary in the south of England.

The headmaster, H. Leo Price, was a famous rugby and hockey international. He once scored a try for England without anyone else touching the ball. He himself was an Old Stortfordian and very shy, despite his fame. He was a conscientious head who supported me as I learned the trade. He was only in his mid-forties when he died, while I was away at war.

Gerald and I had a hilarious day looking for digs. The landlords who proved unable to take us were named Mrs Base, Parrot and Cheesewright. We were just about to clinch a deal with the fourth boarding house when we discovered she referred to boarders as “dogs”. We eventually got a large double bedroom and a small study at the Foxley Hotel, which was just opening. I think it was two guineas a week all found, and our salary was proclaimed to be above the Burnham Scale at £240 instead of £234.

There was a slight hitch when the modern linguist I was supposed to succeed withdrew his acceptance to another post. However, Leo nobly fitted me in, though I had to teach various other subjects, including maths, which, luckily, presented no problem at the required level.

The college was what would be called a minor public school, founded in 1876 as a non-conformist school, though some of the boarders attended the local congregational chapel and others the Parish Church on Sunday mornings. A short assembly was held in the Italianate hall every morning, and a service for all boarders on Sunday evenings.

There was a small but devoted staff. Bobby Sutton, the second master and mathematician, had a dry humour and suffered with great tolerance the influx of not only Gerald and me, but also Bill Jones, history and rugby, and Peter Madge, biology and rugby.

Charles Mellows, a classics scholar, was extremely eccentric. He was universally known as “Chassis”, to quote a malapropism of a current Irish play, and his life was in a permanent state of chaos. He had a superb rock garden in the school grounds and used to work on it, while delinquent boys paraded up and down, reciting in repetition. He was a bachelor and extremely shy. He would pass acquaintances, particularly women, silently and only begin a conversation as he backed away.

Charles was Gerald’s senior, while mine was Walter Strachan, a schoolmaster with exceptionally broad cultural interests beyond his specialisms in French and German. The Head of the Prep School was Norman Monk-Jones, a close friend (along with his wife Betty) and a left-wing atheist who nevertheless lived a very Christian life.

The school had a reasonably high academic standard, and several boys won Oxford and Cambridge awards and entrances. The word Oxbridge did not become current until much later.

The games, including hockey, were quite good. In swimming, it was one of the top four, as far as I recall, its only rivals were Harrow, Felsted and Barnard Castle.

Perhaps the greatest strength was in its hobbies. I helped Walter with an architectural hobby. We cycled around the countryside, and in the winter, made models from dental plaster supplied by a dentist friend. I

also started a path-finding hobby. All I can remember is the instruction to offer a threepence as compensation for damage if caught trespassing! I believe there was some legal justification for this.

There were plenty of trips abroad. I went with Walter and a group of boys to Paris. We also travelled there with the Oliver Prior Society, which Walter persuaded me to join. The society was named after the famous Cambridge professor of French, whose lectures I had attended. We enjoyed a “vin d’honneur” not only at the Hôtel de Ville, but also at the British Embassy.

1938 Marriage

At the end of the summer term in 1938, Iris and I were married. We were able to afford this because my Grannie and Auntie Hilda had died and left us a little money. Unfortunately, my mother was ill with what later turned out to be cancer and could not come to Gosforth. Gerald came as my best man, and my sister-in-law, Renée, as bridesmaid. We had a marvellously hot and sunny honeymoon at the Railway Hotel at the Kyle of Lochalsh¹⁹. We returned to live at 28 Maze Green Road, almost opposite the college. We bought it as it was being built for £880.

Later, we bought a few square yards of meadow below the garden for £9, plus £9 in solicitor’s fees, to prevent any building there. Shortly after the honeymoon, we went on a cycling holiday with a few of the boys in the New Forest. Then Hans Hermann came to stay. When the Munich crisis began, he could not decide whether to stay or return home if war broke out. He chose to go home, and war did not break out for another year.

1939 Last Pre-war Holiday

In the Easter holiday of 1939, we had our first motoring holiday abroad. We took Mother’s Austin 10 and brought her and my sister-in-law with us. We had an excellent tour of the châteaux and stayed at the Hôtel Quai Voltaire in Paris.

During the summer holidays, we took several boys from the college, accompanied by a colleague, David Yoshimoto. David later became a schoolmaster in Oxford and changed his surname to Newton. We travelled to Val d’Isère and stayed at the same hotel in Paris on our way home.

On 1st September 1939, we took Mother up to Glasgow to begin a holiday in Scotland. We stayed with my stepfather’s relatives, but on the 3rd of September, war was declared. We came straight home, stopping only in Edinburgh and Newcastle to visit other relatives.

¹⁹ Ed. Clare & I stayed at the same hotel many years later. We asked whether they kept any old visitors’ books, they had them all. We found that Wyndham has signed SWW, but Iris had signed “Iris Calvert”.

1940 Army

Stortford College had not previously had an OTC but had now formed a cadet force. I was commissioned into the Beds and Herts, but for some unknown reason, it was not a King's Commission. When I was called up, having been reserved as a schoolmaster until October 1940, I could not automatically join the officer ranks. I toyed with the idea of volunteering for the Field Security Police, later renamed Field Security Personnel and incorporated into the Intelligence Corps. Someone warned me about the lack of promotion in the FSP, so I took my chances and was called up in the ranks to the 39th Signal Training Regiment, Royal Artillery.

After 10 days at Colchester, we had a 13-hour train journey to a disused mill between Whalley and Clitheroe in Lancashire. We spent several months there, square-bashing, learning Morse, signalling, and learning to drive a lorry. I was instructed in driving by a young officer who had been only nine years old when I took my first licence in 1928.

We found the Lancashire people very hospitable, giving us baths and supper. At one house to which I was invited, I found a photograph of George Musson, who had been Head Boy at Tonbridge in my last year. My hostess turned out to be his sister.

One of my squad was Rodrigo Moynihan, who drew my portrait for a guinea in a noisy dormitory containing around 70 beds. He later became a famous Royal Academician. I had something in common with the Queen, though he painted her twice. It probably cost them a lot more to have her portraits cleaned; in 1987, my drawing cost £46 to be cleaned.

I achieved the exalted rank of Recruit Lance Bombardier. I was then sent to an Officer Cadet Training Unit (OCTU) at Larkhill on Salisbury Plain, where we trained our First World War guns on Stonehenge.

I was commissioned exactly a year after my call-up. I was summoned to Colonel Delahaye's office and told I was to be in the Intelligence Corps and was no longer a gunner. The HQ was at Oxford. I slept in Pembroke and messed in Oriel when the Provost unkindly described our badge as a "*pansy resting on its laurels*". In fact, it was a Tudor Rose.

We learnt to cycle up the perpendicular hills in South Oxford. My companion was FJ Stott, who later became a German Don at Cambridge. I had a course in interpreting at a farm in Cambridge, living in St John's. I had an exciting weekend when I had to play the part of a German spy landing on the East Coast. The object was to see how quickly the forward infantry could get me back to Brigade or Division without wasting time in ineffective interrogation. I stayed in a Norwich hotel and managed to get off the train at Bishop's Stortford on my way back to Oxford.

1942 Military Intelligence

In August, Iris and my mother came down to see me at Larkhill. We were staying at the Amesbury Hotel when I was told the wonderful news that Iris was expecting our first baby. Later, in Oxford, the adjutant there, the Earl of Northesk, was kind enough to grant me compassionate leave when Stephen was born on 29th April 1942.

Soon after, I was posted to MI 14, Military Intelligence (Germany), at the War Office in Whitehall, where I worked two floors below ground. At first, I stayed in a hotel in Lancaster Gate, which was not much fun under wartime rationing. I soon decided to commute from Stortford. The 7:30 am to Liverpool Street and a number 9 or 11 bus got me to Whitehall early enough.

I worked with the elderly schoolmaster called Friedrichsen, revising the German military dictionary. We went through captured German documents. I specialised in artillery terms and must have known more than anyone else about German words for ballistics, such as “*jump*” and “*droop*”. The shell apparently does both as it leaves the barrel.

I also spent some time in an office that handled day-to-day operations on the Russian front. There, I used to listen to the dulcet Italian tones of Aubrey Jones, apparently speaking on the telephone to a girlfriend. He later came to Tunis on his way to Sicily. From Sicily, he sent us a telegram back to North Africa a few days later: “*I have the Mafia taped.*” This told us more about him than about the Mafia. The son of a Welsh miner, he became a Conservative MP for Birmingham and later a Conservative minister.

One day in this office, the officer who normally took Churchill the situation map on the eastern front was absent, so I had to go. It was off Downing Street, well below ground. It was exciting, though I could not catch a glimpse of the Old Man. At that time, the front tended to move only a few miles east or west. The map was so small that the chalk mark must have increased by a few miles more than the daily changes. Winston could not have learnt much.

In the summer of 1942, I was sent to the now-famous Room 055 and interviewed by a very pleasant Scottish baronet called Robert MacKenzie²⁰. I recall going on to another room where I signed the Official Secrets Act. I was then told to meet my new boss at London Coach Station, from which we were transported to St Albans.

There, I discovered that I had been taken into what the War Office called MI6, also known as SIS, the Secret Intelligence Service. Its main London headquarters operated under the cover title of the Government Communications Bureau. The Section V camp for counter-espionage was at Glenalmond House, backing onto Verulamium Park in St Albans. Both Kim Philby and Graham Greene worked there, analysing intercepted German intelligence.

²⁰ Sir Robert Evelyn MacKenzie, 12th Baronet of Coul (1906–1990)

At first, I had lodgings with a family called Sweeting, but I soon managed to rent a house in Sandpit Lane and brought Iris and Stephen over. We have a photograph of Stephen with my mother there. We succeeded in renting our Stortford house to an actress playing the lead in “*No Orchids for Miss Blandish*”, whose child and nanny smashed quite a few things.

I had a very pleasant walk to the centre of the city, past the Abbey Gateway, down a path to the famous Cockpit Inn. From this path, one could see a young girl lying on a bed in the garden under a protective canopy. This was the treatment for tuberculosis: as much fresh air as possible.

My work was a deadly secret, and I could not even tell Iris about it until a few years ago, when it suddenly became possible to speak and write openly about the codebreaking at Bletchley Park.

I sat next to Robert; the only other occupant was Eric DuVivier, English, but partly Belgian and bilingual. It was here that I became conversant with the “In, Out, and Pending” tray technique. Robert would read a document from the in-tray and mark its next destination. I would note this and put it in the Out tray. A charming young Mayfair-type secretary would then remove it. This system of instruction, called “*sitting next to Annie*”, is the quickest and best way to learn.

The head of Section V was Felix Cowgill, though you wouldn't have deduced it from his initials on his memos. Cowgill was resistant to sharing intelligence with the Americans. We would sometimes receive a memo with a scribbled “C” in green ink. This was from “C”, Major General Sir Stewart Menzies, the CSS Chief of the Secret Service or “the Firm” as we called it. I liked Felix and his deputy, both formerly Indian Civil Service Police. He and his wife entertained his staff at his nearby house.

I remember, in particular, Eric DuVivier's excitement as the daily decoded messages from the Abwehr, the German Secret Service, came in. They concerned an agent whom the Germans were preparing to drop into England. When he finally arrived, Eric was part of the reception committee.

It is certain that every single German agent in Britain was caught and either imprisoned, turned or executed. Those who were turned acted as double agents, sending deceptive messages to the Abwehr, which lapped them up, as we could see from subsequent decoded traffic.

At the end of October 1942, I went up to Glasgow and boarded an old Greek ship together with a Field Security Section that served as my cover, along with the General and HQ of what I believe was the 78th Division. We sailed well out into the Atlantic to avoid U-boats before turning east to pass through the Strait of Gibraltar. We landed at Algiers a few days after Operation Torch, the Anglo-American invasion on November 8th.

It's interesting to recall that the four landing points were originally intended to be further east. The Americans were cautious, so the first Western landing was in Morocco. Had we landed at Tunis, I think we would have captured it without difficulty. But would we then have taken 300,000 Italian and German prisoners in the Cape Bon area, as we eventually did in May 1943?

I reported to my new boss, Major Trevor-Wilson. I think that was his rank, though he was certainly the least military of soldiers. Malcolm Muggeridge, the famous journalist, broadcaster, and publicist, passed through our office on his way home from Cairo. I met Muggeridge later in Paris, where he described Trevor as the finest intelligence officer he knew. Trevor-Wilson's later consular activities in the Far East were also defended by the novelist Graham Greene. I subsequently met Graham in Section V, the Spanish-Portuguese section.

1943 North Africa

Trevor-Wilson had clearly been in Algiers in peacetime and was very conversant with the local situation. The two of us took over the Italian consulate, and he knew all the best places to eat.

We liaised with Eisenhower's AFHQ at St. George's Hotel, up the hill above the city. The American Army soon took over the Consulate as a military hospital.



The most interesting decode I can remember was sent to us from London. It reported that two Frenchmen were coming via Gibraltar to assassinate Churchill, who was paying us a visit in January. Trevor-Wilson drove to the airport, La Maison Blanche, and escorted Churchill and his entourage along back roads to the city, and nothing untoward happened.

A few days later, the two Frenchmen turned up at our office. How they found us, I do not know. They claimed to wish to work for us, having pretended to the Germans that they were ready to work for them. We had no alternative but to hand them over to the French colleagues opposite, and I shudder to think of their fate.

I was sent on my own to liaise with British First Army HQ at Constantine, a remarkable city cleft in two by a huge chasm. I travelled in a staff car with Colonel Hill Dillon, a well-known Irish Horseman known as "Hill Billy". He was Eisenhower's IB British liaison officer, along with Colonel Chretien, his French counterpart.

I occupied part of an empty primary school and slept on a table in the headmistress's study. I never met her, but gathered that she was not amused. I paid daily visits to receive signals at Army HQ, but there was very little to do. I had my own code based on the keywords GIN and ANGOSTURA, but I never had to use it.

Trevor Wilson, two colleagues based in Morocco and Oran, and I were all granted the rather grand-sounding and high-falutin' titles of AFCILO, Allied Forces Counter-Intelligence Liaison Officers.

I worked daily with a local French security officer whose wife would occasionally feed us wild fowl and wild boar. He was soon joined by three or four Free French Secret Service officers who had come through the lines from Tunis. I messed with them and improved my French. They all used assumed names because their families were still in Tunis and could have been persecuted by the Italians or Germans. With them, I took my first trip in an aeroplane, a five-seater Goéland (Seagull), which flew at telegraph-pole height to avoid German flak (Fliegerabwehr-Kanone) when near the lines. We also made a long trip south to Touggourt to track down an alleged enemy agent. Nothing came of it, but it gave me my first real sense of Africa's sheer size.

Army intelligence officers are, of course, jealous of those whose secrets they do not know. Only a few intelligence officers and commanding generals, I believe, knew of the Enigma decodings. We had to wrap up messages with a formula such as "*an impeccable source reports...*".

The First Army HQ staff, to whom I was vaguely attached, had the idea, mistakenly, I believe, that the Germans knew about our plans. They suspected a French leak. They declared non-cooperation with the French. As I was living in the French mess and trusted them, I did not obey. HQ somehow found out, and I was threatened with expulsion from Africa. However, I survived without needing to appeal to Hill Billy at AFHQ in Algiers.

On Christmas Day 1942, there was a spy scare at Sétif, between Algiers and Constantine, where the line-of-communication HQ was located. So I had to drive out there in my Citroen (Traction Avant). Nothing came of it, but I had my Christmas lunch there in a very pleasant mess.

Line-of-communication troops are not generally popular because they are jealously regarded as out of danger. In fact, the Germans went so far as to dub them the "Etappenschweine". Years later, I discovered that Colonel Hayes, chairman of the governors at Wem, must also have been there.

I had the odd trip back to Algiers. Once it was with First Army IB, Major (G2) in my Humber command car, which had just arrived, though completely denuded of all unit equipment (presumably by the patriotic Irish Dockers at Liverpool).

We were summoned back one night by some panic at Army HQ to drive 250 miles over mountain roads on a wet surface at 3:30 am. I took over from my driver/Batman, an almost completely unintelligible Glaswegian. I hit the brakes too hard, and we rolled over a couple of times, fortunately not over a precipice,

but in a level field. The Major was cross, but we were all unhurt, and we were lucky enough to get a lift back in an army transport.

In mid-February, I went down towards Tebessa, where raw American troops faced fierce German counterattacks and were retiring rapidly. The tyres of my hastily requisitioned civilian car gave way in the middle of nowhere. I heard the sound of a half-truck and crawled up above the road. I discovered another road about to join it, which was clearly still under Allied control, and fortunately, a lift home came at just the right time.

I was in Algiers at the end of February 1943, when Monty's 8th Army had advanced west as far as Tripoli. I flew with letters to Monty from Eisenhower's HQ. Taking some French colleagues, we flew far south over the desert before turning east and then north to Tripoli. In the midst of vast areas of sand, we could see the small patch of bright green where Mussolini had managed to bring back into cultivation a little of what had been the Granary of Ancient Rome. I later managed to visit one of the ruined Roman cities in the midst of the desert.

We landed in Tripoli just in time to see an enormous explosion on the other side of the tarmac when a poor Beaufighter RAF crew must have bought it. I stayed for the night in a requisitioned hotel opposite the harbour. During dinner, as British officers were being served by Italian waiters, the Germans began bombing the harbour. It was oddly amusing to see the waiters dive for cover while the diners kept a stiff upper lip, as appropriate for a British officer to drink their soup. It was all over in a few minutes, and the waiters returned to serve the next course.

In the morning, at rear HQ, I discovered that Monty's forward HQ was miles to the west in the Mareth line. I was offered a jeep that they wanted me to deliver. My first drive in a jeep was along a road whose tarmac surface was so narrow that, whenever a vehicle approached from the opposite direction, you were lucky if you could keep the offside wheel on the road.

I handed over the letters at Monty's mobile headquarters without seeing the Great Man himself. I managed to cadge a lift on an army mail plane back to Tripoli. We had to crouch in the rear, sitting on the mail sacks to keep the tail down and ensure take-off. I was glad to get back to Algiers.

Soon after that, in April 1943, the British Eighth and First Armies met the Americans in Tunisia, and the 18th Army Group was formed under General Alexander at the meeting point near Maknassy. We captured many yellow German vehicles. I managed to liberate a Volkswagen and felt rather odd starting its rear engine by hand from the back. Before I could register it, the military police confiscated it.

Back in Constantine, I received a signal from London instructing me to contact Lieutenant Colonel Strangeways²¹. His mission consisted of himself, with “Major Lord Temple of Stowe”, and one or two others. I found that Temple was the nom de guerre of Darewski²², a Polish-born British officer, rather than the 5th Earl Temple of Stowe, who had already died. It was all very secret. Strangeways was somewhat miffed at being identified. He had been extremely successful in deception operations for the Eighth Army and had now been sent to perform the same role during the assault on Tunis.

Task forces had only recently become an option. I proposed forming a task force to enter the city with the first troops. I had the addresses of several Italian Secret Service (Servizio Informazioni Segrete) officers. Strangeways adopted the idea, setting up a task force, not T for Tunis, but Task Force S for Strangeways. By good fortune, I acquired an enormous tent, and my driver and I, in the Humber, pitched it beside Alex's HQ under the protection of his "Brigadier I."

The taking of Tunis had its humorous side. The German police remained on traffic duty and waved the advancing Allied vehicles through. With S Force, I got in early and searched the Nazi Intelligence offices at the Hotel Majestic, but “Colonello Agrifolio”, Head of the Italian Intelligence, had already flown the nest. We will hear more of him later.

Meanwhile, the enemy had withdrawn into the Cap Bon peninsula, northeast of Tunis. When they finally capitulated, around 300,000 of them were taken into the bag, the majority of whom were Italians.

21 David Strangeways DSO, OBE (1912–1998) was a colonel in the British Army who helped organise several military deceptions during World War II. After leaving the army in 1957, he took holy orders.

22 Major Neville Lawrence Temple Darewski was a decorated SOE officer. He operated as a British officer, sometimes referred to as part of the Royal Army Ordnance Corps (RAOC) in records, but involved in clandestine/special operations in Italy.



I was sent to interrogate the German Town Major of Tunis²³. He was an elderly man of no possible intelligence value. As I spoke to him in his office, I was called away across the road. I told him to remain seated where he was. Something distracted me, and the next morning I suddenly remembered him. I rushed back to my office and found him still sitting in the same place. Does this say something about German docility? Conscience-stricken, I took pity on the homeless old man and drove him in my command car out into the empty countryside, where an enormous wire cage had been erected for prisoners. I felt even more sorry for him as he joined hundreds of others inside.

It was a remarkable sight to see dozens of Italian and German trucks being driven by the prisoners themselves through Tunis into captivity. I suspect captivity was, in most cases, welcomed. One impetuous officer arrested the Bey of Tunis, but this faux pas was downplayed and did not become an international incident, although the French soon afterwards arrested the Bey and his son.

I had little to do, and I was fortunate when I developed a painful toothache to find an army dentist equipped with new American instruments. He extracted three impacted wisdom teeth. The pain subsided in a few days, eased by codeine tablets.

²³ Ed. If this was Walter Rauff, the Stadtkommandant SS officer who controlled security and organised anti-Jewish policy in the city, he was not a helpless old man.

I was joined by Richard Gatty, who had been a divorce barrister before the war and who proved a welcome and resourceful companion. Richard found a flat belonging to an Italian fascist restaurateur who had fled the country. I liberated some of his shoes, and a multicoloured dressing gown, which was used in nativity plays years afterwards. The flat floor was lined with dozens of wine bottles. The champagne was in danger of being over-mature, so we had to drink it quickly.

England had sent quite a bit of information about the Tunisian Liberation Movement, an odd bunch of nationalists, “Destour and Neo-Destour”. The leader, Habib Bourguiba, had communicated with occupied Europe. He came to the flat, and we chatted amicably, but got nothing out of him. When I went outside, I found my car had been stolen. He later became head of state, so it would be impolitic to connect him with this.

As Tunis became very hot, we secured an Arab villa a few miles away on the coast near Carthage at Sidi Bou Said.



I had a routine of sleeping there, getting up at 6:30, and then rushing into Tunis. Electricity was turned off sharply at seven, and I discovered the unbelievable fact that tea made with water that is not quite boiling is drinkable.

I interrogated two widely different Tunisians. The first was an Arab cabinet minister and the second a wealthy Jewish lawyer. The Arab, apart from his headgear, was impressive and would've passed for a North European. His skin was so fair, and he spoke excellent French. The Jewish lawyer had been wounded fighting for the French in the First World War, but suffered under the Nazis in the Second. He gave me

the most excellent steak in Tunis and asked me to dine at his villa, which happened to be opposite ours in Sidi Bou Said.

Winston Churchill's son, Randolph, who had a sensitive nose for succulent dishes, gate-crashed the party. I chatted with Randolph Churchill but did not gain a favourable impression.

As the invasion of Sicily and Italy was impending, we were summoned back to Algiers by Trevor-Wilson. I had to abandon Richard to a boring existence, as there was likely to be nothing further of interest to intelligence in Tunis.

Aubrey Jones, whom I had last seen in MI 14 telephoning in exquisite Italian, turned up in Tunis. Aubrey was sent to follow Monty in Sicily. A week later, we received the signal from him, "*I think I have the mafia duped*". Would it be possible to be more arrogant or more wrong? That son of a Welsh miner became a conservative MP and a conservative Minister of Steel after the war.

Monty and the Americans ran through Sicily fairly quickly and landed at the toe of Italy. I found myself attached to another newcomer, Squadron Leader Johnson. With a wireless operator, we flew to Sicily and spent the night in the olive orchard at AFHQ's Advanced Headquarters outside Cassibile, just southwest of Syracuse, where Marshal Badoglio had signed the treaty with Eisenhower abandoning the Germans.

The next day, we sailed in a Landing Craft Infantry to Taranto and then travelled by bus to Brindisi. This was my first visit to Italy, and I was astonished to see the beehive dwellings in this district.

We put up at the Grande Albergo Internazionale, where the food was reasonable and the grapes marvellous, cheap and plentiful.



It was an interesting situation. The senior British officer was General Mason-MacFarlane, to whom Eric and I presented ourselves, but there were practically no troops, as the Eighth Army was moving up the west coast from the toe of Italy. Had the Germans, a few miles to our north, realised our situation, they could easily have swooped down and captured the Italian King, Emmanuel, his wife, Queen Margherita, and the rest of the Royal Family, as well as General Badoglio, the Prime Minister, and several military leaders. The King and Queen of Italy stayed here after leaving Rome at dawn on 9th September, along with the others who had come over to us.

I started learning Italian because my only job was to encode messages from Badoglio to Italian consulates all over the world, urging them to follow his example. Our wireless operator ensconced himself on the roof of the Castello Svevo to send these messages, as no one else had such a powerful means of communication.

I recall General Alexander lunching in the hotel. I met and liked some Yugoslav officers with whom I could converse in French. They were anti-communist, and we handed them over to meet an unpleasant fate when Tito took over the country.

French was also useful in speaking with the Italian intelligence officers. One day, they came to us, excited to have received a postcard from the missing Colonel Agrifoglio. I had failed to find him in Tunis, even though he was there among the 300,000 captured.

There had been too many prisoners to be properly sorted and screened. He had been sent to the USA, from where the postcard had come. We arranged for him to be sent back for interrogation.

I walked out of the hotel onto the harbour jetty to find hordes of Italian soldiers surrounding a group of miserable German prisoners. This was the reverse of the situation in Tunisia, where the prisoners outnumbered the guards. These Germans had been captured in Yugoslavia and brought across by ship. One of the German officers, seeing my British uniform, swaggered over and asked me to protect his baggage from the Italians. Appalled by his arrogance, I refused as his luggage disappeared.

I was in the hotel lobby when I happened to see Eric Berthoud. We knew Eric and his wife Ruth in Stortford before the War, when he worked for an oil company. Eric was bilingual; I believe his mother was French. His cover was "Ministry of Fuel and Power". He was trying to divert Balkan oil supplies from the Germans to the Allies. Eric became the British ambassador to Denmark and was later knighted. I think it was about that time that King Emmanuel and Queen Margherita moved into the hotel.

I had been in Brindisi for about six weeks and had travelled no farther than Bari when I received a message from the War Office informing me that my mother had died on the 15th September 1943 and that I had been granted compassionate leave. I flew back via Tunis and Algiers. I got a priority flight to Marrakesh, Morocco, but there, my priority ended. I was billeted very comfortably in a hotel taken over by the Americans, but I endured a frustrating five days, going to the airport repeatedly each day to find a seat. I had no chance to see the country.

Eventually, I caught a night flight on an American plane to Prestwick, near Glasgow, and then boarded another small American plane that seemed to be taking some American officers to a London theatre and nightclub. This was my first flight in Britain. I was ashamed that, after Puffin Island, I could recognise no landmarks, even though we flew very low. I think the American pilots were navigating from the ground. I was most impressed by the amount of woodland. We landed at Blackbushe Airport in Surrey. Somehow I hitched to London, arriving at Section V to find that they had given me up for lost.

My brother Noel and my stepbrother Leslie had borne the brunt of the funeral arrangements, and I was only in time for the sale of my mother's house. It cost about £1,500-£1,750 in 1938, and in September 1943, it raised £3,000. In 1995, I suppose it would be worth about £150,000!

Section V decided I should not return to Italy, but I should join in preparations for the Second Front. I shared an office with Martin Lloyd, who had been a couple of years senior to me at West House and whose

family were related to the Chamberlains. We worked on decoded messages and on all the information gathered about the German Secret Service in occupied Western Europe. Martin had been a master at Rugby before his call-up, and one day, JC Masterman, a famous Oxford Don and Kingmaker, walked in and persuaded him to stand for Head Master of Uppingham. He was successful and was demobilised. I was glad for him but sorry to lose a congenial boss.

Section V had now moved back to London from St Albans and occupied a building at 14 Ryder Street, St James. I could commute from home. As far as I can remember, there were only the occasional bombs. Although I lost a pair of trousers of a suit being made for me, around the corner, I had to be content with a jacket and a waistcoat.

When the V1 bombs began to fall, it was curious that one felt much safer in London, where the chances of it falling on you seemed one million to one. On the other hand, at night in Stortford, the V1s seemed to come from the east, right over Maze Green Road; the chances were much higher.

We heard the racing engine suddenly stop. After a few moments of anxious, eerie silence, there would be a crash, and some innocent citizens would have "*bought it*", as we said then.

Ryder Street was packed with famous figures specialising in other countries; Graham Greene was already a best-selling novelist and Kim Philby, whom everybody liked and no one suspected of being a Russian agent. After all, we were all allies at the time. We knew that they were communists and some were homos, but we were all on the same side. Various cousins of royalty, Oxbridge Dons, politicians like Lord Longford came and went, but few stayed.

We were preparing feverishly for the impending Second Front. I frequently visited Eisenhower's HQ along the road at Norfolk House in Saint James Square. I was due to go out with the First Canadian Army and got to know my counterparts at their HQ. At the last moment, I was transferred to the 21st Army Group, which consisted of the Second British Army and the First Canadian Army under Montgomery's command.

We formed a small SCI unit (Special Counter-Intelligence) under Peter Mason, who later served as High Master of Aldenham and of Manchester Grammar School. We moved from Hammersmith to a camp in a wooded park near Portsmouth. During the few days we spent there, we enjoyed the unexpected luxury of cakes baked by the army cook, which were quite unobtainable to civilians, and the equally unexpected, but very welcome sight of a nuthatch just above our tent.

Relations were always a bit strained with the army security IB, who were always inclined to be jealous and suspicious of us "*Cloak and Dagger boys*". The GSI (1) was Lt Colonel Niall MacDermot, afterwards a famous KC and Labour politician. The GSI (2) was Major Kenneth Younger, a Scottish brewer, later MP and Minister.

A few days after D-Day, we sailed across the channel in a landing craft and landed near Arromanches. We were in a camp near the coast and within the sound of our artillery, although I think the front was by then about 11 miles away. I found an unoccupied house and slept in state on my army valise on a high French

bed. There was not much to do as the Germans had left no agents behind. I only remember one interrogation in the outbuilding of a famous Ducal Château.

I had caught an infection in England and developed a large carbuncle on my neck. I was sent to a Field Hospital feeling like a fraud among the Canadian war wounded. I think I must have been a guinea pig for penicillin, which had just been discovered. I was given my injection every few hours. My urine was collected for penicillin extraction. The poor Canadians had one injection every three hours. In five days, the carbuncle had miraculously disappeared, but I was sent back to the UK.

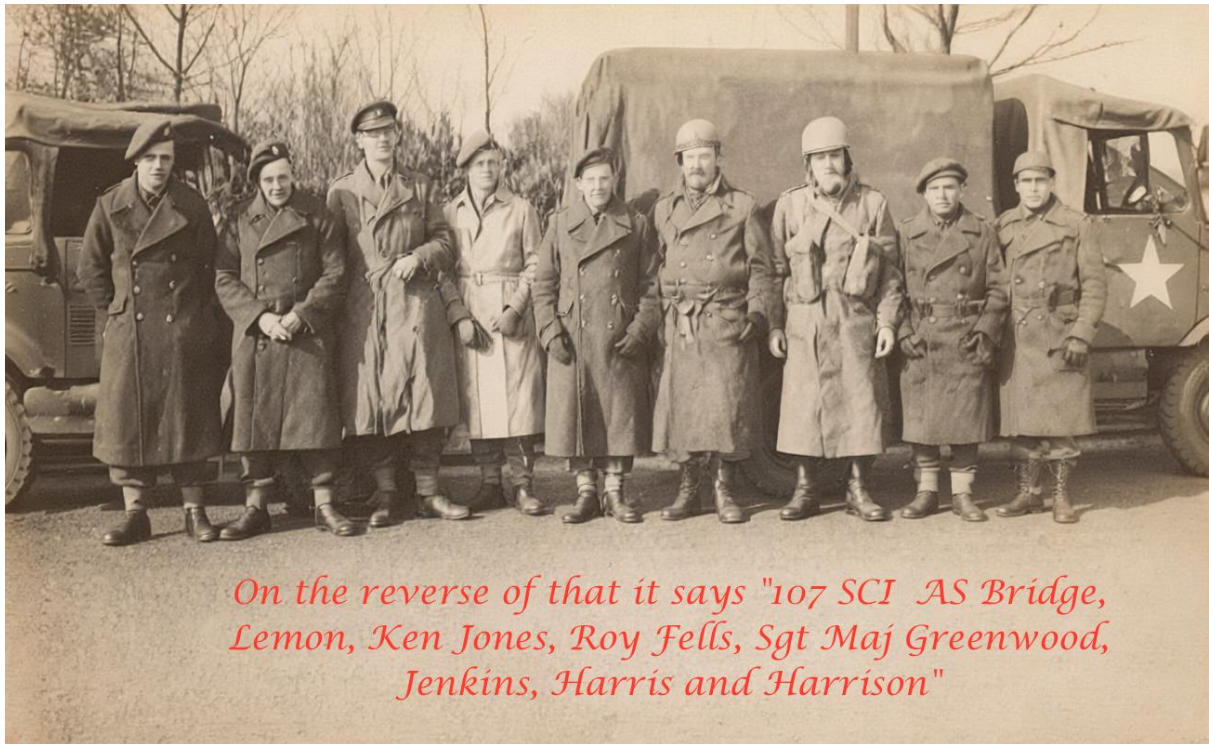
I returned to France from London with a car that had been stowed in the hold of an American Liberty ship. We sailed across the Channel, but the American Mulberry harbour had been destroyed in the storm. There was a slight swell, and the captain remained at sea for a week. In the meantime, I read Proust and enjoyed white bread in the officers' mess. Eventually, we sailed right up the Seine to Rouen, where I retrieved my car from the hold and drove hard northeast to find my unit. During that time, a breakthrough had occurred, and the Germans were on the run. I had difficulty catching up with the unit at Lille and I met them in Brussels.



Peter Mason had not got on with the army and had been sent back to London to direct our operations from there. I found my new boss was Major Bobby Barclay, stepson of Lord Vansittart, the most famous

anti-German before the war. Bobby was the most delightful companion. He developed jaundice, and it was later thought inadvisable to send him to Germany in view of his family connections.

We shared a large house in the Brussels suburbs with our American counterparts and our own deception unit. They were successors to Colonel Strangeways, who had operated in Africa. Their CEO was Christopher Harmer, with whom I kept up after the war when he joined our family solicitors, Pinsents of Birmingham.



We had Belgian servants who fed us luxuriously, although I suspect them of disguising a rabbit as a chicken. Their croutons were out of this world.

Monty had a house only two or three doors away, on Palais d'Egmont, which was bombed when I was at home on sick leave, but no one was hurt. We lived a rather peaceful and idle existence, enjoying the presence of girl secretaries whom HQ felt safe sending out.

Monty's chief intelligence officer, Brigadier Bill Williams, had a particular fondness for one of these girls. I remember feeling flattered when, finding himself too busy, he entrusted both his jeep and his girl to me for a day out in Bruges. Bill later became head of Rhodes House at Oxford. He was clearly much approved of by Monty, who had brought him back from the Eighth Army.

Here I made my first acquaintance with the teleprinter through which we had a direct line to London. We had a message that 12713, which was my code number. The message informed me that I had a daughter. Mary Winkler, a friend of my wife Iris, worked in the War Office and somehow sent this message. It was about October 24th before I received it, although Sue was born on the 10th. Iris wondered why I had given no sign of appreciation. I got leave and saw a black fuzz protruding from a tiny bundle in a cot. This fuzz

was the occasion of Stephen's first sentence containing a verb and an object, albeit in reverse order, "*feathers got*".



We travelled up from Brussels. I missed Antwerp, but eventually got into Rotterdam and skirted the Rhine near Wesel, where we saw gliders coming over and then saw them again down along fields by the Wesel-Bocholt Road.

In the spring of 1945, we moved into Germany and were formed into a new unit, 7CCU, under Lieutenant Colonel George Young, a very civilised and knowledgeable man who had been a journalist for the famous liberal paper then known as the Manchester Guardian. At first, we lived in a small house in a village in a remote part of West Germany, but when the collapse of the Third Reich came in May, we moved to Bad Salzuflen, a few miles from British HQ at Bad Oeynhausen. We discovered that the Germans had left behind a few women agents, whom we called the Rhine Maidens. They clearly never operated, and our work really came to an end.

George Young never wrote but always typed, and when no Agents were found in Belgium, he wrote: "*The Abwehr (German intelligence service) has been cleared from North West Brabant.*" This gave me an insight into how to impress with meaningless verbiage.

I was due to interrogate Hitler's most notorious lieutenant, Himmler. He was captured in Schleswig-Holstein by a British officer who frightened him, and Himmler took cyanide. This was the subject of a

letter I got in the Times in 1983. An intelligent interrogator would have played on Himmler's vanity and squeezed a lot of valuable intelligence out of him.

From Bad Salzuflen, we sent individual officers to Berlin, Hamburg, and Bonn. In Hamburg, we had a lovely English-type seaside house on the banks of the Elbe at Blankenese.



We had another house on the banks of the Rhine on the way to Cologne. I was a Major now and swanned (the vogue word) between these houses. The road to Berlin was exciting because, from the Helmstedt checkpoint, the country was in Russian hands.

We also had a pleasant house in the rich suburb of Grunewald. I remember only three events there. First, meeting Lotte Reiniger and her husband, Karl Koch, who had been brought in. She showed me her method for making silhouette films, which made her internationally famous after the war.

Secondly, we were approached by a Dutchman who claimed to be working for the Russians but, in reality, wished to work for us. I put him in my Humber wearing a British uniform, to drive him into the Russian zone of the city. I dropped him near their HQ. We did not believe him; he was probably a triple agent. After the war, the Dutch authorities arrested him. I was back in Stortford as a civilian when I was summoned by SIS and driven to London in a staff car to account for what had happened to the Dutchman. The Dutch thought he was a traitor and executed him.

Thirdly, I paid a visit to Hitler's Chancellery, which was guarded by very low-grade oriental Russian soldiers, but I managed to bluff my way downstairs to the bunker where Hitler had passed his last days.

At Hamburg, I made my way nervously to the house in Eppendorf, at 142 Ericastraße and was delighted to find Frau Hagedorn alive and well. I gave her some army rations. Egmont and Hans Hermann had also survived. We have paid visits to each other ever since, but Egmont died in 1983.

We paid a visit to the Rhine to meet our American colleagues in Wiesbaden. I drove to 20 Nerotal to see if Frau Behmanburg and her two sons were still there. At that point, my nerve failed me. I was fairly certain that her two sons, both ardent Nazis, would be dead.

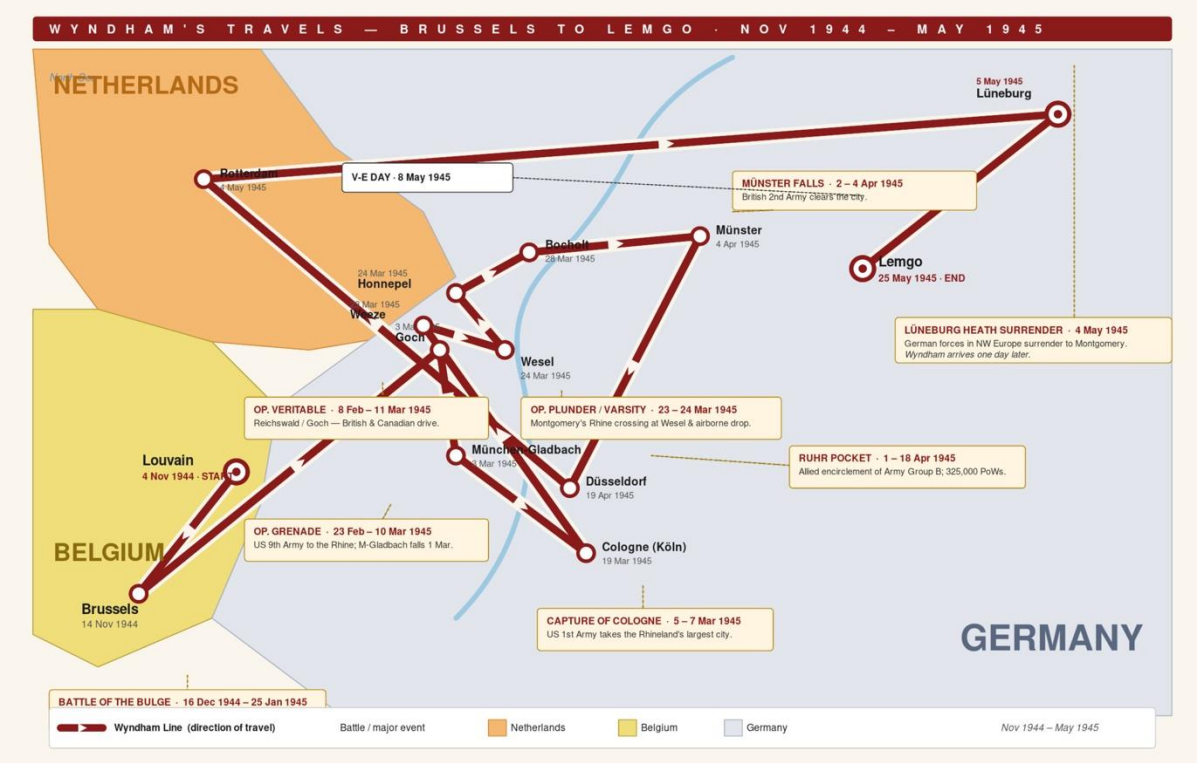
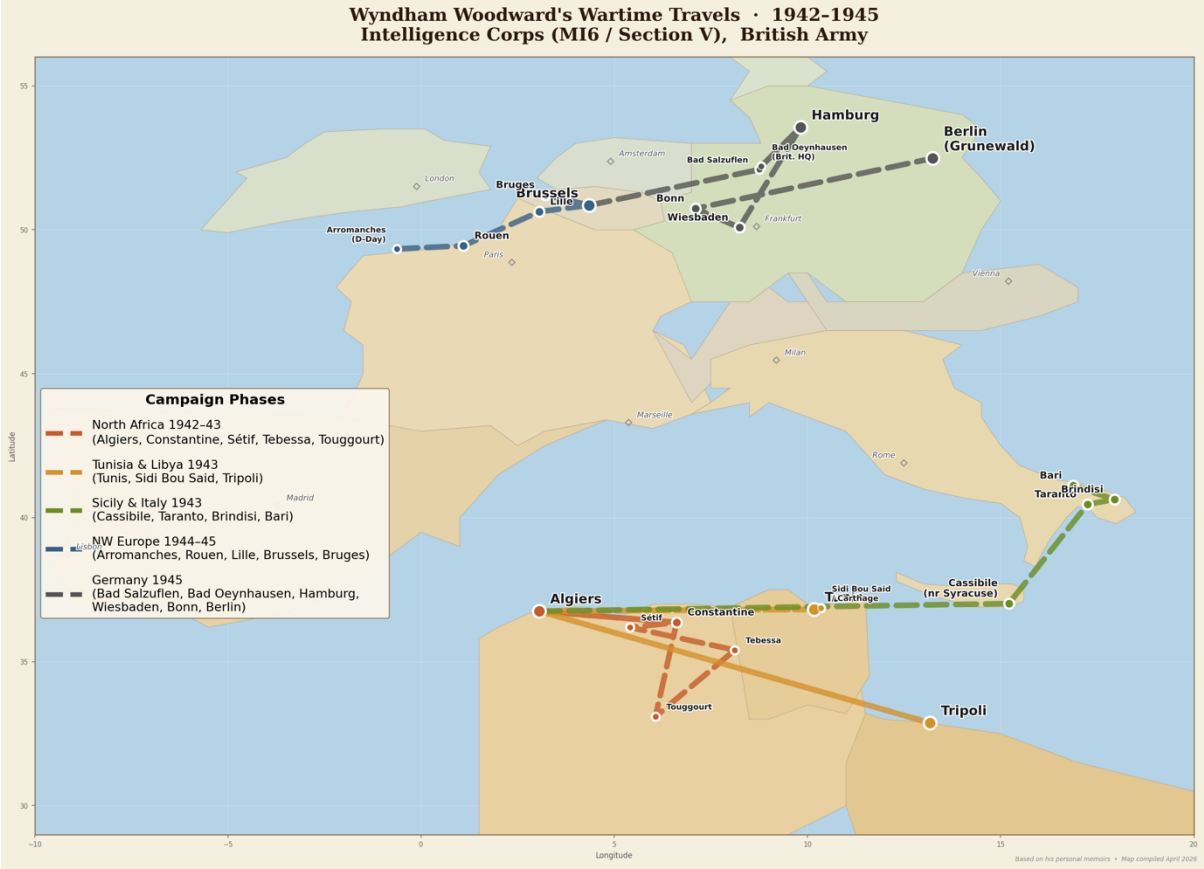
Eventually, George Young and his second-in-command were demobilised. Towards the end of 1945, I was promoted to lieutenant colonel and given command of the unit. I drove to British HQ at Bad Oeynhausen every day in a BMW sports car, but there was rarely much to do.

Trevor-Roper, Lord Dacre, came to see us. He had been sent by Churchill to discover whether Hitler was really dead, as there were rumours that the Führer had escaped from the bunker. Yet Trevor-Roper proclaimed the certainty of Hitler's death even before beginning his investigations. This seemed the wrong way to go about it. Last year, he showed a similar lack of judgment in vouching for the authenticity of Hitler's fake diaries. It will take him a long time to wipe the egg off his face.

1946 Demobilised

In February 1946, I was demobilised, having decided not to stay in SIS, though my schoolmaster's salary was less than half that of a Lt. Colonel. I never saw George Young again, although he became Deputy CSS. I received the usual official letter in the King's name permitting me to continue to call myself Major Woodward. (You went down one from your previous temporary Army rank).

I got back to Bishop's Stortford College for the second half of the spring term and, luckily, seemed persona grata with the new head, Arthur Evans.



Some scattered reminiscences of 1939-45

British Army 1939- 1946

Service Group Number 24 Service Number 210668

Regiment Royal Artillery.

Late Commanding Officer HQ BAOR Intelligence Branch (MI4)



**1088455 Gnr. Woodward, S.W., R.A.
by Gnr. Moynihan Rodrigo. R.A., 1940
(later Royal Academician)**

After a year's training as a Gunner Signaller and Commissioning, I found myself not in the Royal Artillery but in Intelligence. After various conferences, I was posted to the War Office (two floors below ground)

to work for MI14²⁴ on the German Army and to bring a military dictionary up to date. Each day, someone crossed Whitehall to take the latest map of the Eastern Front to Winston Churchill's bunker. One day, the task fell to me, but I did not see the Great Man.

I discovered that the front moved only a few miles a day, and the chalk line marking it was much thicker than that, so Churchill could not have gained much. One day, I was taken to the famous room 055 to swear the Official Secrets Act and found myself posted to the Secret Intelligence Service, also known as MI6.

I was assigned to Section V (counter-intelligence) at St Albans. I sat next to a Scottish baronet who gave me his out-tray to learn the ropes, and opposite an Anglo-Belgian, called Eric. The German secret service cypher had already been decoded, and one day Eric was very excited because he had learnt that the Germans were about to drop an agent, and Eric was part of the "reception committee". In fact, it is certain that every single German agent in Britain was caught and either imprisoned or "turned", i.e. acted as a double agent, sending deceptive information messages to the German secret service, who lapped them up, as we could tell from further decoded messages.

1942 French North Africa.

In November 1942, wearing a RA uniform, I sailed to North Africa a few days after the Anglo-American landing. I reported to my new boss, Major Trevor-Wilson²⁵. I think that was his rank, though he was certainly the most unmilitary of soldiers. On the other hand, Malcolm Muggeridge described him as the finest intelligence officer he knew. His later consular activities were defended by the novelist Graham Greene, who was also in Section V.

One day, London reported that two Frenchmen were coming via Gibraltar to assassinate Churchill, who was due to pay General Eisenhower a visit on his way back from Cairo. Trevor-Wilson drove to the airport, La Maison Blanche, and escorted Churchill and his entourage via back roads to the city, and nothing

²⁴ MI14 was established in 1940, becoming the principal War Office body for analyzing German military intelligence throughout the war, drawing on signals intelligence (including Ultra decrypts from Bletchley Park), aerial reconnaissance, prisoner interrogations, captured documents, and reports from agents and attachés.

²⁵ Major Arthur Geoffrey Trevor-Wilson, Intelligence Corps, was the head of MI6 Section V in Algiers and effectively the officer commanding the AFHQ-attached SI(b) / British counter-intelligence element in North Africa. An early-1943 list names four officers in the North African SI(b) structure: Trevor-Wilson, Frank Buchanan Park, Stanley Wyndham Woodward, and Robert Charles Sanford Barclay.

untoward happened. A few days later, the two Frenchmen turned up at our office. (How they found us, I do not know) and claimed to wish to work for us, having pretended to the Germans that they were ready to work for them. We had no alternative but to hand them over to our French colleagues across the way, who shot them.

1943 Advance with the 1st and 8th Armies

At the beginning of 1943, when General Montgomery's 8th Army had advanced west as far as Tripoli, I had to fly from Algiers to his HQ in Tripoli with letters from Eisenhower's HQ, taking some French colleagues with me. We flew far south over the desert, then turned east and north to Tripoli. Amid vast areas of sand, we could see the odd small patch of green where Mussolini had managed to bring back into cultivation a little of what had been the granary of Ancient Rome. I was put up for the night at a requisitioned hotel at the harbour. During dinner, when British officers were being served by Italian waiters, the Germans started bombing the harbour. It was amusing to see the waiters scatter for cover while the diners kept a stiff upper lip, as is consistent with British officers drinking soup. The raid was small, all over in a few minutes, and the waiters slunk back to serve our next course.

In the morning at rear HQ, I discovered that Monty's forward HQ was many miles west, but there was a Jeep to be delivered, so I had my first experience of driving a Jeep. I managed to hand over the letters at Monty's mobile HQ and cadge a lift back on the army mail plane. We had to crouch at the back, on the mail sacks, to keep the tail down and ensure take-off. I was glad to get back to Algiers.

1943 Tunis and Italy

The occupation of Tunis in May had its humorous side. The German police remained on their traffic duties and waved to the advancing Allied vehicles. I got in early, armed with the address of Colonel Pompeo Agrifoglio, the chief of the Italian secret service, but the bird had already flown from his nest.

Meanwhile, the enemy, having retreated north-east into the Cap Bon peninsula, finally capitulated, and there were about 300,000, mainly Italians, in the bag. I was asked to interrogate the German Town Major. He was an elderly man with no interest in intelligence. While I was talking to him in his office, I was called away across the road and told to stay where I was. Something distracted me, and the next morning I suddenly remembered him. I rushed around and found him sitting in the same seat. Does this say something about German docility? I took pity on this harmless old man and drove him in my Humber command car to the cage in the desert where he joined hundreds of other prisoners.

Some weeks later, in late August, I was in Italy, where the Italian Royal Family and General Badoglio had come over to us and were in Brindisi. I was working with the Italian Intelligence. One day, they came to me very excited because they had received a postcard from Colonel Agrifoglio in the USA, whom I had

failed to grab in Tunis. There had been too many prisoners to screen, and he had gone to America with thousands of others. I think we got him back.



Christmas 1945.

HQ British Army of the Rhine Intelligence Branch Bad Salzuflen. Christmas lunch 1945.

Lt Col S. W. Woodward (extreme left), Commanding Officer, serving his men.

