MEMOIRS

of

H.E.M. NEWMAN

1900 – 1991

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REMINISCENCES

October 1900 - March 1908

I was born at 55 Warwick Gardens, West Kensington, London, two years after my father, Walter Ernest Newman, had married his first cousin, Lilian Jekyll Paynter, in Alnwick, Northumberland. She was the daughter, the fifth of twelve children, of Henry Augustus Paynter of Cornish extraction, and a partner in Newman Paynter & Co., Solicitors. The firm was founded by my great-grandfather, Edwin, the recipient of the black marble mantelpiece clock in Yeovil to which a London branch at 1 Clements Inn was added where my father later worked. It is said that my father had fallen for a Miss Yule (?) who rejected him, and that, articled to Henry Paynter to learn his trade, he had rebounded on Lily, Henry's favourite and somewhat spoiled daughter. Anyway they were engaged for nearly ten years till his salary sufficed for marriage, and after a postponement due to my "Gunner" grandfather's death in I896 leaving debts which my father had to settle. These included debts incurred at whist in the Rag (Army and Navy Club), his nightly occupation, one consequence being that thereafter the handling of playing cards was heavily discouraged other than for patience.

The household consisted of my parents, my grandmother, Emma (nee Montague Browne, 1844 to 1930, from Co. Down), my father's sister Evelyn (six years his junior, 1870 to1950), my nanny (Mary or Mamie Friend), and a cook and house-parlourmaid who changed from time to time. The servants worked in the basement and slept on the top floor next to my nursery, in which Mamie had a bed, adjacent to my father's dressing-room.

I recall that the ground floor contained the drawing-room, the dining-room and the smoking-room (no smoking elsewhere) whence, through a French window one could go via a flight of iron stairs over the back yard to the small back garden. The first floor provided the three main bedrooms, and the bathroom and water closet were to be found separately on the two landings to the rear of the house between the three floors above the basement.

The coal supplies for all our fires rumbled into the cellar below the pavement through a circular manhole normally sealed by a removable cast iron cover, a practice then universal throughout London. The house-parlourmaid had to carry up coal for the fireplaces in use, no other means of heating the house being then available. Gaslight was the sole source of illumination. In the nursery we had just one fishtail-type burner. Each room was furnished with a bell-rope connected by wires and levers to its special bell to summon staff from the basement whenever service was required.

The nursery windows faced south-west across the road to the terraced houses beyond, over the Warwick Road and railway line (both out of sight) to the Earl's Court exhibition grounds, where, unless obliterated by a pea-soup fog, one saw the Big Wheel (later to be transported to Blackpool) slowly rotating with its boxes of passengers hanging from the circumference which provided a view of London from on high. The wheel was electrically illuminated by night.

Horse transport clattered by constantly. There were privately owned broughams[1], from one of which our Dr. Dent stepped whenever summoned dressed in frock-coat and top hat. Two-wheeled hansom cabs[2] and four-wheeled "growlers[3]" passed hired of plying for hire, trade vans delivering goods, coal carts, etc., of perhaps Carter Patterson alert for a "GP" sign in a ground floor window informing the driver that the occupier had a package for dispatch. Every now and then in residential roads one might come across a straw a covered expanse, say, 50 yards long. It served to quieten the noise of iron-shod hooves and wheels to benefit a seriously sick person in one of the houses. Solitary traders came by, men soliciting custom with their traditional cries - sweet lavender, knives and scissors to grind, muffins (borne on the head of large baize-covered trays and announced by hand bell). And three of four times a day, and once on Sunday came the characteristic postman's double rap on the front door knocker calling attention to the delivered mail (penny stamp for a letter and a half-penny for a postcard).

Postmen were smartly dressed in contrast with their shoddy appearance in the 1980s. On their heads were flat-topped untufted shakos fitted with black patent leather peaks and neck extensions, and with G.P.O.[4] badges in front. Their blue jackets, buttoned to the neck, and their trousers to match, were trimmed with narrow scarlet piping. Each carried the mail in a leather satchel slung over one shoulder. Parcel post, one delivery per day, came on a two-wheeled barrow pushed by one man. The parcels came packed in a big rectangular basket-work bin covered with a black hinged water-proof lid. After WW1, shakos gave way to army-type blue forage caps; then in wet weather the men complained of water dripping down their backs.

Other callers pulled the front door bell which sounded in the basement. There came too the itinerant barrel-organ grinders some times accompanied by a monkey, of, more rarely, a so-called German Band, five of six wind players and a drum, all to entice pennies from nearby windows. Perhaps the real thrill was the sound of a motor car and the rush to see it; but when that began I cannot remember.

What of the daily routine? Apart from Sunday lunch 'en-famille' my meals were all brought up to the nursery. As regards their contents I can only recall regular breakfasts of shredded wheat, and that the marmalade, as with the jam for tea, came in Hartley's stone jars, the same stone as was used for ginger beer and the jars of blacking, the viscid black fluid used for polishing boots. (Boots were universally worn by both men and women out of doors. My father's only shoes were brown ones worn on holidays.) Later my father in his dressing room before breakfast taught me the multiplication tables, and my mother after breakfast taught me to read from a paper-back series entitled "STEP by Step" also writing in copy-books beginning with pothooks and hangers, all of which were assets when I started prep school.

Fine mornings almost always found me traipsing the length of Kensington High Street to Kensington Gardens. Of the shops on the way the highlight was "Lorgberg" with a window-full of sailing boats, model locos and rolling stock, stationary engines etc. The last time I saw Kensington

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[1] **Brougham** = light horse-drawn carriage with the driver sitting in front with no roof over him.
[2] **Hansom Cab** = two-wheeled covered carriage with the driver's seat elevated at the rear.
[3] **Growler** (otherwise known as a "Clarence") = a horse-drawn, four-wheeled coupé named in honour of the Duke of Clarence and first introduced in 1840 in London. The body held two seats facing one another.
[4] **G.P.O.** = General Post Office

Gardens the landscape seemed unchanged, but gone were all the nursemaids and the perambulators. It was here that we made and met friends all similarly chaperoned. One was George Byam Shaw (we were born a day apart) the son of an artist in Addison Road. We were present at each other's parties for a long while till I grew to detest him for no recallable reason. In the afternoons it was often to the railings of nearby Addison Road station opposite Olympia. Trains in various liveries would pass through on what I suspect was a circular route around London. There were fewer platforms than at Clapham junction, but quite a number. (Looking at a London Street Guide it seems likely that Addison Road station exists now as Kensington Olympia).

Sometimes we were sent on shopping errands to the Earls Court Road to a corner bakery for farthing[5] buns (a baker's dozen always meant thirteen), or to a dairy for butter where wooden butter-pats stacked in water clawed, say, half a pound from a truckle-like mass to be weighed on grease-proof paper, after which it was patted into a brick and finally a wooden mould was pressed on top to provide a pretty pattern in relief. Or again it could have been to a grocer for loaf sugar, cut off and weighed from a solid cone-shaped loaf[6], hence the name. No groceries were packaged; everything, biscuits, tea, flour, etc. were dispensed by counter assistants from bulk containers. One is aware nowadays of the many retail prices described as £1.95.or £1.99. The equivalent used to be £1 11s 11¾ d (one pound eleven shillings and eleven-pence three farthings). To complete the day I was tidied to spend an hour or so in the drawing room with my mother, aunt and grandma, frequently to hear the restraining, but never resented adage that little boys should be seen and not heard. This little one played happily on the floor, restricted though it was by the Victorian tradition of over-furnishing. My memory for toys almost non-exists. There was an “army” of lead soldiers all in review order, a fort with drawbridge, a tiny clockwork train on a circular track, a small yacht for the round pond, and a wheel of life. This piece of ingenuity consisted of a black open-topped tin cylinder, pierced with vertical slots in the top half, leaving a space below them for a strip of paper on which was printed a series of images. When the cylinder was rotated, one saw through the slots, as in the cinema, a moving picture e.g. a horse and rider hurdling, or a ball being thrown and caught. The day ended with a bathtub in the nursery, the hot water carried up from the bathroom, and the slops emptied in the W.C. below.

There was a routine of etiquette in those days which never concerned me personally, but is worth recording for its curiosity value. That was “calling”. All ladies practiced it. Established inhabitants hearing of newcomers whom they were recommended to meet, called upon them one afternoon. If the called-upon was at home and available, the caller chatted for fifteen minutes, finally leaving three visiting cards on a salver in the hall, a big card from her and two smaller ones from her husband, one of which was intended for the callee’s husband. (Cards had to be engraved in italic script, never printed). The big card included calling days, e.g. 1st & 2nd Thursdays each month of perhaps just one day. Calling days meant that she guaranteed to be at home with tea, sandwiches, and cakes, for anyone paying a social visit. I cannot say when this custom lapsed but as adapted in India where it survived usefully until WW2 - usefully because the European population was in constant flux. Married folk kept small calling boxes fixed to one of their gateposts and any newcomer to the station rode or drove around soon after arrival, dropping cards into the boxes

[5] Farthing = ¼d = one quarter of a penny.
[6] The equivalent now is “cube” sugar.

pertaining to his own corps or regiment, all C.O.s, senior commanders and civil servants, and the Resident and the Maharajah if in a Native State. Thus the newcomer's presence was broadcast and the local society could entertain him or her if they so wished. Before quitting a station cards marked ‘p.p.c.’ (pour prendre congé') were similarly distributed.

Back to London, and some exceptions to the routine there: -

When and why precisely I do not know, but Mamie took me on a visit to her aunt in Frant Forest, near Tunbridge Wells, the aunt who eventually bequeathed her the cottage in which to end her days. A hen coop roofed with corrugated iron stood in the yard, and one day the hens, either through my fault or from some extraneous surprise, scattered panic-stricken, and I too panicked, tripped and cut my nose on the iron roof to leave a scar there for some years. That was my one and only exeat alone with Mamie. Much later at rugger the nose stopped a back’s punt at short range. The College quack (school doctor) diagnosed no special damage, but I reckon these two incidents wrecked my nasal passages permanently.

With greater pleasure I recollect several picnic expeditions to Kew Gardens. My Mamma knew a fellow-dabbler in watercolours living near us, and we three sometimes escaped on suitably sunny summer days into to the semi-countryside. To get there entailed a bus ride from the end of our road down Kensington High Street and the Hammersmith Road to Hammersmith Broadway, where we transferred to an electric tram to take us down Chiswick High Road to the junction for Kew Bridge. My earliest recollection of buses sees them to have been horse-drawn. They were probably under private enterprise, each company painting its vehicles in a distinct livery - red, green, yellow, etc., with each plying its own route. One thus selected one's bus by its colour and not by a route number as nowadays. A raised arm anywhere along a scheduled route brought it to a halt and served as a ‘bus-stop’. On the lower deck the passengers faced each other across the passage; the top deck was open to the skies and the passengers seats faced forwards. The prestige seats were just behind the driver who was perched in front at the same height. Electric trams were similarly open-decked, but the top deck seat backs were swing-able to and fro because trams used to reverse at their destinations. The overhead power-line and the tram's sprung connecting arm underneath it, produced a constant hiss and intermittent exciting white flashes. A penny fare carried one a considerable distance.

Public transport also included the underground. I retain an impression of it at High Street Kensington Station, but I cannot be sure if it comes from hearsay or personal experience. It is a smelly one of sulphurous grime, the pollution from steam locomotives. I cannot specify when electricity took over from steam, but I believe the tuppenny[7] tube, so-called from the fare charged, opened in the first decade of the century. It was deep enough to need lifts and not merely a staircase to reach it, although an emergency stairwell was provided at each station. It became the Piccadilly line in due course. I am equally vague about crossing Kew Bridge, but I cannot utterly ignore an impression of a horse-drawn white tram leading to the open square at the entrance to the garden. Parts of Kew Gardens remain vivid in the mind; an open glade to the Thames with Zion house beyond and bluebells to right and left; the pagoda, and the glass house which we explored when the sketching was finished.

[7] Tuppence = 2d = two pence or two pennies.

Olympia meant the naval and military tournament (no R.A.F. in those days) whither I went several times. Much of the old performance remains intact, e.g. the obstacle course for naval guns and the R.H.A. musical ride, but instead of the Royal Signals on motor bikes there was a similar performance by a team of Lancers in full dress, mounted on horses. Once there was a reproduction of 'Tilting at the Lists' as in Tudor times, with knights in plate armour, their lances half severed to break on impact. Ever since I have retained a romantic interest in armour without having bothered to acquire any knowledge so as to distinguish period styles.

Boxing Day implied dress-circle seats at the London Hippodrome for a "Variety Performance". One vague recollection evokes a 'Victor Hugo' style contest between a diver and a huge octopus in the pit converted into a simulated water tank. Another year the pit contained actual water into which down a ramp went a few elephants, and human divers plunged in to remain immersed for unconscionably long periods. I would suspect a submerged diving bell. Alternatively there were where the Rainbow Ends and Peter Pan, the latter an exciting stimulant for the young imagination. Indeed, for several decades I enjoyed dreams of levitation. Not only were they enjoyable but in rare nightmares levitation provided a happy issue from pending affliction. I used to believe that J. M. Barrie must have written uniquely in this regard but much later, reading Richard Church's autobiographical trilogy, he introduces levitation almost as a fact of life, so perhaps the sensation is more universal than I had supposed.

We must have travelled to and from these theatres in hired cabs, and this thought stirs the memory to the fact that London roads were surfaced with wood blocks, their laying and repair involved black mobile tanks of hot tar, the smell from which is unforgettable. Undoubtedly wood was kinder to horses' hooves and legs than were the stone sets, still to be found in Lancashire towns into the l930's or indeed the water bound macadam roads in the country, the dust from which rendered verges hedgerows white with dust.

Standing: Tan, Vi, Emma and Evie Montague Brown. Seated: Great-aunt Alice Montague Brown and young Poly and David Nicholson

Further to digress, it was on these roads that my parents, like many of their contemporaries, enjoyed spins on their bicycles into the western suburbs on fine Saturday afternoons. Weekends then and until WW2 consisted only of Saturday afternoons and Sundays, and the suburbs offered inviting remains of countryside up to the post-WW1 building boom. In the winter recreational afternoons were spent playing Badminton.

I accompanied my mother very occasionally on her weekly visits to a nearby workhouse on or near the Earls Court Road, where she taught woodcarving to some of the inmates, to which she brought a large roll of tools and considerable personal experience. I took no great joy from this but it served as an introduction to the seamier side of life. The plain red brick barrack blocks, men and women strictly segregated, despite possible relationships, spelt gloom.

We were not without visitors: most were Montague Brownes (relations of my father's mother). I well remember my Grandma's brother, General Andrew (one time of the Scots Greys) and his wife Alice (née Ferguson) the possessor of a clear soprano voice. Their son Andrew, my father's first cousin and an officer of the King's Own Royal Lancaster Regiment, came quite often after his return from South Africa (he frequented Tattersals on the look-out for hunters), and continued his visits into our Northwood days until, in the middle of WW1 he married a divorcee, whereupon my mother's severe moral protests drove him from setting foot in our house again. This did not stop my meeting them henceforward to the end of their respective lives, at most of their several residences in the U.K. Also as visitors came two rather colourless and devout spinsters, Tan and Vi; Eily a gay lady, who later married Octavius (Occy) Lothian Nicholson, eventually a general, and Evie the youngest, who was my favourite, and who later married Occy s brother, Bertram, a navel officer who retired as captain. Amongst her skills was a lucrative one - the modelling of all manner of birds, and animals in coloured sealing wax; brooches, hatpins, and so on. They were unique and much sought after. She sent me several lovely letters from their home, St John's Point, County Down, illustrated with small watercolour vignettes scattered about the pages to illustrate the text. I do not remember how when she and Bertram died, but it was well before their due time.

Evie Nicholson at the "Wax Works"

Then there was my godfather, Dr. Stirling Hamilton, a bachelor practicing in Leytonstone, whose father and my grandfather had been buddies. The family seat, which my family used to visit, was at Woodgaters in Sussex. My other godparents were Nat Dunn, a rich bachelor seemingly without a profession, living in Alnmouth, Northumberland, who had provided my Mama in the 1890s with her hunter, 'Beauty', and who always sent us a goose by rail in time for Xmas. And thirdly, a spinster, Miss Dalton, daughter of a Sapper general, who lived in Longridge Road, not far from us. Uniquely she sent my Christmas present to me on St. Andrew's Day so that its impact might not be lost amongst the Christmas parcels!

The Sunday routine was one of austere solemnity. The gentry walked to matins at 11.00 a.m. dressed in dark suits, clutching books of Common Prayer bound with hymns Ancient & Modern. Domestic staffs attended Evensong. For the confirmed communion was customarily restricted to once monthly at 8.30. Confirmation, as with Masonic initiation, provided access to what had hitherto been a mystery. Another feature was the suspicious semi-hostile attitude existing between Anglicans, Roman Catholics and the multiple shades of nonconformance. A partly uniformed parade of the Church Lads Brigade headed by a bugle-fife band would sometimes pass by. Occasionally, too, one passed a stationary and fully uniformed brass band of the Salvation

Army. Matins would finish perhaps at 12.30 or 12.45. Sermons were long; every psalm prescribed for the day of the month was chanted, and the Litany was not infrequently recited in full. Immediately on arriving home one sat down to the hot roast with all the etceteras; afterwards there was probably a stroll. Then came tea, followed by books - holy books only. My mother read to me from a three volume series bound in limp red cloth called “Line upon Line”; they provided renderings into simple English of most of the stories of the Old Testament. However dull at the time, I later reaped the benefit. Without them how bewildering would be the numerous references in literature and journalism. Later in Northwood my mother, freed from her in-laws, would expect my presence on a Sunday evening at the upright piano to join her hymn singing. A favourite was ‘There’s a Friend for Little Children above the Bright Blue Sky’, misinformation that could take a lifetime to eradicate.

I must digress again. The onset of wireless in the I920's and of TV in the late thirties replaced most forms of home entertainment. All communication had been slower, nevertheless Post Office efficiency was exemplary by modern standards. Telephones were comparatively rare. The household apparatus clung to the wall on a wooden bracket. After lifting the speaker/receiver from its rack one turned a handle at the side of the bracket to alert the girl at the exchange. Aircraft were nonexistent. News was distributed by telegram, but a transmitter might be far from a scene of action. In the case of the 1911 railway strike while we were on summer holiday in Huntstanton (Norfolk), there were no newspaper deliveries, and my father trekked daily to the railway station to find out if there were a chance for him to return to work. One day, trains just happened again without warning.

We did escape from Cobbett's “Great Wen”[8]. My impressions of a long weekend with the Rev. Budge, vicar of Brampton near Huntington, are confined to its riverine situation and croquet on the lawn. Better remembered were several visits to Aston Court in Herefordshire where my mother's eldest sister, Katie, lived as Mrs. Manley Power. The village was Aston Ingham. We detrained at Mitcheldean Road whence pony traps took us and our baggage to the court. It was a capacious house with farm buildings, large beautifully kept gardens with space for tennis and croquet, flowerbeds, fruit, and vegetables. It was bounded on one side by a stream dammed to provide an ornamental pool with a wooden footbridge over it. Behind the stream were apple orchards, where my uncle was said to be engaged in experiments, beyond which, not over two miles away in the background, one could see the unmistakably symmetrical May Hill crowned with its grove of trees, like the sprig of holly on a plum pudding.

Uncle Manley's main concern was, however, dairy farming with a reputation such that several young embryo gentlemen-farmers lived as members of the household (no farm institutes in those days). One of them happened to be present when I was sailing my boat in the pool. It floated out of reach and was drifting under the bridge towards the weir and imminent destruction. This gallant young man ran on to the bridge, leaned over and caught the boat, but the wooden handrail snapped and he fell in. I learned years later that, having brought the boat ashore, my sole reaction was a reproachful "You've wetted the sails".

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[8] Quote from *The Victorian Web*: “William Cobbett famously called London "the Great Wen," though in the early 1820s he had a seed-farm and plant-nursery just where Kensington High Street tube station is now. How would he have felt about the city’s massive expansion in the Victorian age?”

Etched on my mind is another episode. In front of the house on the far side of the Lea/Newent Road was a five barred gate leading to a large field which sloped up to the farm labourer's cottage between one hundred and two hundred yards back. We used to visit there frequently because Mamie, who had been in charge of the Manley Power children before coming to us, had been very friendly with the cottagers, Mr. and Mrs. Seeborne. On this particular day I was mounted on a stocky bay pony. The visit accomplished, I was hoisted back into the saddle. The pony, his head pointing home, took off, but there was no one leading it and I heaved at the reins in vain. The pony stopped short at the gate and I shot over its head. Only cuts and bruises resulted, but my riding days only resumed for the eighteen-month equitation course at the Royal Military Academy at Woolwich.

Years later in adolescence on holiday from Wellington during WW1, my mother and I spent ten days at Aston, by when there was an open motor car to meet us. Also present was a distant cousin, Jessie Norman, quite a comely young woman aged around twenty. She and I seemed to enjoy each other's company, played tennis and went cycling together about the countryside. It was a bad case of calf-love. My ma took umbrage that I should be so led astray, and it was rumoured that Uncle Manley had taken a hand in promoting my education. I took her photograph back to Wellington, and we corresponded for several months, but it was not long before she married and migrated to South Africa.

A year or two ago, being in the neighbourhood, I revisited Aston Court. There it stood shabbily exposed to the road, the shrubs and trees which had concealed the drive and all the farm buildings had been destroyed and the garden derelict. The house had been converted into flats. A man in a nearby cottage was my informant. He shared my sorrow.

For the last three or four summers of our London existence, and come June, my mother, Mamie and I took train for Littlehampton. I do not remember having seen Victoria Station in those early years, and thus am pretty sure that we entrained at Addison Road. I can certainly vouch for the presence there of the buff-liveried London Brighton & South Coast locomotives. We spent three weeks in Littlehampton to escape from the smoky enervating air of London. Littlehampton was an unassuming little town on the east bank of the estuary of the river Arun, and a wide expanse of grass separated the town from the sea-shore. In the middle was a white bandstand where a troupe of Pierrots[9] played daily. They were financed, at least partially, by passing a hat round the audience as it lay in deck chairs. Frequent groynes retained the sand along the shore where shrimps and dabs abounded in the shallows. Paddle steamers plied along the coast calling at the short pier beside the estuary. We always rented the apartments kept by Mrs. Maynard at 11 New Road, a terraced house facing west, the river Arun immediately in front, and open country behind it. The house was too small to admit more than one family at a time. We had to shop for food, but meals could be flexibly arranged to suit our needs.

On fine days the routine consisted of sand-castles, paddling and bathing ad-lib with lunch the only interruption. All bathers used bathing machines: small wooden cabins on wheels, the floors gritty with wet sand, dragged up and down the beach by a pony to suit the state of the tide. Machines

[9] Pierrot = character in French pantomime. A buffoon, he wore a loose white tunic with big buttons, balloon sleeves, and white pantaloons. His face was painted white (from www.answers.com)

were book-able from an old woman who also kept bathing dresses for hire. The sexes were segregated. Male bathing dresses fitted tightly from the thigh to the shoulder where buttons held them in place. Females wore beret-style waterproof caps, voluminous blouses fitted with wrist-length sleeves, and tied into the waist with strings or belts, and below these were baggy knickers terminating in frills below the knees. They were made of flannel which, even after strong wringing required twenty-four hours of airing to dry. We trooped back for tea often bearing after a favourable tide a harvest which we had collected in the shrimping net.

My father arrived every Saturday in time for lunch and departed very early on Mondays. I recall one doleful Saturday. I was busy paddling and refused to come our when summoned. My eyes, turned shore-wards, failed to see a bigger than average wave. Down I went – plop. The result disgrace and an afternoon in bed for punishment, and partly to stifle the cold which I was assured must ensue from saturated clothes. On the subject of bed I remember being enchanted in the early mornings by a hitherto inexperienced chirruping song, which I soon discovered came from a swallow's nest beneath the eaves just above the window.

Once or twice on Saturday afternoons my parents took paddle steamer trips. Mamie avoided these; even to walk on the pier provoked nausea. My first eagerly awaited voyage terminated abruptly when a warning shriek from the ship's siren scared me to a spontaneous howl, and I had to be rushed ashore for everybody's sake. A year or two later, I did accompany them to Worthing.

Fine Sundays produced another routine. We took the ferry across the Arun, since the nearest bridge was then at Arundel, and walked a mile or so along the sand dunes towards Bognor. (Regis was bestowed on the town years later by King George V who convalesced there after an illness). We always stopped at the same spot where a hedge or a depression in the dunes shielded us from the then prevalent south-west wind, and partook of our picnic lunch which unfailingly included a home-made veal and ham pie with a boiled egg in the middle. We stayed there until it was time to return home to tea, and it was on one occasion there that I was introduced to kite flying, an unsuitable hobby for Kensington Gardens with its numerous tall trees.

I may not recollect Victoria Station but Kings Cross became very familiar. Every year the four of us, which included Mamie, went north to Alnwick to spend my father's four week holiday with my mother's parents, who were also his aunt and uncle, and with such of my aunts as might be present.

Going away in those days meant trunks and not suitcases. Packing involved much forethought and lists began well in advance. The trunks were carried to the station on the roof of a four wheeler cab. On the return journey home small boys, spotting the luggage, used to run behind us and perch if possible on the rear of the cab to earn a penny or two for helping to unload it into the house.

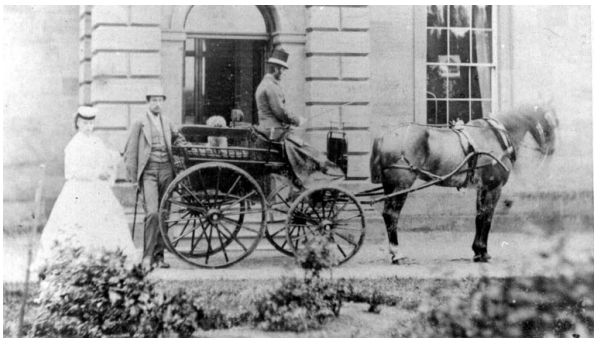
Many porters waited outside Kings Cross for passengers and one took charge of our luggage, trundled it to the label room, and when satisfied that we held tickets, labeled each piece with our destination. He then loaded them into the luggage van and received his tip.

The Great Northern Railway brought us to York, where we exchanged engines with the North Eastern Railway. At Newcastle we changed to a stopping train for Alnmouth, whence the four-mile

branch line took us to Alnwick. The terminus there was surprisingly grand[10]. It boasted a glazed wrought-iron barrel roof above ashlar masonry walls. This was doubtless in honour of, if not financed by, his grace the Duke of Northumberland, the reigning Percy[11] at Alnwick Castle.

Freelands, the Paynter home, lay nearly a mile from the town on the Alnmouth (pronounced Alemouth) Road about a hundred yards beyond its junction with the Newcastle road, now the A1. It was a stone building complete with carriage porch, approached through wrought iron gates and up fifty yards of straight drive. To the left of the drive was a tennis-cum-bowls lawn; to the right behind a row of trees was an iron fence to prevent horses and ponies straying from their paddock. The original building plan must have been a simple rectangle, to which the large annex behind it was an after-thought to cope with twelve progeny and the necessary staff. The gardens included a sizeable redbrick wall-garden with fan-trained fruit trees and box-hedged beds of flowers and herbs. After depositing anyone at the front door, the pony and trap had to circle a bed in front of the porch, in the middle of which was a life-size stone statue of a standing monk, before disappearing down the narrow drive between the house and the left-hand boundary wall which led to the stables. Alongside the stable, above which was the coachman's quarter, was a row of outbuildings containing vehicles, saddlery, and fodder. The coachman, Tommy Train, was a Geordie whose speech baffled a wee southerner. "Are ye gang doon the toon?" was one of his few understandable questions. Off behind the outbuildings and still flanking the paddock, came the kitchen garden which provided a prodigious quantity of vegetables, and soft and hard fruit. In the middle was an earth closet which the men occupied after breakfast so as not to interfere with the female competition for the water closet indoors.

Freelands c.1906 – tennis court on left, cow on right.



Freelands – probably in the 1880s, purportedly of Henry and Henrietta beside the carriage.

H.E.M. Newman at Freelands c 1906

The front door of Freelands opened on to a large hall. Immediately to left and right were the Drawing and Dining Rooms respectively. Next on the left came a straight broad staircase with, to its right, a big table on which of an evening stood an array of candlesticks and matches to light the

[10] The old terminus building is now a famous bookshop, while the branch railway line from Almouth to Alnwick is in the process of restoration (as at 2007).

[11] Percy was/is the Duke of Northumberland's family name – one of the oldest and grandest families in England; staunch Catholics who on several occasions raised armies to fight the King.

way to the bedrooms; there being no gas or electricity, just candles and oil lamps. Behind the stairs was the Smoking Room containing a glass fronted gun rack in one corner, and opposite, to the right, was the Sewing Room. Finally at the far end of the hall a green baize door led to the domestic quarters: pantry, scullery, laundry, kitchen and so forth. In the laundry stood a copper for boiling clothes and a hand operated mangle, and on the pantry table was an old-fashioned circular wood-framed knife cleaner, stainless steel having yet to be invented. The main feature in the kitchen was the coal-fired kitchen range, black-leaded overall. The fire was flanked both sides by ovens, and behind the fire was the water-boiler. The heat was regulated by means of a moveable baffle in the flue pipe at the back. Fuelling was effected by hod through a circular hole normally capped, and there was a hinged flap to the front to allow for stoking. What I have so far described was common throughout the land, but in this case the opened front provided heat for roasting joints of meat on the slowly rotating spit, by then a comparative rarity. Connecting the kitchen quarters with the staff bedrooms was a narrow plain deal staircase, and adjoining the kitchen the younger children of the house were once taught by a resident governess in a capacious school-room.

Upstairs in the main block were four bedrooms and the water closet. In two of the bedrooms were built-in cupboards which, when opened, revealed baths of nearly modern standards. All the bedrooms contained wash-hand stands with basin, jug and soap dish on the top and a slop-pail below; and in those bedrooms without cupboards, round enamel baths were kept under the beds, similar to the amenities at Wellington during WW1. There must have been another water closet if only for the staff, but I cannot recall or imagine where it was.

Now for a note on breakfasts. The gong rang at 8 o'clock and we had to be punctual. The long sideboard in the dining room groaned under its load of porridge, tea, and an array of entree dishes containing a choice of fish, (say, smoked haddock, kedgeree, or fishcakes); sausages or kidney or bacon; eggs in various guises with and without fried bread; and often cold ham; not to mention all the relevant crockery. Racks of toast may have been on the table - I cannot remember - but assuredly there were plates of girdle cakes. These were ubiquitous in the neighbourhood, and were served for tea as well as breakfast. Some were triangular, some round; some were plain, some contained currents, and they would be eaten with marmalade, jam, or just butter. Modern dieticians would deplore the fat content. Indeed I wonder if Northumbrians still follow this custom. (Post-script: No they do not. They were scarcely to be found in the shops when I visited in 1983). Perhaps the girdles, circular sheets of iron surmounted with semicircular strips of iron for handles, are only to be found in cult museums. When the meal was over grandfather remained at the head of the table while the rest of us pushed our chairs back as far as they would go. The bell-rope was pulled and in trooped the servants, all five or six of them in their blue cotton working clothes, white aprons and caps. They distributed themselves along the vacant chairs which lined the wall at the foot of the table. When all were settled, grandfather began to read a passage from the Bible. Then we all turned about, knelt with our elbows on the chairs, while he intoned appropriate prayers. If lucky enough to be by a window, I gazed happily into the garden, and I expect the servant by the window on her side equally enjoyed the view down the drive.

My grandfather, who stood six feet three inches in his socks, sported a huge spade beard which repelled me at the good-night kiss, smelling as it did of whisky and tobacco. He was a strange

Henry Paynter c.1905

character. Years later when I was grown-up, my father told me that he was a master of sarcasm such as to drive his largely uneducated sons from home at the first opportunity, whereas, on the other hand, his popularity with, and hospitality to, his elders and contemporaries prompted so many legacies that he should have died rich had he not been profligate and seldom out of debt. That is as may be, the Duke was among his clients and he thus enjoyed some privileges including access to fishing and shooting rights, sports at which he was notably proficient. He also had the keys to Alnwick Park, and we often drove through it to enjoy picnic teas at Hulne Abbey and the Brisley Tower. On the way several gates had to be opened where fences corralled cattle and deer, and it was always my duty to jump down to open them. But these outings were never on Sundays. On the Sabbath Day thou shalt do no manner of work, thy manservant nor thy maid-servant, thy cattle, etc. I can vouch that maidservants toiled, but cattle here included horses and ponies, and they were strictly protected from Sabbath labour. There was a Sunday post delivery; no postman was allowed to approach Freelands; instead the letters were delivered at Belvedere, a terraced house between Freelands and the town where on the regular walk back from Matins at St. Paul's Church, we called to collect them. In parenthesis, I also learned that Henry Paynter crowned his Sunday austerity after supper with three or more male cronies in the Smoking Room at a whisky-and-whist session. (He kept a chamber pot behind a folding screen, not to mention two spittoons on the floor. That I do remember.)

The owner of Belvedere was my grandfather's younger brother, John[12]. He was shorter and sported only a clipped black beard he seemed to subsist without a job, spending his time growing exquisite carnations in the greenhouse. He was at times cursed with gout in one foot, which he rested bandaged on a footstool. There would be terror in his eyes as I approached lest I should knock it. Uncle John was a widower with four grown-up sons. One Camborne, a sporting type, was often home. The Paynters came from Cornwall but Camborne's speech affected the Geordie. Bill was a horse gunner, having retained his commission after volunteering for the South African war. He served largely in India with Q battery R.H.A., and became renowned one year for winning the Khadir Cup, the major pig-sticking trophy at Meerut. I saw the monstrous silver bauble in Belvedere. Later, after we had moved to Northwood, he stayed with us while recuperating from a liver abscess operation at 'Sister Agnes'. Later still, after retirement, when I must have been either at Woolwich or Chatham, he gave me lunch at the 'In and Out' followed by a trip to Twickenham for the Army and Navy match. The third and fourth sons I never met, neither Pendarvis, who was killed in WW1, nor Peter Paul.

John de Camborne Paynter

[12] By my records John de Camborne Paynter was two years older than his brother Henry Augustus.

Back to Freelands, some four hundred yards away, in full view of the road in front of the house, were railway sidings where coal trucks were constantly shunting, much to my fascination. They were engaged in dispersing a coal tip fed by an endless chain of buckets pulled along an elevated rope-way from Shilbottle colliery about four miles away. My grand father was a part owner of this colliery and I accompanied him in the dogcart on several occasions when he had business there. One memorable day, my father, mother, and I were invited to descend the mineshaft, and thence on rails in a train of trucks we were carried to the coal-face. This was a narrow face and the miners knelt or lay on their sides to wield their picks (I recall no drills). The conditions appeared squalid. One privilege for Freelands was of course, free coal.

My grandmother Henrietta (née Newman) was as dumpy as her husband was tall, her voice a shrill croak; otherwise I retain no special memories of her. She contracted diabetes before the insulin treatment had been discovered, when strict diet was all that medicine could offer, and she died of it in 1913 or 1914. It was rumoured that Henry Paynter then suffered pangs of guilt for the excessive childbirths that he had imposed upon her. Could it have been cause and effect?

The children in order of birth[13] were:

- Katie (1868) married Kingsmill Manley Power, already mentioned.
- Ernest (1869) became a fur trapper in Montana U.S.A.
- William (1870) who shortly after qualifying as a merchant navy officer on the Conway was drowned at sea.
- Fred (1872) a colourless type who experimented with tomato growing in the Freeland's greenhouse before tomatoes were generally popular, then with poultry, which prompted a book on the subject. He finally married an heiress and settled down comfortably in Hounslow.
- Lily (1873) my mother.
- Eva (1876) an invalid, heart &/or TB, who remained a spinster; had a faithful companion in Miss Smith; spent much time in Torquay; learned typing and lace-making.
- Winnie (1878) uncouth but nice; married Bertie McNair Wilson, M. D. practicing at Glanton; later medical correspondent for the Times when he lived at Hendon where we used to visit them; was divorced and migrated to Canada.
- Edwin Colman (Jumbo) (1882) married; lived in a shabby bungalow in Alnmouth; migrated to British Columbia in Canada where he became a sub-postmaster and grew apples.
- Vi (1883) a determined strong character; taught in a London kindergarten; married a widower Frank Lucy, an ex-rubber planter from Malaya; lived at Sutton Valence where I visited them quite often from Chatham.
- Rose (1885) good-looking and man-mad; married Tom Laing of a local family who ranched in Alberta; arid winters and isolation gradually drove her to an early death.
- Edith (Blackie) (1889) married brother-in-law Dr Willie Turner Wilson; lived in Wembley till she died there in I982. To me the best known of them all.

[13] See www.newman-family-tree.net for more up-to-date details of the extensive Paynter family.

- Olive (1895) just like her Ma; married Barclay Henry; lived and died at Arrochar on Loch Long.

Alnwick displayed some unique features. On the way to the town from Freelands one soon passed on the right the so-called Farmers Folly, a tall isolated stone pillar surmounted with the Percy Lion. Local farmers had erected it in the mid-19th century in gratitude for a reduction in their rents. Further along the railway station[14] lay uphill to the left and soon afterwards a road to the right led northeast towards the Bamburgh coast. Still further along after passing a few shops, one came to Bondgate, a narrow tunnel in the wall through which one came upon the wide market-place with shops on both sides, with a slight slope down from left to right. Grand-father's office was at the far end in an unpretentious block, after which one could turn right on the Great North Road (now the A1), passing the precincts of the castle, or leftwards up hill on a minor road leading over the moors towards Rothbury. Black bullets and Berwick cockles were my principal enticements to the shops.

Alnwick High Street – Bondgate in background and the White Swan Inn at left. Presumably the White Swan was the hotel that hosted the auction at which Henrietta's father, Edwin Newman, bought Freelands for his daughter and son-in-law Henry Paynter to live in.

There were footpaths[15] within reach of Freelands. Turning right towards the town, then left at the junction with the Newcastle Road, one could soon climb a stile on the left to a field-path leading quickly to the Calashes, a clear stream between steep banks deeply shaded by low trees and brushwood. Sticklebacks and small birds abounded. Or turning left from the house, after about a quarter of a mile, a field-gate on the left took one along a farm road to the river Aln which was crossable by ford or by stepping-stones to Ethington's Mill. It was in the fields in this direction that we sometimes went hunting for mushrooms. In I907 shortly after Aline (my sister) was born, to the surprise of innocent me, I can clearly remember walking here with my father when we discussed possible names for her, and decided on the appropriateness of the initials A.L.N., 'Lilian' to be the second name. 'Aline' was an afterthought.

Hawkhill lay halfway to Alnmouth. There lived here a farming family called Chrisp, an old couple with several children, one of whom, Etta, had been a contemporary of my mother's at Newcastle High School. So we often called there. The sitting room window disclosed a memorably wide view beyond the first haha[16] to be brought to my attention. One day there at harvest time, I was helping to 'stook' the corn sheaves. The horse-drawn reaper or binder (no tractors yet) had reduced the standing corn to about a tennis court area, when out streamed the terrified rabbits. I chased one to its temporary shelter under a stook, put my hand in and pulled it out alive - quite an event for a small 'townee'.

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[14] See footnote 10 above describing this illustrious station. This and the other features of Alnwick described remain largely unchanged to this day (2007).

[15] The word "footpaths" describes public footpaths passing through private lands that were/are open to the general public whose access rights were/are protected by law.

[16] A haha is a ditch with a wall on its inner side below ground level, forming a boundary to a park or garden without interrupting the view.

Beyond Hawkhill one passed Lesbury, and soon after at a road junction swung left towards Alnmouth which is situated at the estuary of the river Aln, an estuary which then harboured small fishing craft as well as yachts. 'Nat' Dunn, already mentioned, always asked us to lunch at least once. On other visits, we climbed the hill to the north of the town which overlooked the golf course on the low ground between it and the sea, and on which stood a one-time fort converted into a cafe where we ate our tea.

Long expeditions by dog-cart took us as far afield as Seahouses whence we walked along the shore as far as Bamburgh passing Monks House on the way. Monks house was once the home of the heroine Grace Darling who rowed out alone into a stormy sea one night to rescue the crew of a fishing boat in distress. It used to serve the Paynter family as their seaside resort for bathing, fishing, and for trips to the Farne[17] and Holy Islands[18]. By all accounts the annual exodus involved a convoy of carts to carry all the family and its paraphernalia.

Another such drive took us to Glanton to see Aunt Winnie. A longer drive almost due north to Ford and Etal brought us, with a diversion on the way home, to the historical battlefield of Flodden. Such a drive was probably tough on the horse, but it must be remembered that whenever a hill was encountered the passengers dismounted and walked.

In Alnwick itself, we often called in passing at the cottage where the Alnmouth and Newcastle roads met, because this was the home of Emma Kennedy who, before marrying a miner, had been a cook at Freelands. The cottage was noteworthy for me, firstly for the savoury smell of bread rising in front of the open fire, and secondly for watching her son John using a treadle fret-saw to cut jigsaw puzzles for pocket money. In the late sixties, I spent a night in Alnwick on the way home from Scotland. I happened on an old tobacconist in the town who remembered my grandfather. He recommended visiting St Paul's church to see Henry Paynter's name on a board listing the old churchwardens, and remarked incidentally that John Kennedy and his family were now occupying Belvedere. Seen through the gates Freelands looked much as it was but the paddock had been developed.[19]

Another inevitable visit was to Hannah Smith for tea. She had been one of the children's nurses who had married and lived in a small terraced house beyond the railway line. Walking there one day, my father announced that we were about to see a bun dance, and I can recall my disappointment that nothing of the kind had actually taken place.

These annual journeys to Alnwick ceased after I908, the year that had brought us to Northwood. I vividly recall that the Great Central express train, on my father's arrangement with the stationmaster, stopped there to pick us up to take us as far as York. Oh British Rail - Eheu fugaces[20]. And my very last visit, while it was still the family house, although my grandmother had died, was in the Christmas holidays from Wellington in 1914. My mother and I went alone. I met my Uncle Ernest[21] for the first time, otherwise my sole recollection is meeting or seeing somebody

[17] Jeni and I visited Farne Island in 2002. See my UK photos collection. See also 2001 photos of Alnwick, Shillbottle and Seahouses, and 1999 photos of Alnwick.
[18] Holy Island is well worth visiting – a beautiful place steeped in the early history of Christianity.
[19] It hadn't changed much 30 year on (in 2001).
[20] "Eheu fugaces labuntur anni" = Alas! the fleeting years glide on (Latin)
[21] Ernest Paynter, father of Marion.

off at Alnwick station and of hearing there the notorious rumour that Russian soldiers had assuredly come to our aid because snow had been seen in the passenger carriages somewhere or other.[22]

Before closing some notes on dress may not come amiss. Men and women, high and low, wore boots almost without exception before WW1: lace-ups for men, buttons for women. In Lancashire wooden clogs still prevailed. The professional and business men in the towns wore top hats, frock coats, mostly single or butterfly starched white collars and cuffs, sober ties or cravats with tie pins. Gold watch chains straddled between two vest pockets, because wristwatches were yet to come, and a cane or brolley[23] swung from a gloved hand. Even in the country, men without walking sticks were rarities.

Women's hats were less outrageous versions of many still to be seen at Ascot - picture hats with multi-trimmings. Their long and seldom cut hair was worn rolled and twisted into various shapes above or behind the head, and stapled into position with combs and hairpins. Long straight pins with decorated heads were pushed through the tresses to secure the hats from storm damage. 'Putting her hair up' was the tribal ritual signifying that a girl was adolescent no longer.

The shapes and embellishments of women's dresses, blouses, and skirts followed fashion's dictates, but no fashion dared infringe the propriety that insisted upon screening the stockinged ankle and permitting hands to be the only flesh displayed below the neck line. One year, narrow hobbled skirts revealed the curves that lay beneath but the wearers could enter carriages only with the greatest difficulty. Waists throughout were as waspish as tight-laced whale-boned corsets could make them.

The rules for mourning were strict. A widow must wear her black weeds for twelve months from the decease of her husband. Some never relinquished them; others did so gradually through a series of discrete grays and lavenders. Men bore witness to their bereavements with black ties and broad black bands around their left sleeves, but the period for them was more flexible.

Black edged envelopes and notepaper were 'de rigueur' for mourning and when Edward VII died[24], men wore black armbands. Moreover for a while newspapers were printed on black edged sheets with the vertical inter-column lines emphasized.

WW1 made for partial relaxation. Business and professional men took to morning coats or dark lounge suits; bowlers, and later the Anthony Eden[25] homburgs, succeeded the top hats. No heads however were to be seen unhatted or uncapped out of doors. Knickerbockers gave way to plus-fours[26], even for non-golfers, for country-wear. Shoes supplanted boots, other than for cricket and football, and cricket and lawn tennis still required white flannel shirts and trousers.

Women began to disclose that they at least possessed ankles, but knees remained taboo. Clothes varied in shape year by year and corsets were gradually discarded. In general it is fair to say that

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[22] Christmas 1914 was just a few months after the start of the First World War (WW1).
[23] Brolley = umbrella!
[24] King Edward VII died in 1910.
[25] Antony Eden was a British cabinet minister under Chamberlain who resigned his position to join Churchill's anti-appeasement crusade. He joined Churchill's war cabinet and briefly held the position of Prime Minister before being forced to resign in consequence of the Suez fiasco.
[26] As worn by John de Camborne Paynter in the photo above.

hats and frocks became simplified and less larded with elaborate decoration. For a short while cloche hats became the rage, fitting as they did close to the partially-shorn heads. Motoring in the open motor cars of that epoch dictated this if nothing else.

And then came WW2 leading to a slow decline in formal standards, until it became fashionable in certain quarters even to fray and patch new denims before deeming them wearable, while uncut, unwashed hair drooped in unkempt shreds about their shoulders. The price of clothes and general inflation are partly to blame, but it is as if the previous ideal of self-respect had somersaulted into self-contempt. Perhaps at last the tide is turning.

Aline's arrival in 1907 ensured the parting of the ways for the inhabitants of 55 Warwick Gardens. In any case, as I was told later, the relationship between Lily and her in-laws had always been strained. We migrated to Northwood which provided my mother once again with a country environment because Northwood was country in those days, with field-paths in all directions until the building development between the wars desecrated it entirely. My father commuted daily to his office until 1937. The quick train service to Marylebone in a carriage-full of friends lightened the burden. He died there in I947 and my mother followed eleven years later.

My grandmother (Emma) and aunt (Evie) moved to a maisonette at 27 Philbeach Gardens. The old lady died there in I930 aged 86 having remained throughout physically fit but latterly losing her memory almost completely. She confused me with my father when I went to see her, and used to wander the streets in my aunt's absence with no lucid answer as to where she had been, just “up the spout”. My aunt then moved to smaller premises near Barons Court Underground Station, occupied herself as a secretary without typing ability, at last being awarded a quarter in Queen Alexandra's Court in Wimbledon. This was a charitable institution for the impecunious widows and daughters of army officers. She spent the war there refusing to descend to an air-raid shelter however fierce the bombing, until early in I950, having fallen into her fireplace one night, I was summoned to remove her. Her cousin Rowland Newman [27] offered her shelter in his house in Bridgwater, where she died a fortnight later to be buried in East Huntspill churchyard in Somerset[28].

Walter Newman, Emma Montague Browne, Lilian Newman and Evie Montague Browne at Northwood – probably in the early 1920s

[27] Roland Alan Webb Newman or “Rowey”, eldest son of Rowland Newman.
[28] The village next door to Bason Bridge where H.E.M. Newman lived from 1949 to 1962.

EDUCATION

1908 – 1913 Shades of the prison house begin to grow.

Moving to Northwood in 1908 provided a completely new life-style. The new house Edale was rented from a Dr. Perle of Pinner at £60 p.a. It was semi-detached part-brick part-roughcast, its windows casements not like the sashes of London, and it was sited on the NW side of Dene Road, about a hundred yards from its junction with the Pinner-Rickmansworth main road. Dene Road was private; that meant maintained jointly by the householders and not the council's responsibility. Consequently its surface was rough gravel; its verges of unkempt grass flanked gravel paths for pedestrians. The traffic however was minimal, mostly horse and cart, so that one walked in the road with safety. Fronting Edale were green fields, presently rising to the left the road was residential whereas to the right there was a row of four or five humbler workmen's dwellings, a build yard, then finally at the junction with the main road yet another residence.

Edale – c 1910

We had a small front garden. From the straight path to the front door another branched left passing the scullery door and led to the main garden behind. The principle feature of this garden was the lawn, too small for tennis, but a somewhat cramped array of hoops and posts provided croquet every summer. To the left of the lawn the path continued serpentinely ahead, and there were flower beds on the extreme left and right below the boundary wall and hedge respectively. Beyond the lawn was a rose bed in front of a rustic pergola up which climbing roses screened the plot where grew the vegetables and fruit comprising blackcurrants and raspberries. The entire area cannot have exceeded half an acre. Behind the vegetable patch was a hedge, and behind that an open space in which a little to the left grew a large elegant and symmetrical oak tree which in summer hid much of the Kewferry Road, then in course of development, and the parish church which was on the main road.

The house itself, compact and unpretentious, provided just enough space for us and the two maids. The small hall contained a staircase to the left with the kitchen premises behind it, while immediately on the right was the small sitting room and then the dining room with its French window opening onto the garden. On the landing between the ground and first floors were the loo and bathroom in separate compartments. The first floor comprised three bedrooms (one for the maids) and a tiny dressing room for my father. Above, spacious as to floor but restricted by the slope of roof and fitted with dormer windows, was my bedroom at the back with Mamie's and Aline's to the front. As in London we lived with gas lighting and there was a fireplace in every room.

Most of the Warwick gardens furniture accompanied my grandma and aunt to their maisonette at 27 Philbeach Gardens, which backed on to the railway with the Earls Court exhibition grounds beyond. My parents bought their replacements from John Storey & Co. in Kensington High Street

near Barkers. The actual move took place in March. By some means or other my parents had made friends with a family living in a large detached house in Dene Road on the higher ground beyond the slight hill already mentioned, so that I of a sudden found myself packed off for two or three weeks on to Mr. and Mrs. Woodhouse at St Helena for the settling-in period. He was a dentist; her maiden name was Pugsley, from a Kilve, Somerset, family, a locality where the Woodhouse family were wont to spend their summer vacations. Strange the associations however slight with our eventual home some forty years later. There were three sons: one at Rugby too senior to have any truck with me; another at the prep school that I was to join; and the third who would follow me there later. This detachment from the family induced more worry than joy, but the friendship remained intact until Mr. Woodhouse retired and they all left the district.

When I was reunited with my family, it was soon necessary to collect my school uniform which was for Edwardian times quite avant-garde, viz:- no cap or hat, just a floppy grey felt one to be worn only in hot summer sunshine; a white flannel shirt, preferably without a tie but not so enforced; a dark green flannel blazer obtainable from one outfitter only, and grey flannel shorts of which many varieties in length and shape were to be seen with black stockings and boots.

The school building where I joined after Easter had until recently been a private house called Broad Oak, from which the school took its name, in Dene Road about three hundred yards up the hill from Edale. A Mr. A. J. Chadwick had bought the place and adapted it. He was a scholar, a man of high principles, and a games enthusiast to boot. For lack of sufficient accommodation he could accept only day-boys, mostly from the local community, and just a few commuting from Rickmansworth, the next station down the line. A small pine coppice sheltered the house from north winds, and between it and the house a red painted building clad in corrugated iron contained a miniature (.22) rifle range which I personally was too young to use before the school moved (as will be later divulged). A lawn sloped south from the house down to the field boundary hedge and continued to the rear, where behind it was a cinder patch about the area of a tennis court bounded by a six-foot wire netting fence. This was the scenario for the morning break where we rushed shrieking to play such games as tag, and “French-and-English”. The pine copse was of service for an original pastime that entailed certain preparations. We had first to manufacture ammunition, tearing old foolscap paper in to strips, folding these lengthwise four to six times, cutting these into (say) two inch lengths each to be folded into a U-shape. Next we had to strip the skins from several old golf balls, and unwind the gutty (the rubber string which separated the skin from the spherical cork core), cut the gutty in to yard lengths for use doubled. Two captains then picked teams from us, the rabble, and we proceeded to build two forts about fifteen yards apart using the broken branches which lay around in the copse. Then came the battle: we ‘fired’ the paper bullets at the enemy, gripping each bullet between the teeth with the gutty in the U-bend, strained then released catapult-wise. How we scored, won or lost, I cannot recall.

For organised games, a field behind the copse was rented for cricket and the annual sports, and another rented field for football was sited about a quarter of a mile away where Dene Road took a right-handed turn towards the shops and railway station.

My first term was spent in the bottom form under Miss Wurnham's tutelage (the name perhaps misspelled). She gently primed us in reading, writing an arithmetic, which to me happened to be old-hat and easy. She was shortly to be succeeded by either a sister or a cousin of the same

name but by then I had been promoted to the tougher world presided over by masters. Details are blurred in the mind though I remember clearly Messrs. Chadwick and Turner his assistant, perhaps from their appearance in a school group photograph. I suspect the initiation of the very young to the elements of any subject is tough because the fundamentals can only be taught by rote; only later when reason begins to operate does interest spark off enthusiasm. At all events I found the promotion tough. To Arthur Chadwick we went for Latin and English subjects. Towards the end of each lesson he called the class into line in front of his desk and plied us with questions beginning at the top end. If number one answered correctly, well and good, otherwise the question was passed down the line, anyone answering correctly being promoted to take his place above the original bungler. Eventually marks were awarded the final positioning. Was it fair? I doubt it. I think the process discontinued as the chaps learned to handle a pen more instinctively. Mr. Turner led us in to the intricacies of arithmetic beyond simple addition and subtraction, and into elementary French grammar with a more orthodox procedure. There was a system of awarding stars and stripes: stars for especially good work or conduct, and stripes for the reverse. They cancelled each other but an accumulation of ten stars meant the award of a prize, a green leather-bound volume, at prize-giving once a year. Ten stripes ensured a caning. Luckily I never sank that far. A year later an ex-civil engineer joined the staff, but more of him later.

The last hour of a Monday morning was devoted by the entire school to a science demonstration by a Dr. Purl (spelling?) of German extraction. He arrived with a black wooden box out of which came his apparatus to display some comparatively simple phenomena in chemistry and physics. We watched entranced, and my father was encouraged by my enthusiasm to present me with a chemistry set for Christmas. I enjoyed it well enough albeit the chemicals supplied were all innocuous in order to prevent accidents, and I cracked the test tubes over the spirit lamp all too quickly.

Less pleasant was the last hour on Saturdays before the half-holiday. Mrs. McTavish, after private piano lessons, collected the entire school for singing instruction. We stood on benches at one end of the classroom while she at the other accompanied us on the piano the while yelling rude remarks at us. Probably her bullying has put beyond recall any of the songs we were supposed to be singing, and I refused to learn the piano. It is true that my father bought a second-hand set of Charles Halle's Pianoforte Tutor, in all six volumes of classical piano works progressing from the elementary to those demanding an advanced technique, each work preceded by a page of exercises in preparation for the piece to come. My mother taught me the rudiments of musical notation i.e. the symbols that make a sheet of music meaningful. Having fudged the exercises, the noises I produced must have been excruciating to anyone within earshot. I believe my father progressed into volume 3, but I never so much as finished volume I by the time I left prep-school, after which, although I occasionally acquired sheets of highlights of musicals, opera, etc as reminders of live performances, service abroad killed the urge through lack of opportunity, and I always regret the discouragement that Mrs. MacTavish's temperament provided for a potential pupil.

As to family life meanwhile; my father commuted daily to his Clement's Inn office returning home about 6.30 pm, and in time for lunch on Saturdays. No doubt walking to and from the station provided beneficial exercise; anyhow no means of transport existed. In due course a clique of half

a doze congenial chaps daily filled a first class compartment in a Great Central train to Marylebone Station, and for him thence by Bakerloo to Trafalgar Square. The Metropolitan line, by steam to Neasden and electric thereafter, stopped at too many intermediate stations to be tolerated. Sunday mornings after sausages and fried bread was spent at Matins, everyone on foot, and what a dull old vicar he was, and how sausages have deteriorated over the years. The afternoons of both Saturdays and Sundays were spent on country footpaths which seemed to emanate to all the points of the compass, an amenity that gradually declined once the post-WW1 housing development was underway.

Bank holidays took us further afield exploring footpaths approachable from stations down the line such as Chorley Wood, Chesham, and Wendover, Chiltern beech woods in particular were a great attraction. On Boxing Days the old habit of attending a theater persisted, and every November 9th on my mother's birthday, which coincided with the Lord Mayor's show in London, not as nowadays restricted to Saturdays, as in our London days found us congregated to watch the procession through the office window at Clements Inn.

After our final visit to Alnwick in 1908, we spent the summer holidays in apartments at various seaside resorts. For a year or two Mamie accompanied us to take charge of Aline, but on her aunt's death she left to spend the rest of her life in the bequeathed cottage at Frant Forrest (Kent).

In 1909 we went to Minehead. The beach was uninvitingly muddy, however we took advantage of brake trips or wagonette to such places as Dunster, Selworthy, Porlock and the Doone Valley, passengers dismounting to walk whenever we encountered a steep hill. Furthermore paddle-steamers plied from the pier-head and took us to Lynmouth and Clovelly, and on one memorable occasion when my parson great uncle [Rowland Newman] from - was it Dulverton? [Hawkridge and Withypool, I'm sure /CJEN] - joined us with his choir or bell-ringers, we crossed the Bristol Channel to Barry and Cardiff. The return stamped it on the mind: a high wind had risen, the sea was rough and sea-sickness assailed me for this one and only time.

Next year it was East Runton just north of Cromer. Friable cliffs fringe the beach up which were drawn several small fishing craft equipped with lug-sails and oars. Crab-pots were stacked nearby and fishing nets were slung over a wooden paling to dry and to be repaired. We made friends with one of the older fishermen, a Mr. Brownsel, illiterate but a repository of local folklore. I accompanied him several times crab-potting, or to fish for plaice and dabs using a lead-weighted line. A few tramp steamers passed to and fro out to sea, also fully rigged schooners, barques, and brigantines. I recall no yachts as such. We explored the countryside in a hired governess cart.

I have referred in my "Reminiscences" to Hunstanton as our venue for 1910. It was then a small village known locally as Hunston whereas the main town a mile or so to the south where the railway station was described as New Hunstanton. Few memories remain. (Thank God for that, readers will be saying). One tourist attraction for children were the polls on sale that were to be used for leaping from rock to rock over the pools below the cliffs. We did visit the Sandringham House grounds.

1912 was climactic. The holiday was in Newquay, Cornwall, and it was a disagreeably wet and stormy season. Below the cliffs perpetual surf and during the frequent storm notices were posted warning bathers against the dangerous undertow. I remember a 'German Band' in uniform playing

for pennies in our terraced street, and the spectacular launching of the local life-boat for funds down a very steep ramp, reminding one of the water-chute at the old Earls Court exhibition grounds. Then probably during our third week came a telegram from Northwood - telephones being scarce in those days - Edale had been struck by lightning. So my father took the train at once to investigate. He discovered that the fireplace and mantelpiece in the dining room had been blown into the room. In consultation with the owner it was decided that investigating the complete extent of the damage and its repair would render our return home on the intended date impossible. The result was a further a three week extension of our holiday which we spent further down the coast in St. Ives, and what a benign change that was. Not only did the weather mend but we exchanged townee surroundings for rooms in an old fashioned fishing community with a view over the picturesque bay. This bay was sheltered by the promontory to the west, and the bathing was unrestricted. Additionally the countryside and cliff scenery were ever so much more exciting. We trailed spinners for mackerel from hired sailing boats, made wagonette trips to Lands End, Penzance and Falmouth, and enjoyed genuine Cornish pasties, baps, saffron buns, cream, and locally caught shell fish.

Whether the Edale catastrophe speeded our exit from it I can only surmise, but that autumn it so happened that a Mr Harris decided to sell the Red Cottage in Dene Road. My parents had long admired and coveted this house, situated a stone's throw from the shops, so it was duly bought and we moved there before Christmas.

Now I must digress back to Broad Oak and 1910. Arthur Chadwick unexpectedly died, and the ex-engineer whom I have already mentioned, whose name was Blouet was put in charge of a very onerous task which he fulfilled most admirably. Mr Chadwick must long have been determined to provide boarding accommodation and, unknown to us boys, had put his plans into action, because that autumn or perhaps early in 1911, a new establishment, named Forres was opened and at once fully operational. It stood beyond Ducks Hill on the road to Ruislip, a short way down a lane to the right which led to the field path to Harefield. My best route to it lay through the gravel pits, a couple of hundred yards down the main road towards Pinner, path through them leading to the Ruislip Road below the hill.

The pits had been exhausted of gravel and the council had acquired the ownership of the property covering several acres. Wild life was regenerating among the old excavations, and the rough grass, wild shrubs and young trees made a splendid playground which I with Tom Darlow, a Billy Bunter-like school-fellow and near-neighbour, exploited during the holidays. I recall Red Indian games, and boat-racing with short sticks which we floated down a narrow cut fed by a spring which wound its ways around the undulations. One calm summer day Tom remarked: "I can prove that God exists. See these leaves all stock still? Just pray hard now and they'll move". Lo and behold, an almost imperceptible zephyr ensured that they did.

The walk from Edale to Forres look about fifteen minutes. Forres was a rectangular roughcast block purpose-built to contain all requirements including the dining hall, changing rooms for games and so on. There was even a convenient cottage just down the lane for Glassock the groundsman. The grounds sufficed for separate football and cricket pitches, an outdoor swimming pool, a gravelled plot with horizontal beams and a shed for other equipment for Miss Bunyards weekly class in Swedish Drill (later P.T. or P.E.), a 'giant's stride', and a carpenter's shop for our tuition.

After a few terms R.M. Chadwick (Mac to his friends), Arthur's younger brother, arrived with his wife to take charge. He could have been a recent graduate from Oxford. Certainly he was activity itself at football practice, wearing a rugger vest in Harlequin colours. His temperament was warmer than Arthur's and he was well liked from the start.

Boarders were in residence, but I remained a day boy, though a 'school luncher'. Day boys became a depressed caste subject to persecution, which could take the form of an ambush sprung from either the woods or the field hedges beside the Ducks Hill Road, or as I recall on several occasions, a budding scientist wired the door handle to a battery-charged induction coil, completing the potential circuit by saturating the doorstep, and in this way inflicting on us quite severe electric shocks. I eventually became one of the elite when in the autumn of 1912 I was promoted to be a weekly boarder. After one week of emotional shock I grew to enjoy school as never before, this despite matutinal cold baths which one learned to simulate when Matron's back was turned. In the summer term when weather permitted, we plunged instead into the swimming pool. This pool was also the arena for toy ships, sailing and clockwork, and it was there that learned to swim.

With a few changes the Broad Oak routine was repeated, unfortunately Mrs MacTavish reappeared, and we lost Dr. Purl. In his stead, a tiny grey-haired French lady (a Mme Durain or some such name) inveterately clothed in black, came once weekly for French conversation. Being inept at languages I contributed mighty little but it was a revelation to hear authentic French pronunciation and I envy the youngsters who now train in language laboratories. Additionally we read aloud bits of Tartarin de Tarascon and Le Roi des Montagnes, and we learned by heart several Fables de la Fontaine such as 'Le Lion et le Rat', and 'Le Grenouil qui veut se faire aussi gros que le Boeuf'. First Mr Biouet, and then after his retirement, probably 1913, Mr. Frank Green, one of the builder brothers in Dene Road, taught us woodwork in the carpenters shop, a skill that I had already begun to acquire under the latter's guidance in a private capacity.

We dealt with preparation fairly early of an evening, after which one of the masters relaxed us reading aloud stories like Ryder Haggard's King Solomon's Mines and Conan Doyle's Sherlock Holmes yarns. Occasionally we assembled in the emptied dining hall for boxing instruction resulting in a few bloody noses; and there were at least two memorable evenings when a boy's mother a Mrs Stewart Wilson, entertained us with songs at the piano. Radio was beyond imagination in those days and her songs were those currently popular for home entertainment. I cannot resist the temptation (Oh bad luck) to introduce two of her catchy choruses;

"I'm all aquiver when the moon is out;
I hardly seem to know what I'm about;
skipping; hopping; never, never stopping;
I can't keep still although I try
I'm all aglowing when the moonbeams glance
that is the time when I long to dance;
I can never close a sleepy eye;
when the moon comes creeping up the sky."

And

"With rings on your fingers and bells on your toes
Elephants to ride upon my little Irish rose.
Then come to your naboh on next St Patrick's Day.
Be mistress mumbo-jumbo-diddygo-Shea, O'Shea.

Sometimes there were school sing-songs from an anthology called Gaudiamus, said to have been the Harrow School compilation, and, if so, it must have been introduce by Mrs Arthur Chadwick, the daughter of a master there. And we rehearsed for some weeks annually to put on stage some entertainment for the parents, in which I can only remember once being dressed as a Red Indian squaw.

I was never a cricket addict. Sitting, waiting for an innings, or for a spell of fielding, which in itself inferred waiting for a ball to come ones way and the monotony of changing over every six balls, used to set my mind drifting towards better methods of spending time such as amongst the wild-life in the surrounding countryside. In this connection I did one summer term win a green-bound copy of Gilbert White's Selborne for a competition for a collection of pressed wild flowers Eventually seniority dragged me into the team. I fielded as wicket-keeper, in which position wool-gathering was impossible. Contrarily I enjoyed the hurly-burly of the football field and the comparatively short duration of a game and I managed to win my school colours at right back. We played matches against several other schools travelling for 'away' games by wagonette when distance permitted, otherwise by train if as far away as, say, Wendover.

On wet days in winter we could be paper-chasing. Firstly we had to tear old newspapers into small bits and pack them into a couple of linen bags fitted with slings, one for each of the two hares. With ten minutes grace before the pack was let loose, accompanied by a master the hares set off to use their initiative to lay a trail with intermittent handfuls of torn paper also contriving every so often to delude the pack with a false sideways diversion. They used any lanes, field paths or even roads when necessary (traffic mainly draught horse was minimal), and their aim was to return uncaught to school after a predetermined time. Litter-bugs? Surely these were born of plastic wrappings and the car explosion which distributed them half a century later.

Through seniority I succeeded as head boy in 1913, one of whose duties was to ring the hand-bell to announce the end of each teaching session, akin to the cricket umpire's call for 'over' every six balls. During the autumn term I was put to answering questions set for past common entrance examinations, and was thus primed for the climax of my prep-school career for entry into Wellington.

I may as well interpolate here that the Forres premises were requisitioned during WW1 when the school was transported to Swanage in Dorset. A Mr. Terry had meanwhile opened a new school in Northwood for day-boys only, since when ours had dwindled through being further away, so this move was beneficial seeing that Forres remains a flourishing institution to this day.

Back again to family affairs it was probably in 1910 that I was given a second-hand boy's bicycle which my mother taught me to ride in the road in front of Edale, grabbing the saddle behind me and gradually releasing the grip as I became competent. I was then able to accompany my parents on Saturday afternoons when they opted for a spin. One day our destination was Hendon

aerodrome to see a flying display. Disappointingly there came a wind deemed too strong for the safety of the aviators in their stick and canvas biplanes. One actually did brave the elements, taxied over the grass (no runways), accelerated and rose about ten feet above the ground for a furlong or so to gratify the waiting crowds. The rare sound of aircraft over Northwood brought everyone out to watch. We never spotted any monoplane like one that Bleriot used in his pioneering cross-channel flight. However one or two competitors passed over in a London to Manchester race. I think they all required a night or two stop-offs along the route. Hendon was also the reason for another visit by me and my mother to see her sister Winnie who was living there while she was married to Dr. McNair Wilson, who then was medical correspondent for the Times newspaper. We similarly rode to Hounslow to see her brother Fred. One day we made Windsor to see the castle, and in 1912 while the Olympic Games were under way in the White City, if I remember rightly, we watched the marathon runners passing through Eastcote, of whom the winner was the Italian athlete Purando.

Winnie Paynter

Also in 1910 I received my first camera, a Kodak 'Box Brownie No 2' I believe. It cost ten shillings. Included were a developing tank, a printing frame, and dishes. It was daylight printing to begin with: gaslight paper, a darkroom lamp and magnesium ribbon to flare, were bought later. So began a hobby that was to provide a pictorial aide-memoire to most of a lifetime's pilgrimage.

Among the series of visitors to Edale was my godfather Stirling Hamilton who arrived in his small two-seater swift. He gave my mother and me a joy-ride. The car stalled on the steepest gradient of Ducks Hill. He backed gently, free-wheeling to the bottom, turned about, and climbed it successfully in reverse!

Two notable events were the death of King Edward VII in 1909 and King George V's coronation in the following year. For each occasion, my father booked tickets for seats in the law society's stand close to the Admiralty Arch in the Mall, to see the processions. Both involved leaving Edale at 6.30 am to catch a train to enable us to be seated before police closed the roads, so that we probably sat waiting several hours. Troops lining the route and those in the processions wore full dress uniforms, a colourful display in the tradition of several centuries, which except for the Guards Brigade and regimental bands, were abolished forever after WW1. All was arms reversed and slow marching for the funeral but allegro vivace for the coronation. Memorably both events gathered together all the crowned heads of Europe. For the funeral, they all followed on foot behind the sailor-drawn gun-carriage hearse, the late monarch's fox terrier, Caesar on a lead, and his charger empty-saddled with his parade boots reversed in the stirrups. For the coronation they were all mounted. Many lost their monarchies as the result of WW1.

WW1 also meant that our 1913 seaside holiday would be the last for me to be present throughout with the family. After the war, I was only (if at all) able to be present only fleetingly. In 1913 we went to Whitby, a worthy finale for it had much to recommend it, particularly the fishing community and their dwellings below the cliffs each side of the estuary of the River Esk. On the cliff to the south-east stood the ruins of the historical abbey, and on the opposite cliff was the Victorian township where we stayed in a terrace near the parish church. The North Sea is frigid for bathing

in, but we made good use of the beach on coastal walks as far as Staithes and we explored much of the lovely moorland background, basing our walks on Esk Valley villages such as Goathland.

The Red Cottage, which we occupied in 1912, remained the family home until my mother's death in 1958. It was a long low building dating from 1904 and designed by an architect of some repute whose name I forget. It contained two floors only, the upper-storey windows facing fore and aft, required gables over them two each side. On the ground floor were bow windows for the drawing room (2), the smoking room, and the kitchen; the dining room window projected forwards in a rectangular frame. The ground floor walls were faced in Flemish bond brickwork; the upper floor walls were clad in matching tiles. The entire garden frontage running north and south, was bounded by a low white painted wooden fence, behind which grew Dorothy Perkins rambler roses supported on a continuous rustic pergola. Three gates broke the pergola's continuity: a wide one at the north end for a gravel drive to the garage, and two small ones for paths to the tradesmen's entrance, and the path to the front door respectively.

The Red Cottage, Northwood, from H.E.M.N.'s collection

This front door of solid oak studded with black square nail heads was protected by a porch supported on two substantial pillars of Purbeck marble. Standard roses flanked the front path at intervals and my father stepped out very morning before breakfast to record the maximum temperatures from a thermometer fixed to a narrow rustic arch in front of the dining-room window.

Red cottage – Lilian and Aline seated at front porch.

The main garden feature behind the house was the lawn tennis court surrounded during the summer by a six-foot string net to stop balls going astray or smashing windows. The entire garden sloped slightly down towards the south, consequently that end of the lawn had been elevated to compensate, and here behind the net was a waist-high privet hedge clipped into castellations. Below this was a rose garden. Had this not been bounded on the three other sides by a six foot privet hedge itself backed on the south side by close-planted Lombardy poplars, roses might have flourished. The gawky starvelings planted in eight rectangular grass-separated beds were potentially architectural. In fact the sole redeeming feature was a stone pedestal with a sundial on top. A gap in the eastern hedge admitted entrance via a four-way rustic arch: north from it led to the house; east to another equally pathetic but circular rose garden, and south to a

small stone-encircled concrete pool. A broad herbaceous border transforming to a rockery rising by steps at its northern end, separated the lawn from our western boundary fence. A comparatively prosperous rose bed flanked the lawn to the north in front of climbing roses which concealed the fruit and vegetable plot. This was fenced to the south and west by espalier apple trees, and bush apples grew behind them, all to the detriment of any vegetable that were optimistically planted there.

Our apples were stored in a corner cupboard that stood in the wood-framed and weather-boarded garage. We kept no car; it merely contained a workbench and garden tools.

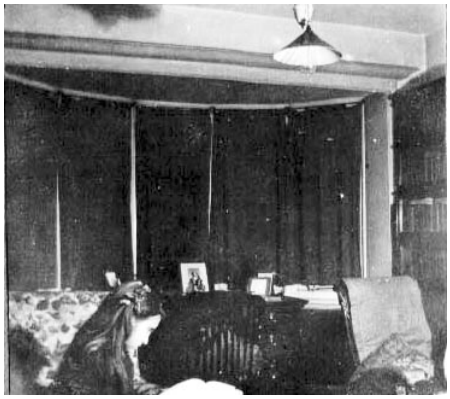
Between the bow window and the lawn on the south side of the house, there were wall-trained peach and nectarine trees, but ignorance as to their treatment resulted in paucity of fruit year after year.

The front door gave access to a sizeable white panelled hall, to the north and south of which were double doors leading to the drawing- and dining-rooms respectively, supposedly intended for more lavish entertaining than we were ever to offer. Straight ahead was the small smoking room outwith which tobacco was taboo. My father read aloud every night in this room from books borrowed from The Times Lending Library until his last declining months in 1947.

Drawing Room – Red Cottage

Drawing Room – Red Cottage

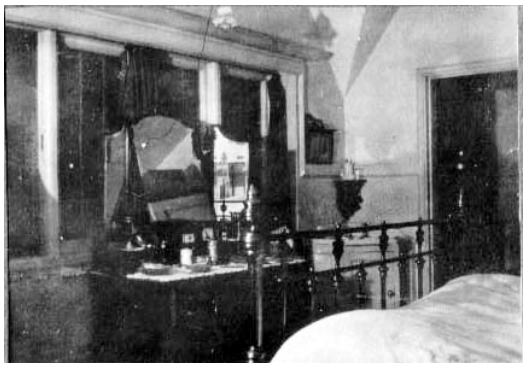
Dining Room – Red Cottage



Smoking Room – Red Cottage (Aline seated)

From the right hand corner of the hall, a passage led to the garden door. Just before it on the right, one turned under the stairs to the pantry, which was also approachable from the dining-room. Through the pantry, one came to the capacious kitchen and beyond that to the scullery and back

door. There was access to the coal cellar from the scullery as well as from the yard outside, and there beyond the coal cellar was the outdoor loo for the maids.



Main Bedroom – Red Cottage

The stairs after three ninety degree twists, led to a long landing which was the perfect setting for a straight length of rails with switches and branch lines into sundry rooms for my No. I gauge clockwork train. Leading off the landing, working clockwise, the doors opened to the loo, the maids' room, my parents' bedroom and a tiny dressing room, a bedroom just as small, the visitors room, my room, the bathroom, and the hot linen cupboard with the hot water cylinder. Every morning next to me in the bathroom, my father enjoying the resonance, sang snippets from Gilbert and Sullivan and Victorian popular songs, the while drying himself after his inveterate cold plunge. Three bedrooms, including mine, had basins with running water, but there was no central heating. This really spread to private houses only after WW2. As was customary, every room had a fireplace; notwithstanding only the reception room fires were ever lit. But we did encounter for the first time the boon of electric lighting, inheriting indeed one or two of the old-fashioned carbon filament bulbs emitting their rather dim golden illumination. All filaments, including the later tungsten ones, were coiled.

To begin with, the shops in Green Lane at the bottom of our road were concentrated on the south side where it climbed toward the station. On the opposite side was the Manor set in several acres of ground, and it was these grounds that faced us across the road; beautiful trees behind wooden palings screening the railway cutting behind them. After the war the Manor was sold. Shops began to line Green Lane on both sides; the Manor was demolished and a row of detached houses faced us over the way. General development spread during the next two decades like a canker over our once beautiful countryside, rendering Northwood an increasingly depressing place to visit.

EDUCATION Part II

Memory is too befogged for any consecutive saga to emerge, and I can only attempt a category by category summary of Wellington College, perhaps to be followed by a similar one devoted to the RMA Woolwich.

1914-1918 Wellington College

It was twilight on a mid-January afternoon that I bade good-bye to my parents on the Reading platform of Wellington College station. We had changed there that morning from the GWR non-stop from Paddington. This procedure was quicker than using the SE&CR the entire way from Charing Cross which I later perforce used on the so-called 'School Special', and which involved a long loop south via Redhill etc. with frequent intermediate stops. The station's name in those days was indeed 'Wellington College'. Crowthorne had been a mere hamlet when the college was officially opened in 1859. Gradually it grew commercial-wise because of the school, and also residentially, especially for commuters from the surrounding townships, until Crowthorne traffic predominated and the railway responded by changing the station's name. I had indeed glimpsed the college on a day trip the previous autumn with the family, but even so I strolled alone apprehensive as to my initiation into college life. I returned to the Hill (my elected dormitory) to find there two more new arrivals equally on edge. We were all soon to become 'squealers', the contemporary name for everyone under puberty.

The college ambience was rural, largely among pinewoods, whose dull dark green-blue never varied throughout the seasons, which, upon later reflection, ensured that I would never choose the like for permanent residence. However the grounds were extensive and self-contained, and from my later acquaintance of many other school situations in, or on the edge, of towns, or even beside farmland, I became grateful for the comparative isolation that I remember.

The main entrance to college, Great Gate, faced north and was approached by a short drive, rhododendrons to either side and with one of our lakes in the far background. This drive debouched from the long kilometre drive running east and west between Wellingtonias, with an ornamental wrought iron gate at either end opening onto a public thoroughfare.

Passing through Great Gate one came to the front quadrangle, separated from the rear quadrangle by Great School, at this time a Natural History Museum. To either side of the two quadrangles at ground level were classrooms surmounted by eight dormitories, each named after one of the Iron Duke's (Wellington's) generals. Each pair occupied two storeys one above the other. These dormitories were the equivalent in all respects of houses in other public schools apart from our sharing a communal dining hall. The Hill was the lower dormitory under the Lynedoch on the west of front quad. Each pair of dormitories was served by staircases within one of the towers to either side of Great School. Down the middle of each dormitory ran a wide corridor between two rows each of about 15 or 16 cubicles fronted and separated by wooden partitions (known as 'Tish') with a gap between tish and ceiling of about 5 feet. Each cubicle with its own large window served as bedroom and study, and it contained standard furniture: bed, desk, wooden chair, a bookcase above the bed, a padded seat below the window, and a circular bath tub with a large water-can

under the bed. A big water pipe ran under the window seat to serve as radiator in cold weather, but it became so choked with lime during the autumn that the flow was inadequate to be effective during the Lent term frosts. All garnishes such as pictures, a wicker armchair, cushion covers and curtains were matters of private choice and purchase. The privacy thus provided was unique amongst public schools where even studies had to be shared. The lower of the dormitories terminated in balconies which in summer provided fresh air, a platform from where several chaps could view the scene below, and where imminent leavers had access to a wall on which to carve their names in memoriam. Between the classrooms and the lower dormitories were the annexes containing yet more cubicles though with lower ceilings. House masters called “Tutors” supervised the inmates of each dormitory. One each was the general rule, but married tutors had suitably large quarters either side of Great Gate so that we shared one with the Lynedoch, and likewise the Anglesey and Blucher opposite had one. To reduce their responsibilities somewhat, our annex was uninhabited, whereas the other annexes were all shared between the two dormitories concerned, slightly handicapping us having less to choose from when it came to competitive games. The bachelor tutors all lived in ‘Siberia’ along first floor passages around Green Quad immediately to he west of the Hill.

The SE corner of the rear quad led to a covered passage leading east past the school library, which projected into the South Front, on the way to the Chapel, to the north of which was the Combermere Quad, nonexistent in my father’s era, longer than it was broad, and named after the lower of the two new dormitories at its eastern end. Above it was the Hardinge. The complete quad was overlooked from the west by the Beresford and Orange. On its north side at the far end was the Ushers’ (Assistance Master’s) Common Room. Next came the Dining Hall and kitchen complex. This Dining Hall had to be built because the original one in the back quad was too small to accommodate the two new dormitories. The old one had been completely filled with chairs for use as a lecture hall, and as a venue for the whole school whenever “The Master” found it necessary to address us on disciplinary matters or what-have-you. And during WW1 the candidates taking the Woolwich/Sandhurst entrance examinations sat there instead of going to London headquarters of the Civil Service Commissioners hard-by the Royal Academy. The Matron’s quarters were attached to the west-end of the Dining Hall. She did not attend to our health, but was responsible for unpacking the launderable contents of our luggage, stacking it in the multitude of compartments from which we each received a bag-full every week, and sent back to her the equivalent for washing. If ever during the week an extra item was required, one entered and bawled down the stairwell one’s requirement and one’s school number and, lo, it came! Incidentally my school number was the remarkably simple No.2. Besides all this, she organized the ‘Mart-hags’, a squad of whom came to each dormitory once a week to sweep up all the dust and cobwebs.

Between the Dining Hall and the Anglesey and Blucher were the changing rooms opened probably in 1915. Prior to the opening we changed for games and washed down afterwards in dormitory, using as of a morning, the hot water obtainable in the washhouse room just behind the dormitory doors. I must add that our morning bath-water, dragged into the corridor, invited a raspberry should the prefect on duty detect no symptom of soap having been used!

At the NE corner of the Combermere Quad emerged a staircase from the subterranean passage which led to The Picton, a dormitory since 1910, which in my father's day was Griffith's House, and straight below the end of the Combermere a passage led to the 'Tin-Tabs' (Tabernacles). These were three classrooms in a row cheaply built of red corrugated-iron walls and roofs, and lined with timber. To the right and beyond a grass lawn was the small music school after which came the gymnasium with the armoury attached; the carpenter's shop; the miniature range; and one or two other insignificant shacks whose purpose I cannot remember.

Now for the houses, There were four of them. The register tells me that in 1914 they acquired permanent names, until when they were known by the names of their respective house-masters; for my generation it was these old names which remained in general use. So at the eastern end of the long drive Pompey's (Pearson's) was officially The Wellesley; opposite was 'Tigs (Roger's) The Talbot. Shoddy's (Upcott's), The Stanley, was not far behind The Picton on the lane which connected it diagonally with the long drive. Lastly came Bevir's, never to be nicknamed. To reach it one left the back quad by the passage from the SW corner, taking one past the physics lab, and its store on the other side manned by one Arvold, who sold us such things as films; then, out by the "Path of Duty" gate passing the Master's Lodge and bearing half left along a narrow lane. Halfway between Bevir's and Turf, the expansive cricket ground, was the "Sanatorium". At the far edge of Turf and beyond "The Rockies" football ground were the swimming baths, The open-air swimming bath remains as it was, but what is now the cinema was in my time the heated indoor bath where I passed my swimming test first time in, and was thus not involved in the official training that many had to undergo.

Like all new arrivals I was allotted a room near our balcony from which the only view was of the slate roof covering Tutor's house, Great Gate, etc; but like our predecessors, one was permitted to change to a better cubicle when it came vacant through someone leaving. We were surprisingly kindly treated, free from fagging duties for three weeks while learning what was necessary to be learnt about local geography and normal routine. There was a small printed map-sheet clearly showing the many out-of-bounds areas free only to College prefects. It was customary for every prefect, both College and dormitory prefects, to choose a room fag (to keep his room tidy) and a brew fag - brewing signifying making cocoa at the gas-heated urn just outside the doors at the end of the corridor in the autumn and spring terms, and similarly preparing cold drinks during the summer, presumably procuring all the ingredients from "Grubbies". (Incidentally, the gas ring roasted the chestnuts that we collected in season in the woods adjoining the road to the Finchampstead Ridges). These special fags were excused from general fagging duties: these involved the last to arrive at a prefect's door after he had bellowed 'Fa-a-a-ag'! Any potential fag found to be shirking his duty, skulking in his room, received six of the best the same evening. Jobs were reasonable. One could be sped to buy something at Grubbies, or at John Hunt the bookseller, or the outfitter on the opposite side of the road, which were indeed the only shops 'in bounds' for us; or to take a message to another dormitory about an impending team game to take a few examples. Being the custom I felt no resentment, and in due course came to consider the practice a healthy lesson in humility for those who had become little 'tin gods' at their preparatory schools. After all, one begins from the bottom in all walks of life. The head of dormitory was G.C.K. Watson, fair and considerate, towering above us and revered. In the 1937 Waziristan fracas we met again, he commanding an Indian Mountain Battery, I similarly with a Field Company of Sappers and Miners,

in one or two perimeter camps. We much enjoyed reminiscing during the evenings. Sadly he died fighting in North Africa. Another, much younger, to me memorable head of dormitory was Marcus Crofton, the son of an Irish peer. Under his leadership we became something of a democracy. I was never lucky enough to meet him subsequently.

The routine ran more or less as follows: - the Dormitory-man having cleaned the shoes that we had put out the previous evening, picked up one of them and used it to rap at every door either side of the corridor at 7.15 usually, but at 6.30 in the summer for early school when that preceded chapel and breakfast. Otherwise it was breakfast first to be followed by chapel, and classrooms as per timetable. The morning quarter-hour break was principally to enable us to change books etc. in one's room, and there was another interval before lunch. Thursdays and Saturdays were half-holidays, otherwise we had afternoon school, in summer about 2.00 to 4.00pm, and in the Lent and autumn terms 4.00 to 6.00pm, after which came tea. Then preparation from 7.00 to 8.30pm followed by 'swipes' (supper) - the name surviving from my father's time when the fare included weak beer, hence the word. Now it was bread and Bovril! Then came evening chapel except on Thursdays when Tutor took prayers in dormitory. Finally more 'prep' time till lights out at 9.45pm for the lower school, and 10.00pm for the rest of us, bar the prefects who were exempted. Every weekday we were obliged to perform a "change" in the afternoon, which implied, if not an organized team game, then some exercise at squash of fives, or going for a run, or a parade once a week for those in the OTC; or it might be net practice or a 'punt-about ', according to season. One could only be excused by a medical certificate from the Sanatorium stating a disability. Sundays differed: 8.00am communion for the confirmed; a roll call in the front quad at 8.30am form by form; breakfast; divinity lesson at 10.00am; Matins at 11.00am and after lunch a walk. Dormitory was declared out of bounds from 2.00 to 3.300pm; on hot afternoons in the summer reading prone on the South Front or beside one of the lakes was permitted. Evening chapel was at 5.15pm from which even a Sunday leave-pass did not provide exclusion.

I notice from the modern Register that a chaplain has now to be appointed. In my day there were no less than seven Reverends on the staff, who took turns to lead all the chapel services a week at a time. Moreover W.W. Vaughan was the first lay Master since inauguration. The first was Edward white Benson, sometime Archbishop of Canterbury, whose overlong Bidding Prayer preceded every sermon. (Almost as long was the daily Grace read before lunch by the Usher on duty.) Gone too now is the Wellington College Hymn Book of which my specimen is still extant in one of my bookcases.

My first Tutor was the Rev. C.T. Lavie, an O.W. (Old Wellingtonian) whom my father remembered. After one term he replaced' Joey' Bevir, another OW, as house-mater in the newly named Benson. We then had a year under the Rev. 'Tom' Lemmey, the best we were to get. He left to take over the Wellesley, to be followed by (Major) Collett, who in turn went to the Stanley in 1918, giving me just one term under the Rev. (Bounder) Wright. E.M. Eustace came as a stopgap for one term, but which I forget. These rapid changes were deplorably destabilizing.

One's Tutor visited us all in turn of an evening for a friendly chat. It amounted to about once a fortnight. He distributed mail in the dining hall; he banked one's 'capital' at the start of each term to be drawn piecemeal as required; and he handed out our weekly pocket-money, a mere shilling!

One went to him for a chit to see the doctor, and for a leave-pass whenever family or friends invited one out, and he distributed railway tickets for our journeys home at the end of each term.

The mention of Sunday walks above suddenly reminds me of my first one which I took in company with a certain Verschoyle, my classroom neighbour whom I liked. There was a sharp reprimand for me that evening because he was a member of Bevir's Dormitory; relationships must never again be so polluted!

As regards the dining hall:- as one entered it there were long tables to right and left. Each lower dormitory occupied one on the left, each upper one to right. The Hill and Lynedoch were the furthest away from the entrance. Centrally behind us was an alcove wide enough to provide one door trough to the kitchens, and several serving counters from which the waiters (jallyhos), our dormitory-man included, served our meals. The jallihos were smartly dressed in brown morning suit type coats with brass buttons, red waistcoats, and navy blue trousers. We squealers began life at the bottom of the table, gradually progressing up as the leavers departed, the head of dormitory supervising us from the very top. College prefects occupied a separate table on a dais with The Master. All food was supplied barring jams and marmalade which we brought each term in our wooden tuck boxes. Food supplies were ample to begin with but when rationing was introduced during WW1, one was confronted at breakfast, as an example, with a hunk of bread and a lump of margarine with no chance of obtaining more, and other items of diet were equally restricted. Sugar shortage meant jam shortage, even at home; honey was just about unobtainable. For a while they recorded our weights every so often in the Gym (fortnightly of so) to ascertain if there were adverse effects on our physique.

WW1 affected us in other ways. The entire school used to run from Great Gate around Broadmoor Asylum (for the criminally insane) and back again every Shrove Tuesday afternoon (to help us to digest pancakes?), and I took part in 1914 event. This was discontinued because of the food restrictions. Likewise, the Kingsley races, also in the Lent term. Speech Days were also cancelled. I was present for the 1914 event, but the dining hall where the speeches and prize-givings took place was filled by the somewhat senior chaps and their parents, so that I never witnessed the ceremonial routine. Book production was reduced and shoddy to boot, so that, what were hitherto prize books, became mere paper certificates to be substituted for books at the end of hostilities. There were fewer inter-school matches for us to watch, and by the time I was 15 years old and eligible to attend OTC camps, they had given way to Harves Camps for the assistance of farmers whose labour force had been depleted by conscription. I attended two of these, one at Raglan Castle and another at Docking in Norfolk, near Hunstanton. A melancholy feature was the steady accumulation of Rolls of Honour listing O.W. war-dead, each pasted to and covering more of the dormitory corridor 'tish'.

All in the lower school who failed to reach the top few in the fortnightly form order placings, did their 'prep' in the class-room at the bottom of the dormitory stairs under the supervision of an usher. The privileged remainder performed theirs in the silence of their cubicles, a silence liable to be punctuated by the noise of a door opening and the occupant calling "Speak to (so-and-so) please" to seek consultation over some point, and requiring a prefect's permission to do so; or it might be "Half way down please" indicating the need to visit the loo situated down the stairs half-way

down to ground level, and only unlocked over night for such emergencies. The daytime loos were situated at the end of a covered passage beyond the left-hand corner of Green Quad.

Another feature of dormitory life was the collection of a shilling from each member at the beginning of every term to finance the buying of records for the Dormitory gramophone that stood on a table midway along the corridor. The purchases were discussed and voted upon, and consisted mainly of revue and music hall songs with one or two classical favorites, and the playing of them was restricted to limited hours of the day. Radio broadcasts were unimaginable then, and portable radios arrived only after WW2. I hate to contemplate the cacophony that probably results from them nowadays.

Head-cover out of doors for men, and for women (even indoors on occasion), was then universal, and for us caps in the dormitory colours were obligatory at all times other than in classroom, chapel, and tutors' studies. Only college prefects remained bare-headed as evidence of their universal authority. (I recall seeing them decked in morning coats and pin-stripe trousers at my one and only Speech Day). Custom dictated tiny caps which covered us only from the nape of the neck to a line inches back from the forehead. The Hill cap was violet-blue with a white button at the point where six white stripes met at approximately the crown of the head. The concentration of caps of multi-colours (the colours all listed in the Registry) served to brighten the environment, in contrast with the drab shades of human hair which prevail nowadays, and contrasted then with the uniform dark blue serge suits, our only permitted attire, to be slightly relieved each summer at the Master's dictate that gray flannel trousers (bim-freezers) might be worn. These same bimfreezers were indeed worn year in year out by all prefects to distinguish them from the hoi-poloi.

Our collars of white starched linen followed current fashion. The lower school wore Eton collars, the broad ones that folded over the jacket collar. At what precise stage we assumed the adult style I cannot say, probably at some step in the form ladder. Eton collars were always in a small minority. In the heat of summer straw boaters with dormitory coloured ribbons were permitted to the watchers of cricket matches and for Sunday afternoons.

We quickly leaned the etiquette to doff our caps whenever we passed The Master out of doors, and to 'tig' the ushers in like circumstances. Tigging consisted of bending the right elbow so as to raise the right hand shoulder high. I wonder if such gestures persist: certainly that for The Master cannot.

Dormitory discipline was ultimately enforced by six strokes from the cane. Prefects seldom used it. However I remember suffering on three occasions, the reasons for two forgotten, but for the third it remains clear. It was the speedy loss of a second eleven dormitory cricket match which so aggrieved the hierarchy that we were condemned to an extra net practice after tea. It was a rule that that net pitches always had to be rolled after use, and on this occasion three of us were so angered by our treatment that we rolled into it our three cricket balls.

Anticipation was the worst part of a beating. It stung at the moment of impact of impact, but it was quickly over and soon came an after-glow which was not unpleasant. Two or three days later one could sit again in comfort. It was preferable to writing innumerable lines for an usher impatient with one's performance.

I have mentioned the OTC as regards camps. Fifteen was the minimum age for joining as a recruit, which for me meant the Lent term in 1916. Memory is blurred in this connection, but I do recall the sweat of polishing brass buttons, the belt buckle, and cap badge, for the weekly corps parade. For short supplementary parades it was sufficient to fall in with a belt around one's suit jacket. We were armed with the long Lee-Enfield rifle, the pattern issued for the South African war, and we wore the leather belt and pouches also of that era. We learned to shoot with live ammunition on the miniature range with .22 ammunition, graduating thence to .303, firing on the open range against a hillside to the SE of the road passing the Gymnasium.

The battalion consisted of three companies, A, B and C, we and the Lynedoch composed No. 5 platoon, i.e. at the front of B Coy. The drum and bugle band was composed of individuals from all dormitories and of all seniorities. There were periodical field days in which Bradfield and Eton OTC's often took part. The latter wore German-style grey uniforms as opposed to our khaki, and this resulted generally in our representing opposing forces. It was said to be our custom to cut off the trouser buttons from any Etonian captured, but I was never in a position to corroborate this. There were occasional route marches. Marching at ease whenever the band ceased playing we used to bawl out in chorus the contemporary marching songs and many catches from the music halls in appropriate tempos. The corps was solely military. Cadres for the Navy and the Air Force were introduced, I believe, only after WW2. I reached the dizzy rank of corporal and passed the test for the so-called Certificate A, thereby adding a paltry 400 marks to the 12,000 or more required for success in the examinations for entry into the RMA Woolwich and the RMC Sandhurst, and this brings me at last to the academic side of Wellington.

College was divided into Lower, Middle, and Upper Schools; the Middle and Upper split between the Classical and Mathematical sides, the latter heavily predominant. The Lower, Middle and Upper IVth A and B forms, composed what was known as the IVth Block. The Middle Classical School were the Lower, Middle and Upper Vths, and the Upper school were the Lower and Upper VIths. Latin and Greek were their essential province with French, Maths, and Science minor appendages. The Maths side Middle School were the IIIrd and IInd Blocks, each split into Lower, Middle and Upper forms, and its Upper School consisted of the Ist Block, split into three like the rest, with just one Mathematical VIth at the top.

My Common Entrance results landed me in the Upper IVth A under the Rev. (Teddy) Larmour, not a very loveable character in my immature opinion. (John Forbes, destined to become my longest outstanding friend, joined one term later as a failed scholarship candidate: his dormitory the Angelsey, incidentally my father's also). My impression now is that, unlike the higher blocks, Teddy took us in all subjects save Drawing, and the Drawing school presided over by the perpetually 'rag-ridden' Hagreen was on the opposite side of the passage running under Siberia beside the Green Quad. I did not function well my first term, perhaps in disarray in the new strange surroundings, but next term I pulled my socks up and finished near the top. Then in August the catastrophic WW1 burst on us. Imagine my surprise when the autumn term began to find myself not just removed, but double-removed into the Middle Third. The spontaneous patriotic fervour and the consequent rush to join the forces had resulted in the unprecedented number of school leavers: chaps who in normal circumstances would have remained reading for university entrance. I had opted for the mathematical side as my Latin, as indeed my French, had

never been among my best subjects. The organisation of the forms in the Middle and Upper Schools was more complicated. Actual forms were restricted to English subjects. The rest, Mathematics, Science (divided into Chemistry and Physics), French and German, were taught in sets, three grades to each block, the higher the set the higher the proportion of marks fed to the Form Master with which to determine a form order for eventual promotion. I experimented with German for one term, but my enthusiasm waning I swapped it for higher mathematics, which was to stand me in good stead. John Forbes joined me and thence-forward we climbed together form by form. I do not recall the steps in this climb, but I do know that I spent an entire year each in the Upper Ist A and the Mathmatical VIth, and that the promotion to the VIth did not involve change from the Ist block set system. John, in parenthesis, achieved the top set in French which is more than ever I did.

What of the high spots? A particularly LOW spot occurred in the summer term of 1915 in the Middle IInd, the form master, 'Jock 'Cave, an unpredictably irascible type. One morning in early school, i.e. pre-breakfast, the subject was French translation. We all in turn had to read in English a paragraph from some French book, and a certain L.F.R. Kenyon, later to become a sapper, offered the word 'modern' for, I think the French word 'mondaine' (fashionable). Jock took him by the scruff of the neck and marched him out of the room. Some minutes later both returned, Kenyon having received 'six of the best 'in Jock's quarters. A unique and shocking episode.

For my later prowess in the army exam I am particularly indebted to two ushers: the Rev. Tom Lemmey, and the little lame man McNeil. The former taught chemistry in the laboratory to the NW of College beyond the Green Quad and overlooking Turf. He knew the exam syllabus inside out. We were constantly involved in experiments using Bunsen burners, test tubes, flasks, etc., but at the beginning of the first of two sessions each week he dictated the specifications of one or other element, its properties, in the same strict order of presentation:- atomic weight, valency, colour, taste, smell, etc. etc. We had to learn them by heart in the prep before the second session where we had to reproduce it word for word. For the least error we had to proceed to his residence in the Wellesley during the ensuing weekend and write the damn thing out three times at his dining room table. One did not err too often, virulent cramming though it was. Notes on other matters were equally cogent. The science Paper in the Army exam contained equal numbers of Chemistry and Physics questions. I rattled through the Chemistry and did the minimum number of the Physics and came top of the entire list! Tom's wit was caustic. John Forbes, as I remember, made him a clumsy verbal reply one day to a question evoking: "O you mouldy mushroom, Forbes; you're only fit to be kicked by the hoof of a cow!"

McNeil took the top-most Maths set. We had to bring to instant recall trigonometrical formulae and the common equation forms, likewise those in the Calculus and Analytical Geometry. Each of the six lessons per week began with our having to write down on slips of paper the brief answers to a dozen or so questions as quickly as he could read them out. This stood us in excellent stead. I, with time to spare over my elementary and middle Maths papers, obtained full marks and I was close to top in the final total in all the papers. It was the English and French that let me down.

However my other great indebtedness has always been to R. St C. Talboys who was form master for the Upper IstA. He was an aesthete who, for me certainly and probably others, persuaded one as to the worth and meaning of art. Hitherto poetry, and Shakespeare in particular, had been

matters to be learned by heart or transformed into prose to extract a literal 'meaning'. This had been discouraging drudgery. Nothing of the sort ever happened with him. He began by reading poetry to us; then came expatiation from which one grew to understand that the purpose was, from the sonorities and rhythms of the words, to stretch the emotions in all directions beyond the literal dictionary definitions of the words involved. In a Shakespeare play, parts were distributed around the class and we were led gently into how the text could be read effectively. It did not take me long to extend this approach to the appreciation of other art forms, an interest that I have pursued and expanded during an entire lifetime, possibly a distraction from routine affairs that might otherwise have served me materially. Sometimes he read to us leading articles from The Times on potent world affairs such as the deposition of the Russian Czar in 1917, and Divinity periods might be diverted, before finishing, to readings of romantic short stories, or from other sorts of literature. I spent three terms with him, and during my first term in the Mathematical VIth he departed for temporary service in the Admiralty.

The Master, W.W. Vaughan, was less sensitive but artistically inclined, and we spent one term pursuing the development of Italian renaissance art illustrated by reproductions. I recollect Byzantine art being quoted as one influence, and I was ignorant enough to ask where Byzantium might have been. He came over, wrapped my head in the sleeve of his gown and metaphorically wept for me.

I have elsewhere referred to the boredom of waiting about for activity in cricket to which I was always averse. Mitigation broke in the summer of 1917 by when conscription had swallowed up the bulk of the labour force. A result of this was a roster for the whole of College allocating half-holiday afternoons to assist the head gardener to continue to supply the fruit and vegetables required in the college kitchens. We were naturally unskilled but I think we helped at least in removing weeds. Obviously, in view of our numbers, turns came round infrequently.

I have touched on the Harvest camps. It might have been that preparing for these prompted Joey Bevir to initiate what he called 'The Push and Pull Society'. He asked for volunteers to assist any local farmers who might welcome our help as labourers on half-holidays. Nobody had hitherto been permitted to bring a bicycle to College, but members of this society were to be accorded them as essential for transport to and from the farms. I most surely volunteered and in clement weather thoroughly enjoyed the outcome. Bicycles were also necessary at Harvest Camps for the same reason, and they accompanied our baggage in the luggage van of the train taking us to the camp: such vans as are nowadays obsolete. How non-members fared I do not know: perhaps they hired bikes at the destination.

There has been no mention of holidays so far. As far as my parents were concerned, they dispensed with them throughout the War. I was more fortunate in the first two pre-harvest-camp summers. From early on, my particular pals in the Hill were P. (Phil) D.H. James and E.S. Strencham ('Stench') Master, both one term senior to me. We became inseparable. James's parents lived at Forton, Somerset, about 1½ miles S.E. of Chard, where his father was proprietor of a lace mill, and they invited both Stench and me to spend three weeks with them at the beginning of the summer holidays. Each time the first two days were at Forton. I can recall one event there following the local otter hunt. I remember no kill but that it provided my introduction to 'scrumpy' at an inn in the neighbourhood. We were however for the bulk of the time installed in

their rented house at Woolacombe at the north end of Morte Bay (North Devon). They were marvelous holidays and I can never forget this family's kindness. Phil had three sisters, two senior to him, and Heather, the eldest, became a great friend with whom for several years, I used to correspond. Only a minimum of incidents come to mind. One day I found a conger eel stranded in a rock pool towards Morte Point which I managed to grip and swing on to the sand where I battered it to death. We ate it for supper, and I was deemed lucky not to have been bitten. The house overlooked the bay and just below it and to the left were the public tennis courts. One day participating in a local tournament, having drawn from the hat a pleasant girl of about my age, we did not survive the competition very long. The third episode covers a spur-of-the-moment escapade. We set off one morning on bicycles with sandwiches in our pockets for Baggy Point at the southern end of Morte Bay. From there we spied Hartand Point at the far end of Bideford Bay, actually to prove further off than was Baggy Point from Woolacombe. It tempted us, and we pushed on through Braunton, Barnstaple, Bideford, and Clovelly. The day was closing when we started back from Hartland Point. Our joint wealth amounted to 3/6d (three shillings and sixpence, equivalent to 17½ new pence). What to do? If we sent a telegram we should starve. So we pedalled back until darkness fell, pulled some corn-stooks down over us just behind a roadside hedge and spent the night there huddled together sleeping fitfully till dawn. We set off again, bought bread butter and mineral-water at the first village store that we found open, and eventually returned to the worrying parents about lunchtime, feeling ashamed and foolish.

The unique events in March 1916 may not be relevant here but they are worth recording nevertheless. The College lakes were frozen hard enough to provide safe skating over fully three weeks, and the Master, surprisingly but reasonably in view of the rarity of such a phenomenon, pronounced each working afternoon to be a holiday until the final thaw. It so had happened that my father had presented me with a superior pair of skates the previous Christmas accompanied by an old pair of his London boots on which to screw them. There was no tuition and my skating remained embryonic, but I spotted that Mr. McNeil was an expert at figure-skating and I strove to copy his technique. It involved curves on both edges of the skate and pivoting on the front points. It was difficult but I did manage a rudimentary 3 or 2 (quite illegible).

Finally I can but recall the culmination of my college education: the fortnight's Army Entrance Examinations at the end of June 1918. They had been preceded by weeks of hectic revision, shelved, from good advice, for at least a day before any of them was due. The reaction during the remaining weeks of the term was dreary boredom. I could not leave because, had I done so and failed I should not have been allowed to return for a second attempt. We were barred from our classrooms and so had to fend for ourselves as best we could. I spent many hours digging for nuggets in the college library, that place to which the few Roman Catholic representatives were confined during our weekday chapel periods.

Eventually while I was labouring at the Harvest Camp in Norfolk, the examination results arrived. They were addressed to our homes and my father had opened mine. He wrote to me at once in ecstasy. Apparently Vaughan, The Master, had communicated to him a month or two before that my prospects for attaining Woolwich were pretty slim, but in the event I was placed fourth in the list, just one place behind D.C.T. Swan, my exact contemporary in the Hopetoun. We had both been awarded prize cadet-ships thereby relieving our parents of certain cash payments normally

required of them. I am vague as to the precise savings, but am pretty sure that they included our final equipment with revolver, prismatic compass and binoculars. Anyway, along there came a parcel from him containing a pipe, pouch, and a packet of tobacco. Adulthood? Well … pointing that way, anyhow!

The RMA Woolwich 1918-19

To cope with the terrible casualties of WW1, the RMA course for potential R.E. and R.A. officer cadets had been reduced from 2 years to 12 months. My batch began training in August or September 1918. Subsequent to the armistice in November our course was extended to 15 months as an interim compromise. Previously in peacetime all cadets underwent a combined sapper and gunner course and sapper commissions were offered to those who had come out top. For the shorter wartime course R.E. and R.A. cadets were selected from the Army entrance exams order, the RE being assumed to need the cleverer chaps. Two administrative companies accommodated the three terms under instruction. One comprised the junior or 'snooker' term. (We all began as 'Snookers', the name in the late 19thC by a gunner officer to a newly invented game on the billiard table of the United Services Club in Ootacamund in the South Indian Nilgiri Hills.) The other company housed the second termers and the senior term. All Cadet Officers or NCO'S were split between the two companies to maintain discipline and generally to run their administration under the supervision of the Commandant and staff all from the regular army.

We joined in dark suits and bowler hats. We were subjected to intensive inspection at the pre-breakfast chapel and subsequent lunch and supper parades and the slightest indication of a dust speck spotted by our MCD or Under Officer involved us in the Hoxter (punishment) drill parade at 6.30am next morning, roll-called by the cadet Corporal of the day and then hectored by one of the Guardee drill sergeants on the establishment. We were measured early on for boots, gaiters, breeches, tunics etc, but it was about three weeks before they arrived. The senior term was all-powerful. Snookers, like new boys at school, were dirt. Middle-termers although supervised still by the seniors were relative non-entities but without persecution. There was of course no fagging. Main indignities comprised a once-for-all Snookers' concert where we had to sing or otherwise entertain the seniors crowded into their canteen (normally reserved for them only.) But weekly on Thursday evenings Snookers were required to attend the Snookers' dance in the gymnasium where the R.A. Band provided the musicians. We had to appear in gym-kit, gym vest, white flannels and gym shoes, with a bowler hat or portion of one to be stacked in the gym dressing room. We had to pair for dancing, any odd one out had to perform solo. Between dances we could be ordered over the horse, balance walk along a beam, or all off the floor, etc., and after 'The King' we had to dash to grip a piece of a bowler, thence subject to be chased by the seniors wielding swagger canes back to our quarters. None was badly hurt – it just served to let one-time public school bigwigs realise their place among the commonality-no bad thing.

Our first three weeks subjected us to concentrated infantry drill under our guardsmen instructors. To be implemented later by sword drill and cavalry drill to be used on our soon-to-be daily routine on bicycles to and from the R.A. riding schools on the town end of Woolwich Common. The strong invective of the W.D. and N.C.O. Rough-Riding Instructors made us all in due course into efficient horsemen accustomed to riding with and without stirrups or reins cantering and leaping low

hurdles; above all how to tumble off limply and so avoid injuring limbs. We sappers had also to cycle to the so-called Ravelin for field works, bridging, etc., and later in company with the gunners on TEWTS (Tactical Exercises without Troops) in the local countryside, such as remained unpolluted by housing estates! We had indoor lessons on tactics, military law, calculating strains and stresses for safe bridging, and the explosive charges required to demolish them, and we practiced semaphore and Morse signalling, and made a hand tapper for more practice in the workshop.

Games rivalries between the RMA and the RMC, Sandhurst, were intense. I recall the summer cricket match at Lords one Saturday when I and others had been awarded weekend leave, (one in three were permitted), when I and others left the ground too bored to remain watching. The Shop happening to win, the authorities instituted a check-out at the gate after the match. I with others duly arrived back at the Shop in the Sunday evening at the accustomed hour. We were not under arrest, but we lost the extra night away awarded to the law-abiding, and were awarded one or two hoxters!

For our third, autumn, term we all became cadet officers or N.C.O.s (I as a Cpl or L/Cpl, I forget which) and we were split between the two companies, taking charge of them and their sub-units on all parades including the weekly Saturday ceremonial march-past parade complete with the R.A. band before any weekend leavers could depart. During this term, equitation training largely left the riding school for cross-country experience, stable management, minor veterinary care, and for driving drill both as outriders, and with long reins from a wagon seat. Somewhat unusually, having regard to gunners always largely outnumbering sappers, a sapper (H.E.G. St George – caricature below) was awarded 'The Saddle' as the term's champion rider. Most cadets with pre-Shop riding experience endured a tough time at the hands of our rough-rider instructors ostensibly to rid them of their bad habits, but not so 'Georgy'. Later on in India with its enormous possibilities to practice horsemanship in many forms I was constantly grateful for my exiguous training at Woolwich.


really
K.R.G. St George.
(Fd Trooper)
Winner of Saddle
at the Show

EPISODES

(transcribed by H.E.M. Newman from diaries into typescript in 1984)

What will follow comprises one month in diary form and the remainder which were written shortly after the events or episodes which took place. I shall introduce them, or provide notes regarding intervening intervals from memories half a century and more later.

Moreover I have edited the text to economize in material and for the sake of the reader's patience, which can be strained when confronted with too much triviality, especially when relating to matters into which he has no clue for their elucidation. This applies less to the month of the reproduced diary because it is possible that the life-style of sixty odd years ago may be revealed therein, and help to colour the pictures to be evoked later. The summarized description of the courses at the School of Military Engineering is for similar reasons intact - it is very succinct anyway.

I was commissioned from the RMA Woolwich (long defunct) into the Corps of Royal Engineers on 19 December 1919, and was posted shortly after Christmas to the training battalion in Brompton Barracks in Chatham with several others of my batch. Being 'green' and pretty useless, I understudied a certain G.C.C. Williams training No 9 Recruit part of 'C' company through their 'square-bashing' in drill, their musketry, and part of their fieldworks course, until, in August 1920, my batch, No 3 young officers course, assembled at the school of military Engineering. By January 1921, we had completed our drill and duties and weapon training course. (Incidentally No.1 YO course, the first post-WW1 to be commissioned, included G.R. (Dick) Richards[29].)

DIARY 1920

Saturday, I January 1920

Late for breakfast as usual; can't help sleeping-on hours late nowadays, especially with no morning parades to listen to. M and Aline went to town early with the idea of bargain hunting for party frocks at the winter sales. A is frightfully bucked at the idea of her first late party. Thank god I shall be away for the morning after.

Hannah, the gardener, here this morning; a queer old bird, ex-policeman who comes when it is fine and he thinks fit. Seems to know his job however.

Went to London by the 11.04 with Wilfred King, now a schoolmaster at Cheltenham, specializing in geography. He was going to see the rugby trial at Twickenham, England v the rest. Mrs. largely and two daughters also in the carriage pleasure-seeking. Tubed to Oxford Circus. Tried at the Times Book Club for two books advertised in 'The Studio'. Got one 'Figure Studies' for which such fools as Swan and Co will reprove me for my morals, and ordered another on 'Costumes' at Bumpus. Met How in Oxford Street.

Footslogged it to Charring Cross and stopped at a stationer's in Leicester Square for a few prints to enliven a Chatham barrack room. 'La petite grisette francaise' seemed surprised. I had not come for postcards of the Kristine variety in which the place abounds! Nearly broke by now,

[29] Dick Richards was H.E.M. Newman's brother-in-law; half-brother of his wife Margaret.

however I stumbled into 'The Cave' for a light luncheon between 11:30 to 2:00 as advertised. Introduced myself and learned that 'Jug' Stuart had been earlier in the morning. There was doubt as to his return but 'The Cave' or the Palais-de-Dance are certain to find him if in town, and sure enough as I was in the middle of a tender steak, Jug 'revint a ses moutons' or, as I suppose they would better appreciate it to be called, 'agneaux'. A good spot to cultivate no doubt.

At 2:00 strolled out together Piccadilly-wards, he with ideas as to his other aforementioned 'pension', I to the Cri' theatre where Dad had bought four seats in the upper circle (actually on street level) for 'Lord Richard in the Pantry' with Cyril Maude in the title role. Found M and A there having arrived at 2:05 fully regaled at an ABC. Dad came soon after me from his haunt in the Strand.

The piece was a farce but not of the screaming sort, and if the subject had not been so far-fetched would have been excellent. The amusement derived chiefly from the skit on life below-stairs in which the butler, actually Lord Richard, suffers from the attentions of the cook (Miss Connie Ediss) and the parlour maid. The first act was funniest with him in a Turkish bath.

Tubed to Marylebone and after tea and toast at the buffet-another of dad's haunts-went home by the 6:00 to the accompaniment of the 'Sporting Times' and a profiteer's family.

A stayed up for dinner at which we demolished the second pheasant sent us by Uncle Bernard Painter from Exeter.

Sunday, 2 January 1920

Accompanied the family to the 10.30 service. After lunch finished Poe's tales, a weird collection of horror, satire, poesy, farce, drama, and Sherlock Holmes. A most versatile author from whom I can see that many moderns have taker their ideas.

Went for a stroll with Dad and A; a variation of the usual Batchworth Heath round. M stayed indoors as we started late, and if she returns a second after four o'clock on Sunday afternoons she knows to expect tears and execrations from the cook, who imagines the world and the fates are against her and that she cannot get out. Such are domestics and life at home: though heaven knows if we can replace her when she gets married in the spring. Necessary evils. Met Mr. Cautley, also peregrinating and looking extremely worried, no doubt on account of his financial position in regard to the trade slump.

After tea when I was packing my suitcase Mr. Whittled Hayes and his brother looked in. The latter is one of the wretched householders trying to find a market for his Irish home which he finds too hot to live in nowadays.

Back to Chatham. 8:47 from Northwood and the 10:25 from Victoria, a b …… awful wait. Taxied up to the barracks, I in front, and Stuart, Kenyan and glimpse behind under the suitcases. Drained now to the last ha'penny[30]. Found Swan sleeping peacefully. He looks perfectly sweet asleep.

Monday, 3 January 1920

Took some time to realize what the noise was about; at last remembered 'Ah, General Parade, hence 8:00am' forty-winks, then time to get up. Fortification now. Electricity to be forgotten to

make room for further wisdom. The C. I. F., Major Herring, a few kind words on the importance of his (own pet) subject; then Capt. Turner Jones (our foster-father) took over his bairns[31], and after preliminaries, rocked us to sleep to the tune of 'tools and materials'. Had no baccy thanks to Owen Carter or I should have been awake --- no doubt (?). After half an hour's interval to collect canvas clothing we were taken to the Black Lion Fields to practice tool drill, and given opportunities to slang the proposed pick and shovel drill. What a production! In the main correct perhaps, but leaving a lot to the imagination, of which the average country-bred sapper has damn-all of a vestige.

No work in the afternoon, which luxury we shall not enjoy again for a long period. Went down to Chatham with Swan and 'Bodie' Alders shopping. Cashed a servant allowance and ordered a razor (Wilkinson safety) at Gieves: got this manuscript book at Ive and Lowe. The others went to watchmakers, Alders under the name of Smith, not as a disguise, but because no one can spell his glorious name without long and credulous practice. Took my tennis racquet for safe custody to Mr. Davis. Following the recent order to resume mess jackets about half a dozen appeared in mess this evening. True relics of the past most of them, strained tight under the armpits, gaping in front, seams let out, all betokening the slimness of pre-war waists. One looked suspiciously like a late uncle's cast-off; nevertheless the glamour of the scarlet was such that somber khaki dared not go into dinner till all the pantomime beauty chorus had shimmied their way through the door.

After dinner listened to the band, and then accompanied 'Bodie' Alders and Walker into the former's room while the latter set the aforementioned digging drill to doleful strains on the accordion.

Tuesday, 4 January 1920

Proceeded to the fortification school at 08:00. Capt. Marsden gave utterance for an hour on siting trenches.

At 10:00 given 45 minutes to dispose of some books issued and met at the Dockyard ferry steps. Changed my canvas for 1s/4d on the way down , the funny old man suspicious of oil stains on the canvas because I was pointing them out to try and scrounge them free, whereas I might have done it for 8d.

A wet muggy passage over the Medway thanks to wind and tide, then:

'back to shop where the gallant GCs grow;
they love it so … etc'

In fact digging, common-or-garden sort, or not so much of the garden, as we wielded pick and shovel instead of the spade, our gallant instructor staying to watch us merely for the morning. What is the use of sappers going to the Shop? All we learned there has to be unlearned or repeated. I think it is largely an excuse for Geoffrey White (Commandant at the Shop) and his ilk to earn their umpteen thousands of pounds per annum. Pretty easy digging - no tree roots as at the Repository, but had to do my task and a good deal of GM Stewart's, he swinging the lead for a

[30] Ha'penny = half penny = ½d in the old currency.
[31] Scottish word for "children".

sprained thumb. It is extraordinary how everyone else's task seems smaller than one's own, Boonie Philipe's amongst others. Alas, how a little digging involves the loss of one's friends.

Helped 'Bubs' Angwin to consume a bottle of mess beer in the interval. Tim Hogan, Palmer and others over with their respective recruit parties.

Return voyage uneventful except that I was bow to a very erratic 'stroke'. I can see that bow oar is to be avoided.

My one and only venture in these remarkable sales bargains came today in the form of a couple of pairs of woolen pants from Barkers. A good investment considering the state of my old ones of which the seats are conspicuous by their absence. A letter from Uncle Frank Lucy (who had married Violet Paynter) came acknowledging the receipt of some chocolates I had sent for Christmas. Also the gas officer sent a chit concerning a gasmask I had never had. I wish people would learn to discriminate between JD (my namesake) and HEM. Half-day thank goodness. Down at the dockyard steps at 9.15, allowing for early morning conveniences. Went on with yesterday's work widening from 5' to 6' and going down to 2☞3☚ at 4/1, thus leaving a 2☞ firestep, and to go down to minus 5☞3☚. Got to about minus 3☞, Whitcombe and I joining forces. It became very dark and the prospect of rain enable us to return in time for a bath before lunch.

☚Les Costumes Chez les Peuples☚ as ordered from Bumpus came today. A French book on costumes in European civilized countries between the Roman times and about 1870, translated from the German. Appears to be a most useful volume.

After lunch set forth with Bodie Aldous for my first attempt at golf. He had been practicing on leave. Trammed to Town Hall, then caught another for Rainham which took us to Darland where we knocked about until dark in the field next to the fieldworks trench system where we performed our night op's scheme. Came away pessimistic. I realize that practice is everything. Got on fair-to-middling with brassie[32] and iron, but apart from one shot failed utterly with cleek[33]. Lost two balls amongst the stones and everything points to lessons from a pro.

As luck would have it, no trams; so we had to walk back. We should have been late for tea, so Bodie introduced me to a cafe in Gillingham High Street, and we had an excellent filling of toasted teacake and other patisserie and so home. After mess went to Stuart's room where he guitared in opposition to Capt. Morris's piano and songs.

Thursday, 6 January 1920

Wilkinson's safety shaver arrived from Gieves and a letter from Uncle Frank inviting me to accompany Dick and Mary to a dance on Monday. Very kind indeed seeing that he has twelve in the house, but of course quite impossible. The razor is a substantial one and I hope economical in the matter of blades in the long run, but I wish they had not sent me two blades labeled Thursday.

What a hell of a day is Thursday. Got back from Upnor at 4.00. Tea and bath. Lecture 5.30 - 6.45. Guest night 7.30 - 9.00. Such a lot of spare time.

[32] Brassie - the historical name for the club that was the closest equivalent to today's 2-woods.
[33] Cleek - old term for a variety of clubs.

Spent all day digging the fire bay and completing it by myself because the rest of them were dispersed gathering brushwood, etc; Ray, the Oi/c today, helping occasionally. Very good exercise no doubt. Kenyon, the slack shit, with an abnormally small task would not budge an inch from his limit and did nothing when he had finished it. Pray God I never have him to work with on any project that matters. Brought over a bottle of ale for lunch.

The 5.30 lecture extremely dull and soporific on infantry tactics by a Capt. Harte KOYLI. Between whiles I gathered it had to do with leapfrogging through weak spots.

Guest night quite entertaining between Stuart and Greaves. Old woman Swan evidently had a mother's meeting with Kenyon afterwards, coming to bed at midnight thinking it was 11.00. A hell of a shinny outside and eventually I slept at about 1.30.

Friday, 7 January 1920

B----- awful day. Rain incessant except for a short spell after lunch. A squidgy-squadgy show with the squeegee about 3☚ deep everywhere. Talk of Flanders mud! It is the SME servants that I pity really over our boots. Our gallant instructor remained on the grass in a serviceable trench coat. If he had been in charge of a fieldwork's platoon he would have blasted to hell, and rightly too; but I hope too for his sake that he has a physical disability of account for his behavior.

Spent most of the time carrying materials with others in a handcart, over an exciting railway embankment en route. Managed to get our fire-bay revetted barring anchorages, with A-frames and CGI below. XPM hurdles above the firestep, and to the rear brushwood behind 7☞ pickets above the CGI. Bath water barely hot on our return: I wonder who is responsible.

After tea tried to buy rust remover for golf clubs from Davis, but he having none, I took them instead for him to clean them. Bought braces and ordered a service cap from Carrington.

Saturday, 8 January 1920

A PC from Mum displaying anxiety concerning the arrival of the pants, so I must write forthwith.

Crossed to Upnor as usual and worked at revetting. Numbers of chaps being away, I was alone in our bay and so helped Macdonald, who was also alone, to put brush-wood along the interior slope of the parapet, after which began laying buckboards.

Returned in time for lunch, and then with Bodie Aldous to Darland again to knock about. Started by missing the ball about ten times with the brassie but there were noticeable signs of improvement before we left, so I returned optimistic. On the way back met Daldy and Swan who had been playing on the US links. The former accompanied us to the cafe in Gillingham High Street .

Had anteroom dinner thence to the Grand Cinema in Gillingham with Aldous, Stein, Whitcombe, and Ray, where we saw people camping and bathing in the USA in midsummer some thousands of feet above sea-level; doubtless for notoriety but demonstrating the madness of certain folk.

Sunday, 9 January 1920

Enjoyed the pleasure of watching Swan get up for church parade. A lovely day. Yesterday's efforts on my part led Bodie and me to ask Skinner and Angwin to play a foursome at the US links, but eventually we obtained sandwiches and plumped for Cobham. Chartered a taxi there and back for

a quid, which, when MacDonald and Lambert joined us, meant only 3s/4d each which was quite reasonable.

I went expecting to be mortified, but, Dear God, ……. silence! Must certainly strive to get professional lessons. Went round the, at present, nine hole course, twice with an interval for sandwiches and beer. Returned for tea, after which three pages of 'Home Chat'.

Monday, 10 January 1920

Lecture at 9.00 in the old Electrical School classroom on obstacles, afterwards crossing the river to practice wire entanglements.

I was the only member of the batch to have done any wiring, and so I was put in charge of one squad of ten, including 'The Old Firm'. (Heavens) After detailing No 2 Wiring Drill we performed it after a fashion. I said 'after a fashion' because we had to wear night glasses which are blacker than any night, and which are lined white and let in light all round, so that one is completely blinded. After having them on for ten minutes the horizon is just discernible, and figures in canvas clothing, if only a few feet away, can be distinguished vaguely. We escaped after lunch at 1.00 on account of the mess afternoon concert, the monthly poodlefake throughout the winter. Descended to Chatham in the rain for a haircut, and tried at three places to find trench boots to replace my old and decrepit Shop 'Sketchers', but in vain. Returned to barracks and changed into respectable clothes in time for a few of the tea-fight specialties in the only part of the mess left free for sober-minded bachelors, i.e. the little anteroom. Found a note in our bedroom to say that Swan and I, with Brownjohn and Dickson, all served by Woodsy, are to shift to St Mary's barracks on Wednesday. Not only is it a terrible nuisance changing quarters, but St Mary's is miles from everywhere. The quarters are old and damp, and the mess is inferior. Former inhabitants never want to return there.

Tuesday, 11 January 1920

Went to the Fortification School, but no lecture; so turned out again. Swan and I could obtain no information from the barracks office as to whether the move to St Mary's was permanent or temporary while our rooms are being painted. The voyage to Upnor was perilous today in a heavily laden cutter. Never have I seen such a sea in that reach of the Medway; a high wind against the tide. Demolished the fence which we put up yesterday, and then erected some more and some 'spider wire' elsewhere. I in charge again, a thankless job with the squad mostly 'Old Firm'.

Bodie phoned in the lunch interval for anteroom dinner in the mess, and we went to the Grand for an excellent film, "Lombardi Ltd.".

Wednesday, 12 January 1920

Lecture at 0900 on Drainage and Dugouts. Our move to St Mary's was cancelled last night, Thank God. Because the Thursday lecture was today we had permission to work all day today and have our half holiday tomorrow. Made a concertina (barbed wire around a wooden frame to block e.g. roads) in the morning with JD and Stein, and then proceeded to high wire entanglement using wooden pickets. The QMSI (Quartermaster Sergeant Instructor) showed us the modern way

when Capt. Turner Jones told us to take it down and carry on with the old book method of up-and-down any old how, which the QMSI had told us was obsolete. It came on wet so we retired early.

Wrote to the Daniels for an estimate for mess-kit.

The 1730 lecture pedantic but interesting, on Scientific Management and Motion Study by a Mr. Butterworth, who began by reading a rather dull paper and ended with slides to show the ideas in practice. The point was industrial efficiency and labor-saving as practiced in the USA. He was extremely philo-Yankee. It is better to teach apprentices correct methods and it is preferable to letting them waste time learning from bitter experience to change their own bad ways. There was the usage of cameras with glow-lamps on head, hands etc, to demonstrate correct methods by experts to standardize and simplify mechanical work, bricklaying, and shoveling, also of a 'pro' golfer driving. Major Galbraith, the principal exponent of these ideas, will be at Olympia in February. (Post-script dated 1984: Of lifelong interest and in the forefront of my mind even now while performing jobs old and new.)

Thursday, 13 January 1920

Showers. Went to the classroom only to be turned out to erect elephant shelters in the Ravelin Shed, all the stores having to be transported from the workshop stores on the Ravelin truckway; what fun! Got away in time for lunch.

To the town in the afternoon. Paid for a month's supply of baccy at Owen Carters, and collected my mended pouch; also obtained more pictures for my room, Watt's 'Mischief', 'The Cavalier', and Court's 'Leaning Tree'. Swan bought two pictures of Venice. I also purchased a kind of file for SME fortification circulars doled out liberally at every lecture; piles of shaving bumph[34] as Stuart calls them.

An ages long dinner tonight for Distinguished Officers RE. A good and plentiful meal for once. It lasted from 1930 to 2225. Sir Richard Harrison and Sir Ronald Maxwell made speeches proposing and replying to the toast of 'our guests'. There followed a kind of Snooker's Concert, which I though was scandalous, in the large anteroom. Old 'Jug' had to produce his Hawaiian guitar. Fed up, retired at midnight, but later heard that things began to become merry at about 0130.

Friday, 14 January 1920

How accurate the Field Prophets are: this glorious day was predicted a nicety, and the weather is supposed to continue until the 18th, when unsettled conditions return. They were correct ages ago about this exceptionally mild winter as they were about the cold spell in November. They beat the daily meteorological office's daily forecasts.

'Grace' (Major-General Thuillier, Commandant SME) was due at 0930 to talk to us about our coming Electrical Course but failed to turn up, so we proceeded to Upnor, completed our first four firebays and returned to barracks at 1500.

Wrote to Turnbull and Asser for a winter sales half price mackintosh. Must begin saving after this.

[34] Bumph = paper

Saturday, 15 January 1920

Fine day. Went to the school but were told to proceed to Darland. Tramped there via the Town Hall. Another waste of time. Shown over the pride of the Training Battalion RE by QMS Roakes. I must say, however, that considerable improvements have been effected since my visits every day there last may with the recruit party.

The spirit moved me in the afternoon to take the 1345 bus to Madison and to walk thence (bus timings not coinciding) to Sutton Valance. Found the Lucy Family flourishing. Dick had departed for Cambridge last Thursday. A young squealer[35] of two terms standing from Wellington in the Murray[36] there for tea with the boys. The college does not sound to have changed much in sentiment even though it has in faces. The Hill[37] were, strange to relate, cock at rigger last term with North Carter as Head of Dormitory.

Sydney Lucy is searching for old furniture for the house he is trying to find in which to settle down. Young Joyce is flourishing and seems quite a quaint little cuss. Curiously they eat for the last time in the day at 1700. Very hygienic no doubt but creating a vacuum later on to anyone unaccustomed to the habit.

I had intended to return by the 1900 bus. Uncle Frank kindly persuaded me to spend the night and loaned me a pair of Aertex pajamas.

Sunday, 16 January 1920

The servant girl too timid to come in to wake me, Billy was allotted that office. Had a fatuous scrape with a seven o'clock razor and so down to breakfast.

I did not accompany the family to church at Langely some miles away, but dug out suckers and brambles in the orchard with Sydney. After lunch assisted the youngsters in the famous jigsaw puzzle of Alnwick Castle, and after tea trudged back to Maidstone, my shoes inflicting perfectly good blisters on my two heels. Caught the 1800 bus back to Chatham where I found scandalous rumours abroad as to my might out, thanks to my previously voiced intention of going to Gravesend in search of a yacht. Trundle and Asser had promptly sent the cheap (£3/19/6) waterproof coat with fleece lining and knee extensions, which turned out to be a kind of badly fitting tunic with a thousand and one gadgets. Must go and change it on Wednesday and, incidentally, I think I must order a mess kit from Daniel's in view of the dance on the 31st to which I have been invited, otherwise I shall have to 'terpsy' in workaday out-of-place khaki.

Monday, 17 January 1920

A rotten day. Crossed straight to Upnor to carry on with the last five bays of trench, hoping to finish them.

Wrote to Dad, and to Craig Davies ordering from them a pair of mess wellingtons.

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[35] Squealer was (is?) what new boys were (are?) referred to at Wellington College.
[36] Murray was the name of one of the Wellington College dormitories.
[37] Hill was the name of the dormitory that H.E.M. Newman stayed in at Wellington (as did his son C.J.E. Newman).

Tuesday, 18 January 1920

Wrote a PC to Philbeach Gardens proposing to visit Grandma[38] on my tramp to town on Wednesday.

A lecture on Tunnelled Dugouts, and then proceeded to carry on with one in the Ravelin. I was in charge, but having been also told to make a plan of the works, I did not have much chance to take control. I staggered under a newfangled level (only three in existence, thank God) right in the way of the sandbag carriers etc, so it was not surprising that, when I came to draw the results, most readings proved to have been wrong. When I returned from this to 'The Officers Hall of Study'(!) I met with a volley of abuse as to why I was the only one idle, why everything was going wrong, and why I was not making such and such a slacker do some work. God all ----- mighty!

Wednesday, 19 January 1920

At work at Upnor on the Cut and Cover Dugout; my task was in the communication trench to it. 'Grock' turned up and spoke to us in one of the stores.

Changed, skimped lunch, and caught the 1345 to London. Turnbull and Asser exchanged the extraordinary garment for a more reasonable and slightly more expensive mackintosh. Was measured for mess kit at Daniels, and replaced my pipe which I had lost yesterday in the dugout - curse it - at Lewis, for which the old man accepted a cheque – Cox's variety! Walked to Victoria Street and tried in vain to obtain information about Holophane[39] reflectors for the Smoking Room for Dad's birthday.

Proceeded to Philbeach where both Grandma and Aunt Evie[40] looked well and they most kindly persuaded me to stay for dinner.

Returned with J.D. Newman and Brownjohn with the abominable 2010 train from Victoria. These terribly slow evening trains are the one drawback to visiting town in midweek.

Dad in a letter again generously told me to forward my mess kit bills to him so that I could have my £25 prize cadetship money to help in the yacht venture.

Shaw, Jug Stewart and MacDonald

Survey Tour

Thursday, 20 January 1920

We spent the day in Upnor again digging the Cut-and-Cover Dugout and its approach. It has apparently been 9' 6" deep for the last four days in spite of our efforts to reach the 10' mark.

The evening lecture was about the organizing and carrying out of assault bridging in 1917 or 1918 in a cross-canal attack.

[38] Grandmother Emma Newman, wife of Walter Newman, who lived at Philbeach Gardens at the time..
[39] Holophane – name of a company specializing in reflectors for light fittings.
[40] Evie was Evelyn Newman, H.E.M. Newman's father's spinster sister.

Friday, 21 January 1920

A nice day, thank heaven, because today we started our 24 hour shift at the deep dugout: shifts two hours on and four off. I was in the first, beginning at midday after the 0900 lecture. We were allowed in the mess during the day but had to remain in the dugout all night. I worked with 'Uncle' Ray from 12 to 2 carrying out the spoil, and from 6 to 8 working at the face, during which he and I attained battle-frenzy over the chalk and flint to keep Stuart and Skinner well supplied with filled sandbags to carry away. Had late anteroom dinner.

Saturday, 22 January 1920

Stuart and I took camp beds to sleep on otherwise we should have had to lie on XPM sheeted bunks. The worst period was between 12 and 2 this morning as I had fallen asleep and took the entire shift to wake up. We had to carry up sandbags from the other two; the worst of the job being to pull the loaded truck up the beastly incline. Slept only moderately from 2 to 6, and then had a comparatively feeble pick until breakfast time because the previous shift had made a horrid mess over fitting a frame, in fact had been pulling teacher's leg over it.

Read the papers during the morning and then made an excursion by bus and train with Skinner to Gravesend. A fruitless journey. Only those detestable converted lifeboats were on offer. Had tea in the Geisha in Chatham High Street; anteroom dinner in the mess and so to bed.

Sunday, 23 January 1920

Spent the day recuperating, i.e. lounging in the mess. Wrote to Mum and to the Holophane Co about the lampshade for the smoking room on Dad's birthday.

Whitcombe Skinner Wavish - Survey Tour

Monday, 24 January 1920

Another casualty today: Gillespie received a billhook across the back of his left hand from St George cutting brushwood. The batch is dwindling badly. Blake ruptured, Wavish with a damaged knee, Graham lead-swinging, Booney (in luck) awarded light duty for damn-all, and now today. Spent the morning cutting brushwood in the woods past the kennels at Upnor and the afternoon making fascines.

Tuesday, 25 January 1920

Frightful toothache all last night, and into the morning, in fact hell all day; so I phoned Mr Pignot, a Rochester dentist, for an appointment this evening. Spent the agonizing day making fascines and a mule track in the woods.

Mr Hedley (Mr Pignot's partner) relieved the tension at 5pm, found a tooth decaying beneath a former filling and proceeded to sap and lay a time charge to kill the nerve. I am to return on Monday.

Wednesday, 26 January

A bloodsome morning making slab roads. Teacher did not roll up for an hour or so after we had started and then kept his mouth shut for a further half hour. It was then midday when we were hoping to go. He then told us we were quite wrong and kept us another hour rectifying our mistakes. Took a taxi at the dockyard gate at 1.25; changed and taxied to the station in time to catch the 1.45; pretty good going.

Accompanied Skinner to Ashtons, the Yacht Brokers of 12 Regents Street, but were only offered a seven-tonner at Falmouth for 500 guineas!

Tried on the mess kit at Daniels; thought I recognized a voice outside to be told it was the Marquis of Blandford, the £30,000 a year bloke.

Reached Philbeach Gardens at 4.15 where they proceeded to compensate me for my fast since breakfast (rather painful munching still) and then they took me to Westminster Abbey for a very interesting lecture on all they possessed there of vestments ,plate, etc. They provided me with a huge meal, after which I caught the 2210 train back to Chatham with J.D. Newman who had been attending his dentist again.

Thursday, 27 January 1920

Lecture by the noisome 'Chips' (Capt. Carpenter) on water supply. Afterwards we were given a scheme on water supply to be finished by Saturday. Applied for a weekend and posted a PC home to that effect.

At 1500 played a magnificent rugger match against No 4 Supplementary Course. The Supplementaries consist of chaps commissioned during the war who had only done one of the short courses then obtaining. They have a formidable reputation but only beat us by 11 to 5. We were positively holding our own all the second half. After a hurried bath a lecture from Professor Atkins (who had talked to us before about lecturing) on "the Three Mediterraneams": i.e. about the old and new worlds and the meeting of the extremes across the Pacific (the third and coming Mediterraneam) with suggestions as to how to solve the problem.

Then guest night: in fact what a lot of spare time!

Friday, 28 January 1920

Over to Upnor again to compete the Cut and Cover Dugout. Teacher again left us till lunchtime before correcting our faulty methods. How rankling is his form of teaching.

Spent 2½ hours this evening with J. Stuart on the water supply scheme, and then circulated around the remainder of the batch mocking them for taking such meticulous care over pen and ink drawings.

Guv Stewart and HEM Newman

Saturday, 29 January 1920

Teacher did not come to Upnor this morning so we escaped at a reasonable hour with G.M. Stewart in charge. Examined various types of pumps and then turned a large pile-driving frame through a right angle on the further side of the pond using spikes and crowbars.

Despite my pass book arriving to depress me I went home by the 1345 and the 1520 from Marylebone. Aline passed me about six feet away opposite Rawlinson's without noticing me. Posted some letters from Stein to some Canadian flames in order to disguise from them his actual whereabouts, and found the family working in the garden.

The bound volume 2 of H. G. Well's Outline of History has at last arrived from Rawlinson's. The Shop and the Batch groups have been framed.

Sunday, 30 January 1920

Nasty damp day. Heard Mr. Gill preach one of the most interesting sermons that I have ever heard ,about the experience necessary to discern the will of God. Put Ma's back up by asserting that the Bible was not all sufficient for this purpose.

Mr. Ferine supplied an address in Essex to write to concerning a yacht. Mr. Ferine invariably spends his summer holidays sailing.

Monday, 31 January 1920

Lecture from teacher on demolitions followed by fireworks in the Raveling; banging off primers, dynamite, guncotton, cordeau-detonant, etc.

Another trip to the dentist this evening. Mr Hedley applied another dressing and wants me again tomorrow week.

The night of the Commandant's dance in the theatre. Daniels sent my mess kit for the occasion, and it fits all bar the jacket. I wore it for mess, but being informed that anyone without mess kit could wear mufti, I borrowed a pair of shoes from Stuart and changed into tails. Arrived about five minutes late as is customary in town but found that all the girls I knew (only three) were fully engaged, so I spent an idle evening dancing about half and being cut by two or three strangers. Actually I discovered two more dancers in Chatham by name Luard and Cocks, otherwise the evening was wasted and had it not been for Macdonald's little brandy flask we would both have been desperate. To bed at about 0115 on Tuesday.

January 3rd and January 4th both contain references to our Electrical Course which appear to be contradictory. It may have been because the course was split for administrative efficiency, but I remember nothing about it.

What follows are episodes which were all written perhaps some months after the incidents and events had occurred.

THE LEVEE

The levee which we attended occurred on March 21, and since we were to tour Christchurch the next day, several of us chose to proceed there to spend the night. Consequently we trooped to London arrayed in gorgeous khaki, carrying sword, suitcase, and a walking stick complete.

"St James's palace." This to the taxi driver! Once inside we found ourselves like grains of sand on the seashore; brilliant scarlet, bearskins, beefeaters, gentlemen at arms, bishops, judges, generals…… and we poor bloody sappers.

Room upon room bereft of furniture were instead packed by this motley crowd. There were familiar ´Daily Mirror´ faces, but being no Pelmanist[41], I only recognized Henry Wilson, the Bishop of London, Ponsonby, an OW in the Welsh Guards, and a few Gunner friends from ´Shop´ days.

Having been marshalled around the maze, our credentials duly scrutinized, and after standing about for what seemed hours, we approached the solemn moment, the Guards' band playing "Kissing Time" in the garden below, rows of inquiring faces peering over the palace wall from along the Mall: how ridiculous - can't you laugh you fool? No; that would be accounted a sign of weakness.

As we approached His Majesty our tickets passed along the line of presenters until it reached the prescribed one; our name was called, we took four or five paces forward, turned left, faced the King and bowed. With my attention rivetted to the King I failed to see the court, amongst whom I heard was the Prince of Wales. The King stood on a dais in front of a chair wearing the uniform of a Field Marshall. My first impression evoked pity; this man, bored and weary, acknowledging with a gracious inclination of his head the obeisance of his multifarious officers. My next a feeling of awe, the King, the symbol of law and order, empire, whom we are commissioned to protect, defend and fight for against any who dare insult, or declare war against him; which implies us too.

Heroics are momentary, thank heavens; better keep on the surface, grumble, laugh, as are our normal habits. Outside again, and under the inquiring scrutiny of the onlookers, Swan and I engaged a taxi to Waterloo, retrieved our cases and deposited our swords in the cloakroom, and caught the 1230 train to Bournemouth together with Skinner and Pike.

(After the levee, BOURNEMOUTH AND CHRISTCHURCH)

We elected to stay at the Grand Hotel but wished we had not, as it seemed to cater mainly for ´Commercials´. However, snobbery enough! We changed and went out, I being led by the other three, old habitués of the town, to Bobbies, a draper's shop, but never mind, it is better on the top floor.

Never have I eaten such an A1 galaxy of cakes, pig though I am for my memory to record it; and amongst a bevy of beauty too, though we failed to sample that, alas. Apart from the high percentage of crocks and invalids Bournemouth struck me as no bad place.

[41] Pelmanism - a system of memory training devised by the Pelman Institute in London.

We met Swan later at a show accompanied by his sister who was still at school here. The show was 'Tilly of Bloomsbury' which had had a long run in London; an adaptation of Ian Hay's 'Happy-Go-Lucky'. A good company, even though it was only a touring one.

Next day, having cashed a cheque at a draper's shop where Swan appeared to be known, I went round the town with the other two; to a music shop where there served a flame of…… 's, and so by the banks of that vast(?) River Bourne to the pier, where we spent an hour or so relaxing, listening to the orchestra, and inhaling the ozone. The weather was glorious and we could discern the Isle of Wight in the mist.

Not much peace however, because we were due at Christchurch for lunch, whither we repaired by tram. Having arrived I accompanied Skinner and Pike to their former quarters, the mess of the Experimental Bridging Coy. RE, a place noted chiefly for Tanks and Rugger, both the hobby of Major Martell RE who was still absent at the Staff College. Murray and Angwin had spent the night there.

The rest of the batch soon arrived, most having spent the night in London, and we all set out for our pub, the King's Arms, in a street near the river and overlooking the Priory. After lunch we began the tour of which I recall little beyond watching tanks performing various tasks, the new heavy pontoons, Inglis bridges on rafts, etc, and experiencing an uncomfortable and thunderous ride in one of the aforementioned tanks.

That evening many 'did' Bournemouth, whereas the sophisticated were driven in a car to a cinema in Boscombe. Sometime or other we toured the Priory and listened to all the legends, including that of its angelic construction, and walked along the bank of the River Avon. The Priory and its surroundings were beautiful, but the countryside did not impress me, indifferent as I seem to be to flat lands such as I know of them, e.g. Hunston, Southwold, etc. The pub was an ancient building and excellent in all respects. We returned to Chatham on Wednesday evening.

(Written in November 1921)

THE COAL STRIKE APRIL 1921

In general this unfortunate event lasted into the summer. Army reserves were called up and were demobilized after about six weeks. The Commandant had previously lectured us in the theatre confidentially about action in cases of civil insurrection and riot.

Insofar as we personally were concerned, we had only recently begun our survey course and were due to go on tour in about three weeks when, one Saturday morning, we were warned to remain on or about the barracks: at least within an hour's call in case of an emergency, all leave being cancelled. We were also told that because we were engaged on the survey course we would carry on with our instruction, so as not to interfere with the tour arrangements, but that all other instruction would cease. This was to enable the reservists on arrival to be formed into units with officers.

Nevertheless on Sunday afternoon a message came for Ray (the head of our batch) ordering the top half of the batch to proceed at once to Lower Chatham barracks and to report to the OC Provisional Battalion. It so happened we were the first batch to be dispatched. There, after hanging about in an atmosphere of constant energy and excitement, I was posted to 56 Field Coy

due to proceed to Bulford under Captain Adams; a special reserve officer, Captain Dyer; me, Lamplugh and two reserve officers, Lieutenants Evans and Meekin. Until leaving we were in fact to remain under the orders of the OC 95. So much for Sunday.

The reservists on arrival proceeded to St Mary's; discarded their civies; donned khaki, and received their identity discs inscribed with regimental numbers. They were then marched under a onetime NCO in a continuous stream to Lower Chatham barracks where they were allotted indiscriminately to the various provisional companies, I to 5, for housing and feeding. Drafts were formed for distribution to regular field units according to trade classification, and on every parade of each forming provisional company the OC read out his list of names until the draft was formed, fed, and dispatched under a subaltern. I packed, made ready my 'marching order' ready for departure on Monday …… False alarm. Tuesday morning also blank, but luckily I had deposited my belongings at the barracks because, about 1130, Colonel Johnson summoned me to round up all the P Coys to collect a draft for 56 Field Coy, order them food, and get them away by the one-something train to London. I had no opportunity to see Adams about all this until the general parade at 1230. Murray was acting similarly for the 57 Field Coy, also at Bulford, so we joined forces and made one collective draft.

The organisation of the P unit was splendid: in the emergency nothing could have run more smoothly. Major Hyland was inexhaustible as adjutant, and little Woodgate was a marvel as messing officer, producing meals without notice and unassailable on the question of draft rations. Ryan was acting RSM, which post though small he amply filled with his astounding voice. The P battalion remained until demobilization, accommodating such men as could not get away to units, and who were employed on odd jobs, guard duties, etc, officered by No 4 Supplementary and no 4 YOs. The rest of our batch were detailed to units in the training battalion and remained more or less idle at Brompton Barracks.

The Journey

Murray and I were naturally apprehensive but the journey was accomplished without incident or mishap, the men behaving A1. Having an hour to wait at Waterloo we posted sentries at all the station exits, but the precaution was unnecessary. We changed trains at Porton and there met a large draft of Signals under an officer who had had a thrilling journey from Crowborough with all his men in mufti and indistinguishable from civilians. He had fed his men on bread and pickles on the platform of Brighton station. A driver and horse transport met us at Bulford station for our kit, and we marched about a mile over the fields in the dark to our destination tired and anxious as regards to our prospects for the night. Wonderful to relate everything was prepared for us, quarters, meals, and I even had a servant detailed for me with a bed all ready.

Quarters

Bulford is a vast area of deteriorating wooden huts, an island in a sea of grass known as Salisbury Plain. No amount of bed clothes seemed enough; one retired suffocating and awoke frantically early frozen to the bone, a howling blizzard probably raging outside. My servant a great hulking Irish driver with knobbly black-begrimed face, a prize-fighter and an excellent man with a squeaky voice, did his best for me, but complete comfort was out of the question.

The mess was likewise composed of wooden huts, and though small, especially for this unexpected influx of officers, was quite comfortable and the grub and drink good. It comprised Davies, the CRE's underling and OC of the usually non-existent Field Coys, also mess president, Shurlock, Lt RE, of the Signals; a doctor, an RC padre, and a cost accounting officer, one silk, the only permanent members. Added to them now were all the officers of the newly forming Signals unit of whom I remember by name: Jennings (with his tales of Colonel Carey RE), Lockley Turner who goes to bed with a bottle of stout and cut his lips one morning on a broken bottle neck, plus the officers of 56 and 57 Field Coys, the latter consisting of Major Milman and Lieutenant Brunyart, reservists, together with Captain Swift, Murray, 'Jug' Stuart, and Angwin. Indeed quite a merry party.

The parade ground fronting the mess was a square grass patch. To its left was the 56 Coy office, the storeroom and guardroom next door; while opposite the mess were the men's quarters. The entire camp was built of wood and corrugated iron. There was one main street with all the needful shops, a post office, cinema, garrison theatre, and an assortment of churches.

56 Field Company

The remainder of the company arrived on Wednesday, the men and NCOs were allotted to their sections next morning and training began. I started drilling the drivers who had no horses nor any transport, and they had forgotten all about it. However Dyer took over and I was allotted No 3 Section. After the first few days they became very bored with drill (and who can blame them?), and wanted some occupation to justify their having been called up. When put to the job of demolishing huts, their outlook did not improve. The DO practically took charge of them. the only trades required were bricklayers and painters, and since they were all tradesmen and union members they were annoyed at;

1) working as laborers; and

2) working as tradesmen at merely army rates of pay .

Civilians worked alongside them and this caused further aggravation imagining that they were doing civilians out of jobs, whereas in fact the DO had been unable to obtain civilians to do the work because Bulford is so isolated .

I had only one really reliable NCO, Sergeant Stanford, and he a mounted man not long discharged from Aldershot, should have been recalled there instead of Chatham. The others had become too civilianized; they had really nothing to do, and so spent time sympathizing with the sappers. One was subsequently court marshalled and reduced and to the ranks, as I heard later, for painting seditious notices on the cookhouse walls. Another, a Lance Corporal, had been a Section Sergeant the war and cut up rusty in consequence. He had seemed a good sportsman but he and I never appeared to hit things off. However, in spite of the grumbles, most of the chaps, with a few exceptions, behaved well.

Another job given to us was the clearing of the road drains in one section of the camp. The first day I, ignorant of the rate of work to be expected, gave them an afternoon's task in proportion to their accomplishment which they were pleased to finish in half an hour. There was trouble here over the dumping of the rubbish.

We furthermore had to be gamekeepers. Some Gunners had been caught poaching in the CRE's preserves up and beyond Beacon Hill. Consequently each unit in turn had to provide a piquet in the early morning and late at night. I was gamekeeper one evening from five to nine and concocted a small outpost scheme, posting pickets at various points along the ridge, and giving each NCO a number of sappers to work as sentry groups. I traversed the whole area on foot but neither saw nor heard anything suspicious.

The normal routine was to work in the morning and to organize games of an afternoon involving football matches against other units, and organizing subsection competitions involving all possible. We withdrew for our survey tour long before these were finished, my only share having been playing goalie rather ineffectively in a game against the drivers.

Various games in the mess, the cinema or a concert party in the Garrison Theatre, occupied the evenings. One evening we (the YOs) were invited to a guest night at the Gunners' mess, where were Barter, Drew, Mansergh, Potter, etc, old friends from The Shop. They entertained us well in their large and comfortable mess in spite of its consisting of a jumble of wooden huts. Stonehenge was quite close and one Sunday Lamplugh and I walked over to see it, and later on Evans and I marched our sections thither. Its wonder and mystery has been vandalized by the close proximity of an aerodrome on one side and Lark Hill Camp on the other. Lamplugh and I also took a bus to Salisbury and back to explore the town. The 400-foot cathedral spire makes a splendid landmark for miles around, rising above all the undulations, but close too I did wonder if it was not out of scale with the building beneath. These outings and a route march towards Tidworth comprised all the neighbouring countryside that I was able to see.

The coal strike carried on to the exasperation of everyone who had been called away from his job, but we were relieved after a fortnight to take part in our survey tour by Martin, Ahern, Benjamin, Dennis and Webster, all of No 2 YOs, much to their disgust, while we returned triumphantly to Chatham.

(Written December 1921)

THE SURVEY TOUR

Shaw, Stewart and Macdonald on Survey Tour

A glorious May in Devon on the fat of the land, no coal strike apparent, and no worries.

We were based on Torcross, a small straggling village, eight miles SW of Dartmouth, facing east four miles north of Start Point. The last mile and a half of the road from Dartmouth was perfectly flat running along an embankment between the sea on one side and Slapton Ley, a strip of fresh water reputedly containing pike, on the other. All the remaining landscape was very hilly as we found to our cost, when every day we, loaded to the ears with heavy survey equipment, encountered it on Government push bikes. The only public transport are the GWR buses from Dartmouth.

We arrived by train at Kingswear on a Monday morning, ferried across the river to Dartmouth, proceeding thence by charabanc. We had the Torcross Hotel almost to ourselves; fared well, all expenses paid by the survey school. Later batches impinged on the holiday season and reportedly found themselves taking second place, some sleeping in the village, and their impressions of the Misses Hill, proprietresses, were uncomplimentary. The hotel was right on the sea, with immediately behind it the rocks and the cliff face.

To begin with the bathing was frantically cold. The steeply shelving beach delayed the warming up period, but either we grew used to it or the sun became effective because gradually we bathed more and more comfortably.

For reasons stated, the work was always strenuous and the days were fully occupied, though I personally made a point of either returning in time for tea or making for somewhere bearing a good reputation for cream.

Thanks to our fortnight on coal strike duty we had missed that much instruction and practice, so we had to attend lectures in the Slapton village school whither we repaired every morning at nine. We began in syndicates of six to formulate a scheme for triangulation. Mine, I remember, contained amongst others 'Jug' Stuart and 'Bodie' Aldous. We toiled up and down dale for hours periodically losing ourselves trying to spot each other over long distances from hill top to hill top or other vantage points, so as to cover the area with a network of triangles.

The instructors' own scheme was the one chosen, and we then worked in pairs, Jug with me, first erecting our three or four beacons and later measuring beneath them all the angles connecting them with the surrounding network using a 5" vernier theodolite. Then came the laborious task of base measurement which we performed as a complete batch with minute care with invar wire and magnifying glasses, and with a good midday interval for cider and pasties. Next came the wearying donkey work with survey forms and seven-figure log tables in the Slapton school, not forgetting the awesome resection form, which each of us had to produce separately for some point that we considered might be useful to us for plane-tabling.

We performed plane-tabling singly, each having approximately one square mile, to complete the detail within it at the scale of 1/20,000 and contours at 5' intervals. I was the lucky one as regards situation, my area needing a mere short walk since it lay immediately behind the hotel. It included Torcross Lea, the Devil's Cauldron, a narrow slice of Slapton Lea, and Torcross Chapel. Inland the boundary was the road running south from Stokenham, and its centre was approximately Widdicombe House. It was hereabouts in a hay field surrounded by woods that I lost the eyepiece of my alidade on the last day, and so had to finish with a simple sight-rule. Nevertheless, despite this, I finished up 'by eye', and was awarded 100% for it. Major Clough was my personal instructor but I saw him only once.

Mrs King was present with her husband, the CIS. The AISs were Major Clough (without his wife), Captain Charles West (with his fiancée somewhere in the neighbourhood), and Captain James Kirby engaged in cradle snatching the attraction a miss E--a T-rr-l, a frequent passenger in his ABC. She was a niece, or friend of Dion Clayton Calthrop, the playwright, who was also in the hotel, a very interesting conversationalist. Among other occasional guests was the tiniest woman I have seen accompanying a moderately tall husband. Unlike many dwarfs her features and limbs

were in perfect proportion. D C Calthrop said he had seen her in 'pinkie and the fairies' where she took one of the diminutive parts, perhaps the Fairy Queen.

One Saturday Jug, Angwin and I went to Torquay by bus, ferry, and rail to see the locality. It resembled a hot–house, although it had only been comfortably warm when we left Torcross. It is picturesque; a mingling of trees and well-proportioned buildings in harmonious brick or stone (I forget which). After some shopping Jug met some women acquaintances and we took tea in the pavilion where the golden apple beauty competition winner serves as a waitress. A tré-dansant party was arranged for next Saturday, but I, not partial to such affairs, resigned my place to some more seasoned poodlefaker.

All having been made honorary members of the Royal Dart Yacht Club, Shaw, Angwin and I went one Sunday to pay our respects to them: quite a jolly crowd of old men, most retired or with private incomes, I would expect, very happy sailing or discussing it over whiskies and soda. Very genial and kindly people.

On the bus back from Dartmouth, Angwin and I encountered a Mr Hamilton who invited us to come and see him any evening at his house near Stockton. It turned out to be a beautiful spot on a hillside overlooking the sea. The house is surrounded by a semi-wild luxurious Devon garden amidst scattered pine trees. I shall always remember the lovely prospect as we came away, the full sea's surface straight towards us for miles and miles over the bay.

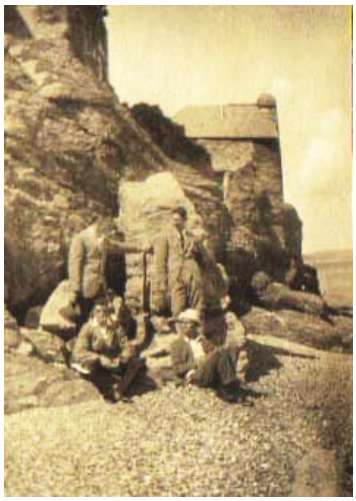
My Hamilton had held some important civil post in South Africa during the Boer War and he now spends his time using his brains and fingers in his workshop under the house. He showed us two of his ingenious inventions. One was an instrument accepted by the Air Ministry for notifying airmen of their angles of tilt and inclination when flying in fog. The other, which he had patented, was an unpuncturable motor tyre. It consisted of curved steel plates rivetted together which can be inserted between the inner and outer tyres. He said it had been tested using worn-out tyres over 5,000 miles after nails had been driven into the covers, and there had been no puncture. Contrary to expectation the appliance was quite light.

Since his wife died he had lived as a recluse, merely walking to his wife's grave once a week, or visiting Dartmouth occasionally. Consequently he bore a sinister reputation throughout the countryside. We also heard that he drank like a fish, but the only drink which he produced for us was tea!

One night about ten of us attended a circus at Kingsbridge; the genial Alfred who often visited the Hotel supplying the transport. Our meal in the baronial style 'hall' in a shabby public house was execrable, and so was the performance afterwards, the only relief being a group of Japanese acrobats. Later Silas Blake (RCE) and I listened to some amazing (leg-pulls I thought) yarns from the foreman of the Ford Depot in Manchester about its management and organisation. Several other noteworthy incidents include the local choir and bell ringing club who performed their peals on hand bells outside the hotel gate every Sunday; secondly the old bearded yeoman exhorting us all to repent as the Kingdom of God was at hand. He would be safe, the rest of us damned ---- and had we seen the comet? Then there was the poor shell-shocked well-bred lunatic wandering about, craving for drink, for whom one glass of beer was overmuch. One day an old farmer approached and I explained to him what I was doing and why, and being invited to look through my

alidade declared repeatedly that he could see nothing. Resuming work I discovered that the sun-flap had been down! Lastly the farm hand: “what be ye doin’ in this field wi’out stick, zur? Varmer, ‘ee never never lets us in vields wi’ bulls wi’ out stick. Ye can never tell w’at bulls will do one way nor ‘nother”. Corollary - rapid exit!

Jug Stuart, Shaw, Macdonald and I walked on two Sundays to Lannacombe Cove, on the coast past Bee Sands, what remained of Hall Sands after a gale demolished the village in 1916, Start Point, the lighthouse and then the Cove. Lunched there on monster crab, rhubarb, cream, farm butter and new bread; lazing the afternoon away, and then tea with cream and homemade cakes all for 3/- a head; and not forgetting the faithful Tusker, a cross between a fox terrier and a foxhound(?), who joined us each time at Hall Sands assured that the game would be worth the candle, and only leaving us at last as we reached the hotel in time for supper.



Shaw, Macdonald, Stein and Stewart at Hall Sands

Great was the wrench at our departure. The prospect of more weary months at Chatham was indeed bleak. We were granted five days leave which came as a small consolation. But oh; just think of that cream.

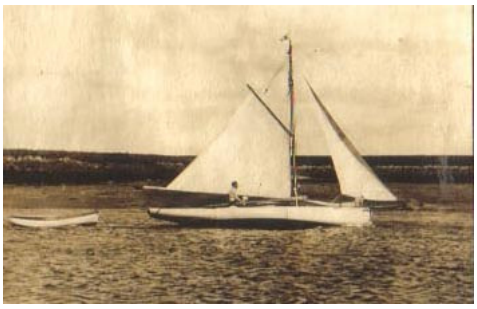
THETIS - SEASON 1921

A chapter of accidents-bad luck or bad management - as you will.

DCT Swan and Skinner aboard 'Sylvia' 1920

We discovered her at Gravesend. ‘Tarzan’ Skinner and I had been there one afternoon on ‘spec’ to see Inglis, the boat builder, and having refused to consider converted lifeboats at exorbitant rates, I had the idea of writing for information to the Gravesend Sailing Club. The Secretary replied and told us about the Thetis being for sale, so accordingly we went again to inspect it. The owner, a Mr Wellard, met us and took us on board. She lay in the basin, a neat cutter of about 4 or 5 tons, 29ft by 8ft with a 4’6” draught, spoon bow, countered stern, cockpit with two bunks in the cabin, fine lines; in fact seemingly desirable, and a big contrast to the tardy old water-logged tub of our Sylvia.

The owner assured us that it was sound, and that the sole reason for selling her was that he had bought a more roomy ship, and could not keep two. The only snag was the price which he put at £140. However, after some correspondence we eventually bought her for £125.



Thetis-1921

One or more members of the syndicate, comprising Tarzan, Swan, Bud Stein and I, made several more journeys to fit her out, all portable stores being still ashore for safety, and eventually Swan and I were deputed to sail her round. Wellard and his wife accompanied us as far as Hole Haven; quite a fine afternoon, good breeze, sunshine, and we were favourably struck with her sailing qualities. They were nice people, and showed us all 'the ropes', and after tea rowed ashore to make their way home by train. Then with the night came the rain, Swan in the darkness dropping and losing one of the dinghy skulls.

We should have started away at about 8.00am on Sunday as low tide was due around 10.00 but we did not wake in time to get away before 9.00. The wind was blowing nearly dead up the creek and at its mouth we had barely 30 yards in which to tack, but after a few scrapings across the sand we made the Thames estuary. Alas, we had no chart embracing Hole Haven, and in turning eastwards we had turned too quickly: SCRUNCH. Aground on a lea shore and the tide falling fast. ''Down Sails'' – scrunch, scrunch, scrunch – what a hell of a tide; but luck, dear fickle luck for once smiled on us, for this self same tide which was terrifying us suddenly set us free. Thetis rose clear and we were over the spit. So with a heave on the Halliards and a spanking breeze, off we made for Sheerness.

We had intended to pick up Skinner on Southend pier, but seeing that we had but one skull for the dinghy this was impossible and we gave the place a wide berth.

All went swimmingly until we reached Upnor pier; the wind had dropped a little and the tide had turned again. Everything was ready for dropping the anchor on the west tack (the wind dead ahead again) when we began to lose ground, dropping ultimately as far back as Upnor Castle. If Thetis bottom had been clean all might have been well, but, as we were utterly defeated we dropped anchor and packed up. Swan struggled shorewards in the dinghy using our one skull as a paddle, but the tide was too strong, and in the end the ferryman came to our assistance.

Monday morning we were pontooning. Thetis was high and dry on the mud. Then to our horror as the tide came in we saw that she was dragging her anchor. The wind had acquired the intensity of a young gale, blowing against the tide in the same direction as last night causing great commotion to the river surface. Thetis was bouncing all over the shop and succeeded in twisting up her anchor chain (she always revelled in this pastime) and was steadily being blown down river. The syndicate obtained leave to go to her assistance and it behoved us to try to secure her to one of the barge mooring blocks, which sounded fine, but the strain was such that we failed to secure to two of them and were wondering how to proceed when a police boat rescued us and towed us to our last night's intended goal, i.e. the firm ground above Upnor pier.

Thetis on Upnor Hard 1921

The following days saw her beached, scraped, painted, tarred, varnished and altogether fitted out, then, full of optimism for the future, along came the coal strike followed by the survey

tour. From then on fortune, the fickle goddess, turned the smile of her countenance away from us, and we were left to the tender mercies of all the goblins and hobgoblins that yachtsmen can be called upon to endure.

The rest of this story is begirt, or should be, with a black edged mourning border, cypress, crape, and widow's weeds.

How we regretted disparaging poor old Sylvia but, waterlogged and leaking as she was, and hopeless wreck as she was under her new owners, she never caused the trouble, worry, and anxiety as did gentle Thetis under the spell of the aforementioned bogeys and hobgoblins.

After the survey tour Tarzan and I determined to spend the five days leave afloat. Imagine our chagrin on finding Thetis pulled up high and dry on the shore. Callum had arranged this for security during record high spring tides, and the tides had now reverted to the neapest of neaps.

Church parades, duties, and engagements of all kinds frustrated our efforts at weekends in general, and twice when two of us set out and had everything ready to start away we found we had fouled some unyielding object with our anchor on the bed of the river. Some days after the first disappointment we obtained the help of two men who found us attached to a chain joining two barge anchors, probably some ancient mooring. Having no available chain we temporarily made fast to them with a stout manila cable ---- which parted.

When the same thing happened later we did have some chain ready and were about to secure ourselves, when up came a dirty old local motorboat; the crew claimed them as last year's moorings which they had up till then lost, and dragged off with them.

I shall not detail every disappointment, anchor dragging, etc. Even with a big heavy anchor we had bought especially, she wound her chain around it and heaved. Suffice it to say that we barely spent a longer period afloat than paltry afternoons. Mind you; under sail she was a perfect pet, all that could be desired for easy handling. She used to heel a bit, but never dangerously, and always seemed satisfied with a gunwale awash. We never had any water near the cockpit. It was only at anchor that she played the devil. With wind against tide she was a pure bastard, jumping around all over the shop; no anchor could stand it. Our only salvation might have been a concrete block but we never tried one, having heard stories of blocks being dragged about the mud like skis on snow, and the slender iron ring with which they are fitted to corrode surreptitiously away.

The crisis arose at the end of July, the beginning of our summer leave. We had all planned to spend the three weeks cruising along the south coast and had made preparations accordingly. In the event Swan, his home in Jersey, had cried off to spend his leave there, Stein, a week before the event, having received a letter from his father in Canada commissioning him to undertake some work in Edinburgh, only Tarzan and I remained to carry out the project.

The day of departure broke fresh and clear and we, having chartered a taxi to bring along all our chattels and provisions for the voyage, arrived at our dinghy about 1130. Having stowed in it our baggage we proceeded to row out. Hell ---- with even worse exclamations our hearts sank to our boots; for what did we find but that Thetis's bowsprit was snapped in twain, our steel wire rigging ripped to glory, our bow battered, and our riding anchors both cut and fouled; in fact the very devil of a mess. We deliberated and decided to chuck it. We could not waste a week, a third of our

leave, knocking around Chatham seeking repairs the while we might be away enjoying life, nor could we be sure that the accident had not strained our beloved Thetis to the extent that in the first bout of weather we could have sprung a leak, and a leaking ship needing constant pumping is no sinecure or joy ride. So he to Folkestone and I to Northwood, on our several ways disconsolate. Later the weather did turn foul and beastly, so that we could take a little pleasure in sour grapes reversed.

After our leave we discovered the real truth. On the night prior to our intended embarkation there had been a young hurricane. Thetis had, I imagine, performed her usual gyrations around her anchor and had dragged off, eventually colliding with and beginning a bumping match with another Thetis about three times her own weight, a yawl belonging to Comdr Wilson RN of HMS Stork. Our damage was repaired in the REYC house at Upnor Hard and the cost of about a fiver[42]. The commander's Thetis was so badly mauled and hors de combat that he was able to sail to the Channel Isles and back and then to present a bill for £35 from a south coast firm of yacht builders comprising a complete refit and renewal of mahogany ornamental woodwork and umpteen coats of paint, etc!

It is true he spent about five months trying to wangle the sum out of his insurance at Lloyds, but after various visits to lawyers he found his claim could not be met unless he sued us in court. It was felt doubtful that we could win in that event, and that the damages and legal costs would be quite beyond our means, so we all stumped up the £8.15 per head.

Early in 1922 we set about trying to sell Thetis, hoping for £100 to £120 until the end of May. Advertising proved disappointing and we accepted £80 to relinquish her before our final departure from the SME. Summing up our total expenses, we found that they amounted to some £171, so that the £80 was just less than 50%.

Had it been worth it? I can only state that should a similar opportunity again arise I for one would join another likely yachting syndicate like --- well – like a shot.

THE SME SUMMARISED: Aug 1920 to June 1922 (The subaltern's Bugbear or back to Bottles)

The Square Courses

Apparent hell at the time but latterly, during construction, retrospected with regret.

Shades of drudgery, farce and boredom with comic relief from major Gawdsoul:

> "That's whawt you wawnt to avoid", or "I don't like your colour scheme, etc."

Not to mention Sergeants Taylor and Shirley: "For the benefit of the Sapp-u-rs." Marching order was the devil of a sweat, or relief at frequent disbursements of 2/6[43]. "Taffy" Welchnan was very efficient on Shornmead Rifle Ranges, and perhaps we derived the greatest benefit from Col Kelly as CI Tactics. The first instalment involved eleven 'Weekes'; the second was short, snappy, and 'Savage' – especially after the intoxification of puzsyfoot – batch dinner show, a bloody head, torn mess kit and "How did it happen, Ray?"

[42] Fiver = Five pounds

Electrical School

Batch at Shomead - c.1920

The best batch at the SME for years. The cause? We were new, keen, green, and conscientious. A boring advanced edition of 'Young' at the Shop, but useful as regards RE pay (having qualified by passing the AMIEE exam). Many experiments and much note-taking. For amusement - Frothy old 'Josh', the 'dealer in ohms'. Various tours to the dockyards, power stations, plant manufacturers, cable makers and layers.

Fortification School

Fully calculated to put a chap's back up. No amusements apart from self-ordained ones, the principal relaxation being the Kings Head at Upnor, where was a piano and excellent stout. Generally hard work to be done, undone and redone, without any 'fatherly interest' from above. Tour to Bournemouth (nominally Christchurch) for the experimental Bridging Company. NB TJ's scarf; "Capt Brown, Sir"; "Somebody had to be underneath". The interval for refreshment was: ????

The Survey School

The tour already described. Astronomy was baulked by the coal strike, and the only unattractive portion was gridding aerial photographs. Again a wonderful batch; why on this occasion? Nobody knows; perhaps luck. 'Our Father', Capt James Kirby, the cradle snatcher, now snatched.

The Construction School

Should never be mentioned in polite society. Mainly 'sh-t without wit'. A tour of four days in London, including sewers and sewage farms.

Workshops

Haphazard but useful and interesting, especially IC engines. The complete artisan in two months; moulder, fitter, turner, smith, plumber, pattern maker, welder, etc. NB "Finnie" the steamer; to be swallowed with care. Ensure a good report by oiling your hands and leaning with your canvas against an oily flywheel. A test paper – "Would you like the door open or shut? Leave the papers on the table when you come out."

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Behind it all the hobgoblins – Grock and Partner, the mechanical hot air plant, and the final result a piece of paper to be filed in the War House, as good as any waste paper basket.

The SME Course was followed by three weeks at Aldershot at the RE Mounted Depot to learn horse-mastership. Much was repetitive of what were taught at The Shop, but an advanced version in some respects, and including several days acting as Drivers, e.g. grooming at morning and

[43] 2/6 = two shillings and sixpence, or "half a crown" – nowadays equivalent to 15p.

evening stables etc, and more detailed instruction about equine ailments, injuries and muscular strains. There was less actual riding but more driving of what were then known as GS Waggons. From thence we moved to Perham Down on Salisbury Plain for instruction in anti-aircraft sound ranging, a peculiar craft in itself, really only applicable when aircraft arrived singly. I can barely recall the details, except as regards the main apparatus consisting of a tripod in which swivelled horizontally, a metal bar each end of which bore an old-fashioned gramophone-like cone, both cones able to rotate in the vertical plane. The aircraft flew into audible range. The listener had an earphone in each ear, and each was connected to one of the two cones. He had to follow the aircraft so that (a) the sound was at its maximum, and (b) the intensity of the sound in each ear was identical. His companion read off the vertical and horizontal angles involved. Imagine three such stations a mile or so apart and each zeroed to the same bearing, and a central HQ with some computer facility from which it can obtain from the detail received the range and direction of the target for the gunners to respond.

This course finished, No 3 YOs ceased to exist, and our dispersal around the world marked the end of three years' close comradeship; for me the posting was to:

54 FIELD COMPANY – BULFORD REVISITED

The 54 Field Company RE was reformed at Bulford Camp in July 1922, having been demobilized in July after the war at Borden, and having remained at cadre strength ever since.

Captain Cadell was the first OC with 'Bodie' Aldous and 'Artie' Bennett, but this was only a temporary arrangement, as Cadell was due for an E & M Course in Manchester, and the two subalterns for India in the winter. However, AG7 had picked the right man for the job. Cadell had performed his task with judicious judgement and foresight. No detail was too small; no organizing too complicated. Poor Artie and Bodie had the donkey work of compiling a card index covering every man in the company: his name, trade, age, birthplace, hobby, sport, etc, all of which later seemed rather wasted labour since in my years of experience there it was seldom consulted. He worked like a Trojan in the garden, digging, weeding, and planting in preparation for 1923; he organised tennis tournaments for the children at the CRE's house. But, like machines and the first paragraphs of the resume, he lacked humour. "I don't carrrrre two hoots." He had furthermore reformed into the resemblance of a Mess under every opposition, even from Bodie and Artie, the RE Mess which hitherto had been kept going by odds and ends: doctors, accountants, padres, signals, a kind of Hobnail, Ragtime Club.

When I joined the company it was nearly complete as regards men, but it lacked horses and transport. After an hour's drill daily the men were put to cleaning the lines, a necessary but tiresome occupation, and they called themselves 'The Haymakers'. The admirable CSM Edwards kept them busy while Bodie and Artie laughed and grumbled according to their respective natures.

Cadell left in early September having handed over to the pukkah OC, a Major Kelly. The Major belied his unimposing appearance and his weak voice, and turned out to be a proper gent, though a stickler for his rights and for those of the company. He struck the garrison adjutant as "a most difficult major".

We then obtained our horses, mostly cast-offs from the local gunners, who were discarding all but bays and blacks for the sake of appearances. The remainder came from Arborfield Cross, the Remount Depot, resulting in a motley collection, chiefly greys and roans, but by and large better animals than we had recently seen in the Aldershot Field Companies, and our stables, although corrugated iron, were more commodious.

Soon, with the arrival of 56 Field Company, the feuds began. First came Major Trenchard from Aldershot. He had a splendid reputation, and we began by wishing that the 56th had been our lot. His first subaltern was Whitcombe, and then Bodie was transferred, thus providing two subalterns per company. They were a priceless pair spending their office time writing vast fatuous screeds to departed members of the batch, and while Bodie occupied himself shoving his fist through glass, fixing doors the wrong way round, and playing the concertina, Whitcombe designed church windows and cathedrals, and played the flute. When I say 'played', his eyes may have followed the score, but his fingers eschewed all the sharps and flats. The pair of them, the RC padre, and I, made occasional expeditions into the local countryside to see the churches and the scenery, so that I had a good introduction to the county of Wiltshire. The WD and RAF blemishes alternated with lovely valleys of pasture, trees, and picturesque villages, narrow strips of civilization astride the winding tributaries of the River Avon.

In November came Neville Patterson to 54 and Bodie and Artie departed on embarkation leave, and after Christmas 56 were the gainers with the arrival of Edney and Vezey (both ex-4 YO), while we got Boddington. 57 Company was expected to expand from cadre in 1923, Bulford having been its customary home, when to our surprise in February from out of the blue came 17 Company from Londonderry under a Lieutenant Piggott. The junior subalterns, all married territorials, left in April, When Guinness, the real OC arrived from leave in South America, and Gillespie and Macdonald (No 3 YO) appeared unannounced after the dispersal of the 6th Fortress Company.

Neville Patterson at Bulford 1922-3

Guinness was a reticent type, but charming withal and good company, a man seemingly without worries, impervious to mud and hot water. He was an effective umpire as between Trenchard and Kelly in their frequent disagreements, and informed the CRE's adjutant of whatever was the outcome.

The Adjutant, a Welshman namely Captain Lewis, arrived in April. His hobbies included, stamps, photography, operatic gramophone records, and movie stars; but his was a hard life, the butt of all, and, not the least of his awkward jobs, Mess Secretary.

One of the mess members was Solly, ex-Rifle Brigade now Signals, an OW from the Orange[44], a skilful pianist, and a mad speed merchant on his Ricardo Triumph motorbike. I bought from him his old Ariel motorbike of so-called 3½ HP, which served me well, apart from the slipping of the rubber belt drive in wet weather, but it proved difficult to dispose of eventually.

[44] Orange is the name of one of the dormitories of Wellington College.

The CRE was Lieutenant Colonel Phillip Hodgson. He and his wife Dolly, ex du-Boulay, a gold medal violinist from the Royal Academy of Music, became life-long friends. She became aware of my musical interests and soon their quarter. Figheldean Manor became open house and I cycled there almost regularly of a Sunday to enjoy their hospitality. Likewise during my 1927 furlough from India I stayed with them several times in York where he was posted as Chief Engineer Northern Command, and where playing tennis one day with a girl from Tadcaster I became momentarily infatuated, that is until one day I found her to be superstitious and prone to fortunetellers. On retiring he became Bursar at Charterhouse (Godalming), and after the war we stayed quite often in each other's houses. I mourned their deaths inordinately.

(Much of the above paragraph is obviously not in the original draft.)

Major Pemberton became assistant CRE. He had spent some eighteen years with the Madras S & M[45], but had to revert home after an accident while hunting with the Ooty hounds, resulting in prolonged sick leave, and he still suffered from insomnia, hence a perpetually worried look and frequent absence of mind. Nevertheless he was a good bloke once you knew him. (Another PS: on my posting to India he wrote to the adjutant in Bangalore recommending me as a likely candidate for the Corps.)

My first impressions of Bulford had been adverse, but I soon became reconciled with the landscape. The mess and social life, and the speedy development of the 54th Field Company into an efficient unit, made life there totally pleasant.

The 1922/23 winter was occupied by musketry. The results were creditable, but the preliminary training was long and boring. It were better to include it in short periods during general training, so I thought. Then came works. This consisted mainly of the making of the football ground, an operation which devolved upon Boddington who was in charge of our workshop. He was a splendid scrounger. Every conceivable object that caught his eye, Decauville[46] track, timber, odd bits of iron, troughs, brick, etc found its way to our store. His reputation became unsavoury, and it added to the ill feeling between 54 and 56, by no means to his displeasure. In fact however it helped to frustrate the efforts of the cost accountants to curb expenditure, which resulted in the near stagnation of all small construction. Our contract to build the golf club house could not have been completed had it not been for Boddington and his disciples. It cost the country a mere 3/6[47], and took ages to finish owing to interruptions such as furlough, distance from camp, etc.

Education occupied an hour every day. I took map reading; Patterson had history and geography; an NCO taught English. If we had intended school-mastering we would have opted for training thereto. Grown men's brains seemed impenetrable, and we were reduced to cramming them with the facts which were subsequently set into the exams; otherwise the prospect was an endless repetition year by year talking to the same bewildered faces. What a travesty of education! It is true the papers were sent to the so-called education officer, but he, poor man, supervises the whole of the Third Division and could spare a mere glance to the highly marked papers, so that statistically we were super-schoolmasters.

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[45] Madras Sappers and Miners which H.E.M. Newman later joined.
[46] Decauville track – a form of prefabricated tramway track.
[47] 3/6 = 3 shillings and sixpence = 18 pence in today's money.

The men were badly off for amusement. Recreation grounds were limited and remote and further development was precluded by the money shortage. Our soccer team was successful, but only a limited number could take part, the bulk found early solace in bed and had to be hounded to watch their team. The NAAFI was hard up and unable to afford performances in either the garrison theatre or cinema of a style to satisfy either officers or men. The alternative was a trip to Salisbury, rather a boring old town unless one could afford the money for the available amusements. The eleven mile journey there blew away much of a sapper's weekly pay: the busses were crammed for two or three nights after pay day and subsequently empty. We struggled to entertain them in the camp and institute, but it was uphill work organizing weekly dances and occasional gala nights. Their frequency increased and the funds swelled, but the habitués were the garrison ladies and their Gunner paramours: very few sappers would attend. They pleaded inability to dance, so a 'hobnail' class was formed. It made current frequenters more proficient but failed to enthuse a wider field. Complaints arose about the institute being run for the benefit of outsiders only. Whist drives received only limited response; smoking concerts provoked none either and talent was weak, and the entertainers who were engaged, though popular, failed to pay their way. Each religious denomination tried to run institutes with no better luck. Amusing British troops is a task indeed. The Plain though is the salvation of some men, who, though with good records for zeal and efficiency, no sooner espy a town than they proceed to make it rock and heave under their feet.

Officers are much more lucky. They have a mess to live in equipped with papers, bridge, billiards, and a piano to while away the time. There is hockey, rugger (in 1923 we organised a very successful side), golf, and dances in Tidworth Club. Given transport the haunch of venison in Salisbury always provides a good meal to be followed by fair performances in the local theatre. In the summer there is also the tennis club for those addicted. For such as we, provided with chargers, there is no limit in extent or direction in which it is possible to hack. Polo is available in summer for any with a trained pony, not so we alas. But in winter one can follow the RA Harriers. Though less flash than Aldershot, Bulford is less harassing, less vast, and one can so soon escape into the countryside whenever army existence begins to pall. It may lack the facilities of Chatham (e.g. yachting) but it also lacks the dust, smoke and trams of that detestable town. Besides, Poole and Bournemouth are within easy weekend reach, as is also London, provided one can return for duty on Monday morning.

There is obviously class distinction in the army. The spring training opened with the infantry skills of drill, musketry once again, and semaphore, but it was not until we began field works that the sappers' interests became fully engaged and they snobbishly(?) pricked up their ears with interest and began to pull together. Its 'piece de resistance' was the trip to Mudeford for pontooning. Our march there took three days, 58 miles in all. We bivouacked in Longford Park just south of Salisbury, and at Ringwood. Sore feet were prevalent and we had an opportunity to select the sheep from the goats.

Mudeford Village lies at the mouth of the River Avon, at the eastern end of the eight mile string of towns forming the Bournemouth District. The estuary instead of running straight to the sea sweeps sharply left, the mainland on one side and a narrow shelf of shingle on the other, to which it was our daily effort to form a bridge. The tide is so strong here sometimes as to make it well nigh

impossible to row a fully manned pontoon against it, or even a shallow draught dingy. We had to be careful in picking suitable days in which it would be possible to form a bridge from rafts. Company equipment included two pontoon waggons and one for trestles. To these were added some heavy decked-in pontoons, derelicts from the experimental establishment in Christchurch, all of which had to be incorporated to bridge the approximately 100 yard gap.

The hours were long, 6.30 to 2.00 with a 10.00 to 10.30 break for lunch, and tempers were consequently frayed; and soon to sore feet were added sore arms and legs. The weather was hot and fine until towards the end of our five weeks there when it turned wet. We lived for the 12.30 bath on the far side of the shingle spit. Certain spectators on the mainland using binoculars showed a morbid interest in these somewhat unedifying activities. The GOC Third Division visited us once and being an ex-infantryman knew nothing of our techniques so that his comments were bland. Later he inspected us in Bulford on a wet day to turn the tables, finding fault with clothing, horses and turn-out; bur he did not bother us much.

As soon as we became used to the long hours and enervating atmosphere, and ceased sleeping after lunch only to wake feeling like death, we found amusement aplenty. 17 Company had paved the way and the neighbourhood opened its doors to us; with tennis invitations galore it eventually devolved upon the Orderly Officer to represent the Mess. Our hosts were well-to-do people in sizeable country houses; retired civil servants, British and Indian, and suchlike. They all broached the desirability of camping in a remoter field; in fact we came to sense when such remarks would arise. It was understandable. One grows heedless in time to the soldier's crapulous vocabulary which can alarm sensitive ears. One Sunday the morning service in the church over and against us had to be abandoned, so every Sunday afterwards we posted the Orderly Sergeant to supervise the ablution benches to ensure no further disturbances to worshippers. Neville Patterson, his 10 HP air-cooled Rover, his home in Parkestone, and thus his local acquaintances, were a Godsend for me, and it was thanks to him that I spent such a pleasant time.

There were weekends and other visits to his house, and several dances at the King's Hall adjoining the Bath Hotel. I found the young woman who runs the place extremely pleasant, and the one or two dancing lessons which I had from her were exceedingly helpful. One evening, how I don't know, I became involved in a 'cocktail supper' at a bungalow in Sandbanks with complete strangers unknown to me and to my lady companion. It might have passed unnoticed at a place of public amusement, but was a little degrading and out of place in a private residence: an experience, and as such to be valued.

The return march, particularly between Ringwood and Longford, was swelteringly hot. Major Kelly had opted to drive back, and Neville was away cricketing, thus leaving me acting OC, and I was alarmed to be invited to tea at Longford Castle. I only had a sports coat rolled up in the valise and felt quite disreputable. It was much ado about nothing however. Lord and Lady Radnor, and Viscount and Viscountess Folkestone were very hospitable and allowed us all to bathe in their pool, a deep section of the River Avon behind the castle: and Boddington and I spent a lazy evening paddling about in a canoe.

On our return the aforementioned inspection by the General took place. Bulford fields and Tidworth were choked with tents inhabited by units of the Third Division concentrated for an exercise. Luckily for us our Brigade (the 8th) Commander only called us out if any bridging was

required. Even that was farcical, because the Avon is well bridged and none can be demolished in peacetime. Even our efforts were ignored by the gunners who used the stone bridge alongside our pontoons. The other two companies fared less well, being called out daily to do nothing but tramp around the countryside or sit down in it.

Thanks to our being scattered during the months preceding the divisional sports, we had no opportunity to prepare for them and achieved no successes.

Patterson, with No 1 Section, having successfully demolished a railway bridge between Amesbury and Newton Tony with all the sapper units watching and listening to his exposition of the details, our demolition course consisted merely in detonating a few primers, raising some molehills trying to produce shell holes, and scattering pieces of rail around Beacon Hill.

At the end of the training season, Macdonald due for Gibraltar, and Whitcombe, Boddington and I for India, we four dispersed on leave pending embarkation.

I have omitted to mention that all this while I had been acting as Mess Treasurer, a veritable Geddes, necessarily opposing all extravagance. During the comparative idleness of winter it was tolerable, but in the summer it was irksome, taking up too much time. I could perhaps have been rude to people on occasion, but not, I hope, without provocation.

The CRE was removed to the War Office, and drastic changes were imminent in the Divisional RE, so quitting Bulford was neither a sorrow nor a pleasure: indeed it was with mixed feelings.

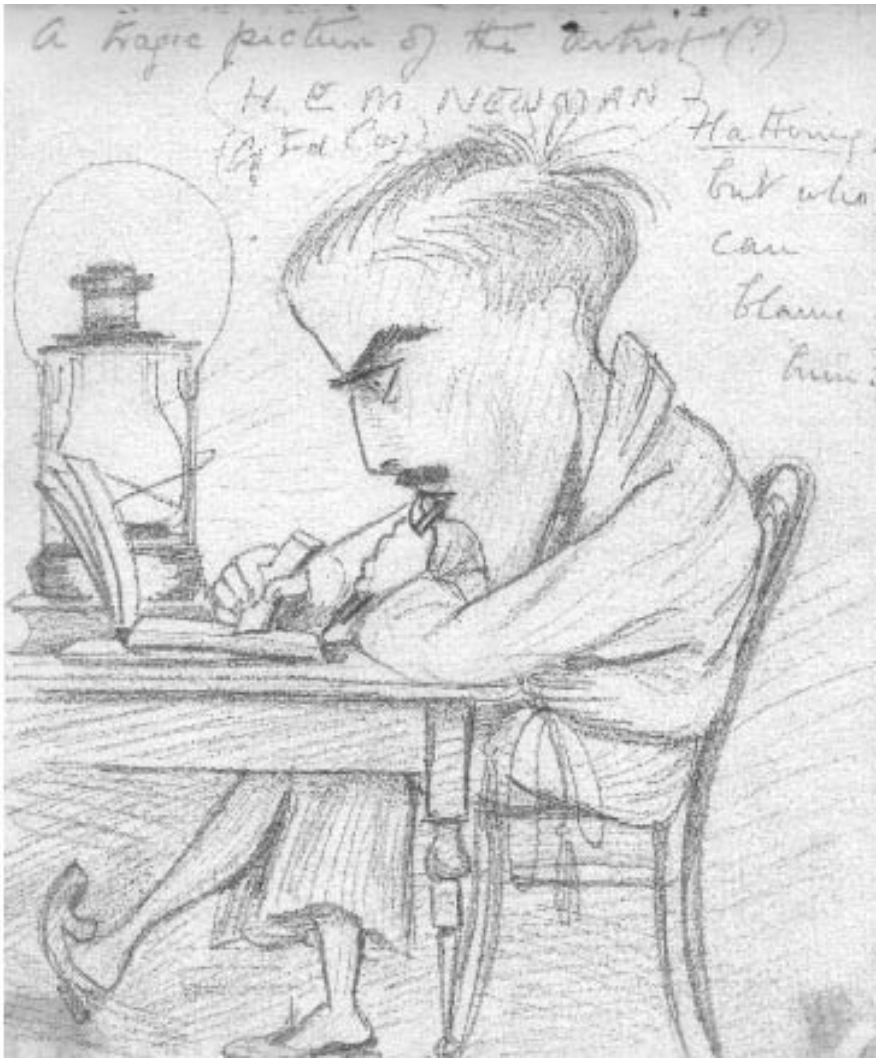
INDIA 1924 - 1929

Note: A number of Indian words and names occur in what is about to follow, and I believe is to be helpful to be able to pronounce them however roughly. I therefore append these notes on vowels:

a as the a in past	e as the e in pet
a as the u in punt	i as the ea in peat
ai as the i in pint	o as the o in post
e as the a in pate	o as the o in pot

u as the oo in Poona (now spelt 'Pune')

FORGET all about the 'a' as in pat



BY TROOPSHIP TO INDIA (Drafted July 1924)

We boarded the SS (HT) Marglen on 16 January 1924; sorted our baggage (mine inadvertently against strict WO Regulations by passenger train on a AF G980 from Bulford), bought deck chairs, and otherwise prepared for the worst. We cast off next day on a cold drizzling afternoon, I thankful that I had nothing personal to do with the folk waving farewells from the quayside. Southampton was shrouded in mist, and, apart from the lights of St Catherine's Point we saw no more land until we reached Cape St Vincent some days later. It looks a grim spot: just a rocky point surmounted by a lighthouse and an old Moroccan fort; no trees, no cultivation; a few scattered white buildings; and mountains in the distance. A possible air force station appeared shortly afterwards, and several fishing villages.

A noise outside the cabin one night about 3.30am propelled us up to the deck to see the Rock of Gibraltar away to our port beam, its lights twinkling around the base; and further off and astern to the starboard one could see the African coast.

The Mediterranean was cold and grey, in no wise blue. After viewing peaks of the Sierra Nevada to the north, snow-clad and seemingly cut into multiple steep gorges, we later came upon the Algerian coast to the south, a pleasing prospect of trees, farms and general cultivation. We passed quite close to Algiers, an imposing town as seen from the sea, surmounted by a blue-domed mosque against a background of hills. A railway runs along the coast, and behind it in the bay, crowded masts bespoke a busy port. Long range glimpses of Malta and Sicily revealed no details of interest.

A brown-green sea reminiscent of pea soup revealed that we were opposite the Nile delta, and several hours later a distant row of palm trees heralded Port Said: no coast line was visible just palms, a wireless mast and a lighthouse. Port Said where we were at last comfortably warm, is approached to the east of a very long breakwater, and the first impression one gets of the town itself comes as a gigantic illuminated advertisement for Scotch Whisky. We coaled all that night: a conglomeration of lighters and braziers, a thick black haze of dust, and running hoards of 'coolies' up and down gangplanks. There was a pandemonium of claxon horns from motor launches against continuous discordant shouts that might be analyzed into a kind of rhythmic song. Simon Arzt is a vast store offering all manner of goods, and guaranteed to be open for business whenever a ship is tied up to the quayside, be it day or night. There was no stopping us. I bought a big pack of 'Gippy' cigarettes which did me proud for the rest of the voyage, but which I felt constrained to discard as soon as I had smelt camels on landing in Karachi.

The following day was spent in the Suez Canal. The view to either side was sand, no more, no less, apart from intermittent settlements with flowering tress, a few military hutments, discarded coils of barbed wire, and a series of wayside halts along the accompanying railway track. There were a few lakes where ships could be tied up to enable others to pass unhindered in the opposite direction. It was also our introduction to friend kite. The sunset at Suez was memorable. To the west behind the town the brilliant sky above dark purple mountains: eastwards were blue haze, distant violet hills, and the vast stretch of golden desert; all the colours harmonizing and gradually deepening into darkness.

Having seen the mountains of Sinai I fell sick, so that the next land that I saw was the coast of Sind and the Kiamari docks, although we had received a quantity of the land of Oman on board in the form of dust.

There were no less than twenty-five sappers, from married skippers downwards, on board, so that we tended to dominate matters. The Tanks were nearly as numerous, a good crowd, and worthy opponents for deck rugger. The rest were all sorts and conditions, the majority newly fledged from Sandhurst. There were about 150 officers and only 90 rank-and-file. The scandal were the second class families packed tight in slum conditions. The only bad spell of weather was off Ushant. With me in the cabin were 'Fido' Fathful (No.2 YOs) and Boddington. They were a hefty pair and matters became strained in the confined space of a second class cabin made for two. The latter is gross and both are untidy so that it was not only tempers that became mixed. 'Bodders' camera mad, tried to turn the cabin into a fetid darkroom. Fido and 'Egg' Broomhall had founded a Purity and Temperance League following an outbreak of insobriety at their last night in Aldershot, and they made frequent use of the wireless operator, sending home Biblical references on such interesting matters as 'Horsemen riding upon horses ----- etc etc".

Suez and Port Said were examples of French influence in the building of 'tropical' towns, tawdry paint, rusting iron verandahs, cheap and nasty, an apology for gaiety, and sinks of iniquity. British Karachi is no paragon, but it evinces signs of substance and taste.

We arrived there on Saturday, 9 February. Excitement was intense. Everyone was agog for posting orders, and for us tender-feet this was the introduction to a land filled with strange things: but notice the old hands suddenly displaying scorn for trivialities, and uttering weird burblings to their Aryan brethren (i.e. Indians). Never mind: St George and I walked half a mile outside the dock gates for exercise and returned stiff.

We disembarked on Sunday; everything we possessed was dumped into a train which chugged slowly several miles to the rest camp, where Mr Cox and Mr Grindlay spent a happy day as shipping agents sorting it all out. The lucky wights[48] going north got away that night. We on the other hand who were due for southern climes remained behind. Four of us slept in a large (EP) tent in the sand, fed beyond the railway in a stone mess, and were lucky enough to engage an honest bearer for the two days. The camp was efficiently run despite the staff being restricted to one Captain with just baboos. There were several Gunner friends here, recently arrived from Colchester, stationed in Hyderabad, and in Karachi for Practice Camp.

Hyderabad Sind, as I learned later, is no sinecure of a station, but the dislike of all things Indian that they expressed was disheartening.

Georgie and I visited the drab town on Monday, bought large hats and had our hair cut. Cox and Co had some English mail for us, so we were in a forgiving mood; even with the ubiquitous smell of camels.

We southerners left on Tuesday, thank heavens, St George, Healing, Saegert, and I for Bangalore and the Madras Sappers. We boarded the little BI, SS Chakla at 2.00, bade farewell to the staff of the Marglen, just 100 yards astern, and put to sea again. It was a delightful little voyage in a

[48] Wights – people of a specific kind (old English)

delightful little ship: just 12 first class passengers including an Indian judge and his wife. They appeared to have a family of twenty, all of whom came armed with garlands to bid them goodbye. Compared with the Marglen the cabins were huge, the remaining accommodation comfortable, attendance good, and the food excellent. Captain and Mrs Whitworth were our table companions and they provided excellent company.

We anchored on Wednesday off a number of small towns, at each dumping and collecting numerous Indian steerage passengers, the ferries in and out being rackety small sailing craft.

Thursday morning Bombay and sticky heat. We spent the afternoon rushing around stores, and Bombay, the little we saw of it, looked magnificent. The harbour was impressive and Victoria station cathedralesque. We lunched at the Grand Hotel, but it did not impress us so we dined at the Taj. The company was amusing and the liquor provided a pleasant start to our train journey which began at 10.45pm. Mr Cox's rep. saw us through the luggage weighing quite nicely but he displayed extravagant baksheesh[49] ideas.

Georgie didn't sleep that night: I did. Next day we took occasional strolls at the halts. An American doctor and a railway engineer kept up a continuous stream of verbiage and cheroot smoke, and we, lazily eavesdropping, at length reached Guntakal at about 7.00 where we changed to a narrow gauge train with small compartments. George slept: I didn't. Next stop at 6.30am Bangalore: 16 February and ----- Corps Sports.

BANGALORE (February/September 1924)

Bangalore is a place good to look upon with seasons divisible into two: the hot and the wet, neither of them very distinct. From February to April it warms up, but never beyond 100°F. The May thunderstorms are occasional, and their frequency decreases until the SW monsoon arrives to bring rain without any thunder on an average once every four or five days from June to September. I was told that the north-east monsoon in November also brings rain and cools the temperature to last until the coming February.

Golden Mohur trees grow in many roads and bungalow compounds rendering the town brilliantly colourful with their scarlet flowers for some months, beginning at the end of March and remaining unspoiled during the early rains. Many species of trees are non-deciduous remaining green throughout the year, including the Java Fig often planted in avenues and growing tall and gracefully. Tree rats are ubiquitous. They and garden birds, many of which are colourful and good to look upon, shriek hideously. None sings as the word is understood in Europe.

There are fewer snakes and scorpions than I had imagined, but lizards abound, the gecko in particular, as do flies and mosquitoes, plenty of them anopheles. Nevertheless malaria is rare thanks to the universal use of mosquito nets, the burning of coils under dinner tables, and the officers' ankle protectors, to wit, their normal mess wellingtons. The first rains produce heavy swarms of flying male termites around lamps, walls and furniture as though it were a snowstorm. Soon they discard their wings and crawl about the ground. Bullfrogs love them, and for hours of a

[49] Baksee or Baksheesh = a small sum of money given as alms, a tip, or a bribe.

night they sing their monotonous chant of gratitude and praise, persistent as a gale through telephone wires.

The cantonment inhabitants are numerous and varied, comprising a cross-section of Europeans and Indians, military, commercial, legal, and Mysore government servants and their staffs, and all the domestic staffs that these imply. Upper class bungalows are set in spacious compounds which contribute to the distances one has to travel in the obligatory round of calls, polo grounds, a race course and a golf links, and a Kew and Regents Park combined, the Lal Bagh. In atmosphere there is little to choose between the Palm House at Kew and the said Lal Bagh.

Society does lack cohesion. There are no permanently settled families of prestige to set the tone. Every year or so the population has been transformed. Hostesses vie with one another in providing splendid little dinner parties to the limit of their means. Face to face all is politeness, but beneath small scandals are collected and stored for a backhand scratch.

There is a photograph album in the Madras sapper mess, and I was surprised on first opening it to discover a portrait of my father's brother Edwin who was killed in the Sudan in 1885 at the Battle of McNeal's Zariba, at Tofrek. Later on Tofrek day, 14 March, 14 Field Company's holiday, I met many veterans purporting to remember him. His reputed bearer was among them and he did his utmost to improve the occasion during the next few days.

The Superintendent of Instruction in the Corps is responsible for all the training to the exclusion of workshop trades, and I was posted to be his assistant, not very arduous and mainly to ensure that the recruits are undergoing sound instruction during their fieldworks course. I superintended the installation of electric lighting into their barracks in the Meeanee lines, looked after revolver courses, and helped in organizing the pontooning camp to be held in Nanjangud (a small riverside township south of Mysore City). I strove to instruct two Bombay Pioneer Officers on a long fieldworks course in the summer, and later supervised the shorter All-Arms Course; also I built a relief map of the district in 'brick earth'.

For the daily 6.30 drill parade (and never was there any rain during the monsoon period to interrupt it), I was attached to No.9 Field Company. Incidentally, officers always paraded mounted, and I was always with them for ceremonial Corps parades, Corps field days, and Brigade parades, and it was on one of the latter celebrating the King-Emperor's birthday that I first encountered a feu-de-joie[50], and endeavoured to maintain a dignified bearing on a charger who was also previously ignorant of it to my consternation.

For two days I took charge of a party of DI Company recruits on a mobile column exercise along with the 5th/6th Dragoons, the Wiltshire Regiment, and some Gunners, during which I learnt that South Indian soldiering is not to be taken seriously. The first day we marched miles through jungle to attack a hill devoid of enemy, and hearing nothing further returned to camp. While the rest of the army were slanged by General Ponsonby, the GOC, nothing arose about our absence. We erected a water tank for the night and received no orders for the next day, a day during which we

[50] From Oxford English Dictionary: noun (plural **feux de joie** pronunciation same) a rifle salute fired on a ceremonial occasion, each soldier firing in succession along the ranks.

were neglected in a retreat and finished by having a minor encounter on our own with O'Donnell's detachment from DI company, who had thought, till they met us, that operations had ceased.

Much earlier I had spent six weeks obtaining a transport certificate which I did not want. Its possible merit was my introduction to the use, care, and maintenance on the horse. Major Hickle IASC instructed us, a genial type and kindly too, who when realizing the distance I had to travel between his lines and the Sapper mess, invited me to breakfast at his bungalow each morning. One morning on my way there my pony tripped and fell, inflicting such gashes to her knees as to prevent my beginning polo till two months later.

If I received no other benefit from my job, at least I relinquished it with a greater and more varied knowledge of field works than I had on leaving the SME Fortification School; and, thanks to Subadar Anthony and Jemadar Arokiasami, a great respect for the practical working knowledge possessed by our Indian officers.

Bangalore caters for all amusements. Conversation in the mess concentrates on polo, the game to which for the officers all others are subservient. I do so regret the accident that postponed my introduction to it, because this year I could never progress beyond the stage of slow chukkas – less slow as a rule than slow chukkas are intended to be; annoying too since it is only when amongst friends who take a personal interest that progress in the game is possible.

Hockey is the principal game for the Sappers, as for the entire Indian Army, and every day, usually with officer participation, games are in progress, and there is wild enthusiasm during the annual inter-unit hockey tournament for the McClintock Trophy. The smooth matti (bare earth) hockey grounds make the game bewilderingly fast for a newcomer used to the grass equivalent. British ranks maintain the soccer tradition, and after the rains cricket, and strangely, rugger, are available. Mixed tennis is perennially played at the United Services Club where the red courts and consequent red balls, the speed and the light, are all handicaps to the newcomer. 16 AT Company had recently built an open squash court in the mess compound, a splendid means of getting maximum exercise in the minimum time. Bridge is omnipresent for those who play it and there are weekly dances in the aforementioned club.

Polo ponies are invariably being schooled in the mess compound in the 7.00 to about 8.00 interval between the 6.30 parade and breakfast; but, apart from polo and parades, ponies have little use. One goes hacking but one needs to watch for treacherous white-ant holes in the ground. To take a polo pony paper-chasing is reckless. (Since leaving the station a cavalry officer has inaugurated a pack of hounds.)

One Thursday came a telegram. A bridge between Mysore and Ootacamund had been washed away in a flood. I was required to go at once to prepare an estimate for labour and materials for the erection of a temporary replacement, and was given the choice of either Thursday or Friday for my departure. Thursday being a holiday (as was Sunday) every week, I foresaw difficulties in obtaining warrants, money, etc, and so opted for Friday. By Friday evening I was ready to go, and had wired Jug Stuart, then GE Wellington, obtained my railway ticket and booked a berth on the 8.30pm train, when about 5.00pm came another wire – "cancelled". Later we learned that Lord Rawlinson, taking advantage of his new privilege to go to England once during his tour of duty, had

cancelled his tour of inspection of the Madras district, rendering the bridging expedient unnecessary. Thus I lost my free trip to the Nilgiri Hills.

Only a few days before they left for Waziristan I was posted to 9 Field Company and left Bangalore with them on the morning of Tuesday, 30 September.

WAZIRISTAN (October 1924 - June 1925)

The ten day journey from Bangalore to Manzai was less tedious than that might seem, even though it was spent in a carriage on four springless wheels making reading impossible because of the bumps, with sleep the only way to relax. Any monotony was relieved by the halts; some of short duration to allow regular train services to overtake us, and one daily of about four hours to enable the men to have a meal cooked on the platform, the chargers to be exercised, and for us officers to have a meal at the station and a walk in the countryside, or the town as the case might be. We always were, within limits, given a choice of long-halt stops, and Agra being one of them, we took it and hired a tonga (pony trap) to take us to the Taj Mahal. Another halt, probably two days earlier, was at Raichur, where I wandered through an ordinary village and over a ridge only to find an entrancing landscape; to either side grey hills bordering a grey still lake, those to the left particularly rocky and massive, and capping them were the ruins of a vast ancient fortress in extent rivaling even Dover Castle; its broken outline, varying shades of grey were set against a leaden sky. Both these occasions, one planned and one by chance, are unforgettable.

Reaching Mari Indus on 7 October, we there met 12 Company due to return to Bangalore, and from them we received our complement of mules and dozens of items of equipment. We then crossed the Indus by ferry, loaded the metre gauge trucks with all our gear, and arrived in Tank at about 11.00pm on the 9th. We were of course duly impressed with all the barbed wire fencing there, the sentries posted over arms both day and night, and by the pistol in the Station Staff Officer's dinner jacket pocket.

Manzai 1925

Manzai on the 10th - Yes, and glancing around we wished that the journey had taken longer. Imagine an expanse of blackened stones humped into a ridge, the sunshine pouring on it like the very flames of hell. Eastwards, stretching away to the Indus is a level plain of trees, villages, and cultivation but rendered invisible by Manzai's position on the ridge. Four or five miles to the west stands a range of barren brown mountains. Under one of the peaks, Girni Sar, lies Girni Post, manned by an outpost of the South Waziristan Scouts (militia under the control of the political agent) and to the north-east is the responsibility of the Manzai Brigade. But only seldom in the hot weather does the heat-haze permit you to see either. Manzai itself consists of several sun-dried brick mess buildings in a sea of tents behind a perimeter of barbed wire and a dry stone wall of boulders, in which intermittently a roofed enclosure marks the position of one of the manned pickets on the watch. The exits north

and south for road traffic and one to the east for the recreation grounds are all blocked by wired 'knife rests' after dark. There are electric fans, and ice from a tiny factory can be bought at a price.

Khirgi is 100 feet above Manzai, Girni a 100 feet below, and water flows by pipe between them. When both are visible you could swear that water runs Uphill. On a clear day after rain the tip of Pre-Ghal, 11,500 feet overlooking Razmak, can be seen to the north-west, and away to the south-west is the Takht-i-Suleiman, another monster well on the way towards Quetta and the Zhob. In official eyes we in Manzai are the Derajat Force of immense strategical importance.

Gilbert Cassels (4 YO) with our advance party had pitched all the tents in our lines, and we officers were to be quartered in one of the aforementioned buildings. We were keen and raw, so imagine the joy to be told: "Now we've got a job kept especially for you. We've never had a Field Company here before; so come along ……"; "Line this main road for us with stones. Now whitewash them. No, that's no good they're not straight. This one is too small; that one too big. That one is not white enough. Keep your dogs off 'em, can't you?"… Gawd … Exaggerated of course , but it may indicate the pernickety fussiness that infested the Tenth Brigade, K of K's. (Our sobriquet for the austere and humourless Brig Kensington.)

With us were the 109 (Murree) Pack Battery RA under Major Thorburn, newly from England for the first time, and replacing one who had been with the battery for 19 years. One subaltern was reputed to be a BA Law from Oxford. The infantry consisted of the 1/2nd (ex 67th) Punjabis; the 3/9th Jats; the 4/7th Rajputs (then in Khirgi) and the 2/17th Dogras lately in Tank. The 19th DTT Company IASC and a detachment of 5 MT Company RASC completed the garrison, and we Sapper officers lived in the Service Corps mess with two more Sappers, Kenyon (3 YO) and Pool (2 YO), both garrison engineers in the MES (Military Engineering Services).

Captain W (Bill) Morse was OC 9 Field Company, a man with whom one worked happily and with confidence. He was a linguist who, after some years experience in the Corps, spoke fluent Tamil (no one else could) in which language he always spoke to the troops. The subadar (Varadaraju) confessed to me once that the Tamil was so high-falutin and literary in style as to be beyond the understanding of peasant cultivators, as are most of our recruits, and that he (the subadar) had often to interpret important items to them later in private. Cassie[51], one batch junior to me, was a good co-operator. Having been born in the Argentine, and having had to ignore his calling-up orders for conscription, he was due for prison if ever he returned home. He had a splendid eye for ball games: polo, hockey etc.

In an attempt to acquire the flavour of our surroundings we attached ourselves in turn to the battalions as they went on battalion training. I spent a strenuous day with the 1/2 Punjabis to Khirgi whence south into the mountains, up hill and down dale all day: my first of many such experiences.

We had barely time to settle down, build tent-walls and organize our workshops, when rumours were afloat about the possibility of a trek up the road, with Wana and Sorarogha the probable alternatives. In preparation for it we were involved in the wiring of the Manzai supply depot, the making of a terminus railway platform there, and the removal of the gravel. "Keep those carts off

[51] Gilbert Cassels, mentioned above was always known as Cassie.

the polo ground, will you!" not that polo was ever to be played in Manzai. For our own preparations we borrowed a maestro from the MES to teach our masons how to square-up local stones, and we constructed a template to assist in the building of fireplaces in tent walls. No1 section went to Jandola (the HQ of the South Waziristan Scouts) for about a week to wind up barbed wire. Till then we had been superbly healthy with minimum sick parades, but Jandola in November is the very devil for malaria. All our chaps had mosquito nets, bamber oil, etc, but (as we were to discover months later in Tank, they did not fully understand how to use them, or from sheer cussedness refused to do so, and the Section returned sickened with fever which was quickly to spread through the whole company, and gone with it were our prowess at hockey, and our reputation in the brigade sports wherein we came second just behind the 1/2nd Punjabis. We did not shake it off completely until the following summer.

Sorargha proved to be our destination, and a fortnight before the Brigade was due to move there, the advance party of one Company of the 1/2nd moved forward, and I followed a week later in a Ford vanette. From Khirgi to Sorargha (from hereon referred to as SRA) the road follows the Takki Zam (the Tank River) which is nearly always in sight. The Zam is normally a mere 20 feet or so wide descending a shingle bed varying from narrow tangis (gorges) to flat reaches a quarter of a mile broad. In the rainy season the simultaneous down-flow of water from the mountains produces spates and these can cause death and destruction to anyone caught in a tangi.

Between Khirgi and Jandola there are two iron girder bridges on masonry piers. This eight mile stretch of road runs between precipitous saw-toothed barren crags, whereas the next ten miles to Kotkai crosses the Palosina Plain cutting through some pink and grey clay ridges. Here also were once two more bridges now just grim relics from spates, with the road as originally having to cross the shingle. Just above Kotkai what is now Pool's tunnel used to involve a riverbed road diversion. Beyond the plain one approaches and passes through the Ahnai Tangi, a gorge with a fort on a peak above it, which, besides commanding miles of the surrounding country, lends interest to the grandeur of the scene. At last after another 13 miles comes SRA fully 4,000 odd feet above sea level, where, on the edge of a ragzha (plateau) overlooking the Zam, and with hills all around, stands yet another scouts' fort. It was inside this fort that, with two of the Scout's officers and Pool, I was to spend the next few days. The local Pathans hate the scouts, which are recruited from the Khyber region to avoid the complications of the indigenous blood feuds, and who can scour the country at a moment's notice unencumbered, unlike the army with its equipment and stores. There was a minor scrap while I was there. After the frequent removal of bayonet fighting sacks from the assault course beside the fort, and after repeated warnings had had no effect, one evening at gin time: crack --- crack-crack. Fireworks? We went outside and peered over the wall; then ducked. It seemed as though rapid fire was opening on us from about 200 yards range. It was the reply to a chappau (an ambush) which the Scouts had laid, and which had been lucky to catch the thieves on the first night. One, the heir to the local malik (head man) had been shot through the head, and just for stealing 'gunny'.

The advance party had been told by K of K to re-erect the old stone camp wall on a new line only about 50 yards from the original one; salvaging old barbed wire to incorporate it in the new fence; to build a stone-in-mud dairy to hold 50 cattle; and make mud bricks to construct fireplaces; also, as far as I can remember, to establish two camp pickets on the low hills to the south-west. By the

brigade's arrival on 26 November all was ready bar the dairy which needed a few more days. 9 Company's mess was to change its situation about four times involving as many new fireplaces. To begin with the camp was comfortably large including a broad open space in the middle, resulting from previous occupations of the site. Having built all the culverts, made good all the camp roads and drains, built all the EP tent fireplaces (the only ones in Waziristan giving satisfaction in spite of K of K's having tumbled down after having been declared too small), all the men's tents dug in, the district commander arrived to inspect it. He and K of seldom saw eye to eye, and here was a splendid opportunity for the senior. "You have far too much free space, the perimeter is too long and it masks the field of fire from the fort. So squeeze in." We squeezed in so tightly that a mouse scarcely had room to wave its tail. Everything was shifted; everyone was uncomfortable, and not a man was allowed off work to wall in tents, etc: only the dairy stayed put. In addition to all this: "You must fetch bajjeri (gravel) to cover all the roads." So lousy were the roads so treated that no one used them if there was the space to creep along one side or the other. Even the bi-weekly lorry convoy of supplies never managed to roll them smooth. Initially 109 Battery officers and Captain Ellery IASE joined our mess, but later a replacement battery (guns for howitzers) elected to mess separately. We all drew rations, but our mess was attractively economical, Rs 1/13[52] daily as opposed to Rs 5/- at the brigade mess for example. It was due entirely to the skill of our mess cook who fed us daily on the most excellent curries and rice. Initially officers occupied their own small 60 pounder tents. Soon however Cassie and I were sharing an EP tent, and when the bitter wintry cold set in we re-erected our 60 pounders inside it. Given a double fly tent, such as the EP, a low solid wall all around it, a log fire in a 9 Company fireplace, the roof ventilators closed with 'ganny'[53], some whitewash and a petrol vapour lamp, anyone whose sole experience of camp life relates to bell tents and marquees on, say, Salisbury Plain, can have no idea how comfortable camp life can be. Given a whisky-mac[54] or two for nightcap and life becomes almost luxurious on the bitterest of nights.

The establishment of the camp pickets on the surrounding hilltops was given top priority. Sangars comprising dry stone walls large enough to take a 160 pounder tent each were built by the infantry and our job was to surround them with a wire entanglement. One named Knife Edge, as the name implies provided the greatest problems, but they were overcome, and all in all we were enabled to acquire useful knowledge of local conditions. Next came the sheep pen and the dairy roof, the latter giving us much trouble, and eventually on 1st December we began our job on bridge abutments. The site was a mile upstream from the camp where the 40 foot wing walls to a 60 foot span girder bridge over a subsidiary nullah[55], had been built with a vertical face, cracked, bent, and twisted by the earth pressure behind them. We had to make these new wing walls with a considerable batter to take their place. Much of the earth forming the road embankment behind the abutments had to be dug away to render it safe to excavate the new extended foundations, and some engineers wondered why we had elected to remove the spoil so far away. We pointed out that a nearby pile of soil as it grew became an increasingly difficult obstacle for removing the remainder, and besides, there were Decauville tracks and trucks to carry it away; furthermore we

[52] Rs 1/13 = 1 Rupee and 13 annas or 1.13 rupees.

[53] Probably meant to be "gunny" – viz: coarse sacking, typically made of jute fibre.

[54] Probably a mixture of whisky and green ginger wine.

would need the open space to mix foundation concrete by hand, and in which to accumulate quantities of bajjari, gravel, sand, cement, and cut boulders for the masonry wings.

The concrete specification was a 1: 3: 6 mixture, and we experimented with screens, buckets and water to comply, but came to the conclusion that nature had solved the problem, and that, after removing the larger pebbles the ungraded river bed gave the best results. We laid hundreds of yards of Decauville track to bring dirty bajjari to a washer and thence to the working area. The washer utilized a natural stream to hurtle over a shallow platform into a container floored with corrugated iron (to elaborate on this would be otiose[56]). The hill from washer to site proved to be too steeps for men to push the trucks; mules proved too unmanageable to pull them, in the end we contrived containers suitable for pack transport, water for concrete mixing was provided in two tanks fed by a Merryweather pump chug-chugging below beside the river. When all the preparation was finished and the concreting had begun, 6 Field Company of the Bengal Sappers arrived and were ordered to join and assist. It was a tactless action as all concerned agreed; in fact a certain person asked the Brigade, without consulting either Company, that umpires be appointed to apportion the work. Luckily one of the 'umpires' in all innocence spilt the beans and the idea was squashed. Had there been any friction the Companies would have been blameworthy, but in fact there had been none. Lee and Steel of the Bengalis proved the best of co-operators. But still, it was provoking to see our little khaki duptas (originally the attempt to replicate the 19th Century shako) outnumbered by the red flashes on the big Bengali turbans; the outnumbering due to our No 3 Section having been sent to Ahmed Wam (some way upstream) to straighten an S-bend in the road.

The S-bend in the road had been a temporary expedient to avoid cutting through the rocky projection from a mountain towards the river, and its removal involved much time and patience driving holes into it using sledge hammers and boring bars to take charges of gelignite. The road had meanwhile to be kept open and this entailed removing the debris as speedily as possible, hefty lumps of rock being broken up by hammer blows. The blasting itself had to be restricted to late afternoon. When the straightening was completed we had to excavate for and build a culvert involving yet more blasting.

The road had interfered with the irrigation of some of the cultivated kaches (projections of flattish land in parts of the river bed which are irrigated by means of artificial channels called Karezes bringing water from higher up the river) and the Mahsud owners had been exacting annual compensation from the government. I was employed plane tabling some of the kaches on order to help the authorities to compute which Kaches should have their karezes re-established and which to buy outright once and for all. It was an interesting job, but subject to the annoyance of never being sure that the MES badraggas (hired bodyguards) would arrive at the appointed place or on time.

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[55] Nullah = dry river bed or ravine.

[56] Otiose (adjective) = serving no practical purpose.

We first sampled the local shooting on Boxing Day. The Khassadars (locals hired for regular policing by the PA) first took us to the wrong side of camp, the lazy blighters that they are, where only sisi (a wee brand of partridge) are to be found, and which are notorious for preferring to run rather than to fly. Later we pushed further afield to a nullah behind Knife Edge and Ahmed Wam. Here it was rough going with some lingering snow, but it was the haunt of chikor[57]. As we advanced they flew out from the rocks on front of us and overhead towards the river, generally choosing moments when we negotiated awkward dormers clutching rocks and grassy tufts with both hands. This lends zest to the sport but the bags are never large. Many Thursdays and Sundays were spent here later.

In January Cassie and I essayed an Urdu exam. He passed, I didn't. It is the necessary qualification for us to draw Indian army pay.

There was another wing wall job awaiting attention at Piazha further upstream, and Bill Morse was given the choice as to whether we should go there or remain in SRA, and he elected to go leaving 6 Field Company in SRA to finish the local job. Razmak had been established about a year before and it was rumoured that we might be sent there for work. Bill believed that to be closer might clinch the issue: anywhere is better than Manzai. Nearly 200 camels accompanied us to Piazha; the column was colossal for the size of the unit and the march was very very slow. Office tables, etc were constantly tumbling off, and it was highly amusing watching sappers heaving on the nakhels, hissing, and kicking the brutes' shins to persuade them to assume the loading position. We had perforce to walk all the way in the river bed, because the road was effectively blocked by 4 Company (Bengal S & M) at Bangiwala, by the Third/Second Bombay Pioneers at Akakhel, bands of Mahsud contractors, and later, just below the Zam Zal Tangi, by Madras Pioneers. The continual immersion ruined a pair of boots.

Piazha Camp is on a ragzha about 200 feet above the river bed. Access is by a long tortuous but gentle incline for the transport, and for men alone up a straight path on the shoulder between the river and a subsidiary nullah at right angles to it. Until a pumping plant, promised by the E & M officer in Tank some months earlier eventually arrived in April, all the water for the camp was brought up in pakhals on pack mules by the zigzag path, thus absorbing nearly all the Transport Company's mules: an immense handicap.

10 Field Company under Mike Gilpin with John Forbes[58] and Lawney Gayer (also an OW) as subalterns, was there, and Mike had said how nice it would be to live together: however on our arrival it was a different story - "We are exceedingly comfortable with the First/Second Gurkas, and we don't want to move." They were working upstream while we worked down so that on the whole we saw mighty little of each other.

There was less space for us here than there had been in SRA with no room for a mess, so we pitched our tents alongside the 109 Battery mess and lived with them.

Contrary to precautionary frontier practice we were surprised to find that the Third/First Punjabis, who not only invariably provided road protection duties downstream from the camp, never varied

[57] Chikor – quail or similar.
[58] Later Sir John Forbes of Allargue House, Corgarff, Aberdeenshire, Scotland, a Wellington contemporary and close friend of H.E.M. Newman.

their tactical procedure. Dittiwala bridge, whose wing walls we were instructed to rebuild, lay between 2 and 3 miles downstream. It was a masonry bridge and smaller in all respects than the one at SRA, but the wings had almost entirely fallen down, so that we had to demolish the remnants and not, as before, merely build a new battered wall outside the old one. In fact the total removal of the walls entailed more earth shifting in proportion, and we had no infantry working parties to assist us. There were no mishaps and we easily finished within the appointed time, although I greatly feared trouble on the last day having had to keep back the local Khassadars with fixed bayonets when they had become too importunate for baksheesh cement, etc. which was not mine to give. Any time spare during working days was devoted to training our NCOs in the art of field geometry and sketch plans. For most of this period the RAF were flying bombing missions overhead, and we could constantly hear to the south the bursting of bombs as they contrived the discomfiture of the Abdur Rahman Khel.

Space at Piazha was too restricted for hockey grounds, so we all played strenuous games of basket ball. There were all manner of teams in addition to the regimental ones; even the OWs had a side, and the most skillful players were the Gurkhas. We played to “common sense” rules, and not as in PT regulations, but it was such an excellent game that we brought the tradition back eventually to Manzai and continued to play it there.

There were amazingly few regrettable incidents throughout this road project. During our first night at SRA the drivers of the contractor’s bullock carts fired a few rounds hoping to persuade the Brigade that they were being exposed to terrible dangers by being kept outside the perimeter. On another night there was a scrap in the khassadars post. One day the Scouts were shot up on the range and suffered one man (in the butts) wounded, and on another the column was called out to help the Scouts somewhere towards the Ahnai Tangi in response to a challenge from a bold bad malik to come out after him, but who gave up after a few shells fired by the gunners. Once or twice in Piazha the Gurkhas retiring from road protection had a few shots at them, and on several evenings there were stray harmless zip-bangs into the camp. Khassadars fired range practices below the camp to the consternation of anyone on the road. All told many potentials for tragedy but no deaths occurred. In his report which appeared later the District Commander gave credit for this to the excellence of the troops concerned; but was it really because the local Mahsud believed it politic to keep the peace so long as rupees reach him in crores[59] for that very purpose.

Soon what were called Waziristan Concessions were published awarding allowances to troops stationed there, and we were inclined to expect these to have contributed to our return to Manzai which is just on the Indian side of the administrative border, however, more uncomfortable it might be climatically than say, Razmak. If our surmise was correct, just how miserly can they be? Manzai registered 114°F of on the day of our return.

[59] **crore** cardinal number Indian ten million; one hundred lakhs

TWO MONTHS LEAVE Kashmir and Baltistan – 10 Jun 1925 to Aug 1925

I left Manzai by vanette for Tank at 7.00am, thence a grilling train journey to Mari Indus. I was accompanied on the broad (5'-6') gauge[60] to Rawal-Pindi overnight by a quiet little man who slept under lace-edged embroidered sheets. No sooner had we arrived in Pindi next morning than the carriage was invaded; "You're going to Kashmir? You're wanting a car? I'll give you a return ticket for Rs.220." "I'll give you one for Rs.200." "Why not take my Bewick for Rs.190?" and so on. I, not having breakfasted and still sleepy, was a mug. I stopped the play at Rs.160, taking a ticket with a Captain (?) Ansell of the United Services Agency. He ingratiated himself with me, and after breakfast drove me shopping around Pindi to Cox's, Wilson's, etc, and exacted a promise that I should stay on his house-boat, the Berengaria, saying that it would be much cheaper than in a hotel; that it was lying idle complete with servants – might as well make some use of it after all.

We left Pindi at midday and reached Murree (English vowels here: an exception) at about 3.30pm. The continual climb up, up, into the hills was a revelation; from the brown barren plains, through scrub, and into the land of pines. As the car wends its way upwards one can see below numerous small terraced fields and little peasants houses dotted here and there. The radiator needed frequent refills, and we stopped several times for tolls. Murree stands at 8,000 feet elevation, and for an hour or two at this altitude I felt quite breathless. I found Chamber's Hotel's only recommendation to be its proximity to the car-stop, thus saving coolies up the hill: otherwise it was no better than a dak bungalow. The town was packed; British troops were on their summer season's relief from the plains, and I was struck how infantile the shaven and shorn British Tommy would appear if set beside average Indian recruits, whom one might mistake for veterans in comparison.

The onward journey to Srinagar on the 12th took from 7.00am 4.15pm, with a stop for tiffin[61] at Uri. Seen yesterday as a novelty the hills became tedious until interest was again aroused by the Kashmir valley.

The road drops from Murree to Kohala where it crosses the Jhelum from British to Kashmir territory at almost plains level and it is thus very hot. The road seldom remains straight for more than 100 yards; a few snow capped mountains are passed in the background, and on the road are many parties of road menders, mainly Sikhs, who are seemingly unable to cope with the generally bad road surface. At Domel customs are collected, but the officials appeared satisfied to inspect no more than my firearms license. One leaves the close proximity of the hills at Baramulla and emerges onto a broad, green, highly tilled plain with series upon series of snow-topped peaks surrounding it on all sides. The road here is mostly straight, its verges planted at 6 foot intervals with tall Lombardy poplars, state-owned and reputedly to be felled for telegraph posts. We past villages, the houses timber-frame interlaced with rough brickwork, the mosques roofed with kerosene oil cans beaten flat. Here and there are what could be the ruined remains of ancient Buddhist monuments or temples. Fruit trees abound. The populous looks poverty-stricken; most of the men cover their close cropped heads with greasy skull caps. Rackety tongas are dragged

[60] 5'-6" gauge refers to the width between railway tracks. Standard gauge is 4'-8½" or 1.435 metres.

[61] tiffin = (Indian) a snack or light meal.

along the road by skinny ill-fed ponies. Occasionally there is a prosperous man sporting in contrast a voluminous white safar (turban).

Unexpectedly we come upon rows of shops, and then, over a bridge, a shrieking mob of agents' touts, and one realizes that this is Srinagar. I brandished a stick furiously and they dropped off the car enabling me to proceed to the Chinnar Bagh (garden of plane trees) and the H B Berengaria, to be followed by durzi (tailor) touts, photographers' touts, dhobies (washermen), and a police constable with a "Strangers' List" to be filled in.

Next day, the 13th, Ansell drove me to the Band (quayside) and I found my way to Mahomed Baba, the agent recommended by friends, and with whom I made the preliminary bandobast (arrangements). It was a prosperous redbrick establishment, the interior lined with skins and heads, and presided over by an oldish man in his clean Kashmiri "dressing-gown" who speaks perfect English without the ability to read a word. Who should I find here but C D Steel, of 6 Company Bengal S & M, also Baltistanwards bent, so of course we joined forces for the trek.

The morning was occupied with old Mahomed compiling a list of stores, and a walk around various shops to buy chapplis (hefty sandals), pattu (goat's wool) socks accompanied by my prospective shikari[62], Mahomed Bat. After tea Ansell took a party of us to the Dal Lake for a bathe, the water gloriously warm but weedy, and so back to dinner and bed.

I did not admire Srinagar. Might this have been caused partly by my self-boosting host, a type from which heaven preserve me? The surroundings are pleasant enough. Europeans live in small detached gabled houses straight from suburbia, each in its own little garden of flowers. There is water everywhere, the Jhelum and tributary canals forming berths for countless houseboats, from which as often as not come strains of horrible gramophone music to shatter any preconceived ideas of the aesthetic east. Similar music braying to the accompaniment of splash, splash, splash, come from the shikaras (small paddle boats) plying to and from the superfluity of houseboats. There is a great royal palace, and tawdry temples and mosques contiguous with squalor, and the whole is set against the Takht-i-Suleiman, a truncated conical rock, the site of a large prison, probably a one-time fortress, which is illuminated at night. The Dal Lake, beside the Takht, is a beautiful expanse of water and a haven for yet more houseboats; and beyond it lies the Shalamar Bagh, but having endured the clanging of temple bells close to the Berengaria, and dreading disillusion from the lyrical ambience of the Kashmiri Love Lyrics, I declined a proffered visit.

The morning of the 14th was spent at Mahomed Baba's sorting and packing, after which came the bills. How one learns by experience. It transpired that I could have spent my time in luxurious comfort at Nedou's Hotel at less expense than the cost of the houseboat. We embarked that afternoon in the boats that were to take us the first stage of our journey, Steel in one, I in the other. Mahomed Baba brought the final stores and extracted cheques, and away we went passing palaces and squalor to the open country. It was indeed nice to be talking quietly, contemplating, and finally dozing to the rhythm of the paddles; sahib in the middle with father in front and his family astern.

[62] Shikari = hunter or guide on a hunting expedition

We found ourselves on the 16th at anchor (tied to a pole) at Manasbal, to be met after breakfast by the tiffin coolies who had been sent ahead to buy grass rope for shoes, vegetables, and importantly, to collect eight pack ponies a piece for our transport. It was startling to realise how lavish was our outfit. We paid off the boatmen, an acquisitive pair (the first of many such) at 9.30, loaded the ponies and away we went. My personal retinue comprised Mohamed Bat, the shikara, Ramangamo, the khansama, guaranteed to provide an excellent dinner in the most adverse circumstances; omelets and soufflés his specialties; Jamala, the tiffin coolie, conscientious and hard working who later was to act as a chota (junior) shikari; Risala, the camp coolie, and Ramzana, the dak (post) coolie, both of whom ran the camping bandabast and carried items like rifles and guns on the march. (It is the shikari's perquisite to wear the field glasses.) Normally the sahib forges ahead at great speed followed by the tiffin coolie with the tiffin rolled up in a blanket on his back, and on a warm day, the sahib's coat. The sahib merely wields a khad stick (iron shod, about 6 foot long), and possibly a camera. The remainder stay with the baggage; if ponies, at a steady crawl; if coolies; at bursts of speed between halts.

Ordinarily on parao (a day's march) the sahib reaches the camping ground about midday, eats his tiffin and waits between three and four hours for the baggage. He reads or sketches, or in suitable places walks after pigeon with a gun for consumption at breakfast next day.

The day was hot, and the new stiff chapplis[63], in addition to lack of training, contrived to make the allegedly 12 miles seem an underestimate. We passed inundated terraced paddy fields being planted out; other fields of flax mingled with scarlet poppies making brilliant displays, and eventually we joined the 'road' from Guntakal, the Sind River, and entered the Sind Valley.

Enjoying only two months leave each, we endured a march and a half on the 16th. The direct route to Baltistan lies over the Deosai Plain but this was still snowbound, so that to avoid restricting our time for shikar[64] it was necessary to hurry. The valley became increasingly narrow, more rocky and less fertile. The road crossed the river twice. As we approached our camping site at Gagangir, we were enclosed between precipitous pine-clad slopes with rocky heights above.

From an even narrower gorge next day, and later a right angled bend, the road entered a wide green expanse of turf where cattle were grazing and where many wild flowers were in bloom; recognizable were thyme, wallflowers and shepherds purse. We passed Sonamarg, said to attract many tourists as a camping site, to our own camp at Baltal. In fact the actual village of that name lay on the opposite bank of the river. We met many native families on the move, presumably Ladakhis, driving zhos (a cross between the yak and the bullock) loaded with their possessions.

On the 18th up, up and up, and over the Zoji La, the easiest pass over the Himalayas at 11,300 feet. The snow on top lay in deep drifts, and water comes rushing from under snow bridges. It was hazardous going, the snow crust liable to give way to an emptiness below. It led to a gentle descent and we found that the character of the wild flowers had changed; small purple irises and columbines abounded. On the very summit whom should we meet but BHS Lloyd, a sapper one

[63] Chapplis – may mean chappals = (Indian) slipper
[64] Shikar = hunt or hunting

term junior to me, making a conjunction of all three Sapper and Miner Corps, Madras, Bombay, and Bengal. He was returning to civilization with a bag of three ibex[65] and one sharpu.

We emerged to a bleak treeless expanse of rocks, boulders, and grass, with snow lingering in drifts. Rain showers assailed us. Moreover we were held up by a collapsed bridge over the River Dras undergoing repair. If we had ventured to wade through the icy, fast-flowing, stream, the ponies would not have been able to follow. We tried encouraging the labourers with advice straight from Military Engineering, Volume 3. It cut no ice. When finished we were still in doubt as to whether the crude cantilever construction would bear the weight of ponies even singly. Then along came a party of two elderly and two younger females shepherded by a supposed padre who had been sightseeing in Dras of all places. They thanked us for the repairs and were surprised to learn that we were only travellers ourselves. Matayan our staging post was so dreary, wet and windblown that we opted for the dak bungalow, our only venture of the sort. The shelter was welcome, but the bare walls and the dust convinced us that even a 60 pounder tent was preferable. Before unpacking we checked the weight of our baggage because so many ponies seemed unnecessary, but in fact we could not have done with fewer, which set us pondering how we could have reduced the load.

The march next day to Dras was short and dull. Some itinerant musicians stopped, gazed at us, and then blew ghastly noises from a horn, evincing disappointment that it had not cajoled us to distribute any baksheesh.

We examined a wayside corn mill, of a type endemic to this region. A horizontal waterwheel beneath a stone floor connects with a spindle to a mushroom-shaped grindstone above. A slanting hole in the grindstone, central above and eccentric below, conveys grain from a suspended basket to the grinding surface between grindstone and floor.

After passing a ruined fort of uncertain date we reached our camping site on the polo ground, a long narrow space about 150 by 40 yards enclosed by a stone wall, such as are to be found in all the villages hereabouts. Camping on them is the reputed privilege of bigwig politicals, etc. Here we paid off our original pony teams and henceforth hired for daily stages ponies or coolies as appropriate.

Six miles from Dras on a tedious hot twenty-one mile trek to South Karbu, I developed a blister on one heel which became pretty uncomfortable by the end of the day. We passed many wild bush roses with lovely pink and white blooms and some black currant (?) bushes.

We left the road to Leh on the 21st, branching north over the river by the wobbly Kargil suspension bridge, the only 'civilized' type of bridge we had so far seen. We changed our transport here and changed from Ladakh to Baltistan territory, from Buddhists to Moslems, from comparative prosperity to squalor. Ladakhis are Tibetan and dress in that fashion; Baltis shave their heads from the forehead to the nape of the neck, leaving kiss-curls dangling at either side and they wear little round caps of grey homespun. From now on the mountains are of bare brown rock, snow almost nonexistent. Wherever a side nullah brings water from the hills a village appears as a beautiful oasis, the road winding among terraced cornfields and shady trees of mulberries,

[65] Ibex = a wild mountain goat with long, thick ridged horns and a beard.

apricots, and walnuts, all skillfully irrigated from the side nullahs. The houses, built of boulders in mud with wicker screens, are dotted here and there, and all would be perfect but for the stench and the squalor. Doubtless the Baltis lot might improve did they but choose to copy the pulyandry[66] of the Ladakhis instead of the Moslem rules of polygamy.

On the 22nd it was 25 miles up and down to Bagicha. At midday at 01-thing-thung (pronounced woolding) we nearly had a fracas changing coolies. The lambadar (village headman) only acceded in satisfying our request for coolies by our threatening to inform his superiors of his failure to comply with his 'rai'. Joining the Indus soon after, we passed a waterfall of considerable height on which the sunshine played and produced an array of rainbows. The road became steeply undulating to give me a painful muscular stiffness above the right knee. Each morning it had dispersed but by the evening, all the way to Skardu, it returned to plague me.

There followed 15 more miles of undulations to Tolti where we camped on another polo ground. The lambadar requested quinine and was piqued when we could spare him only two tablets and the Rajah sent us some sour red things looking like cherries. Otherwise nothing report-worthy.

On Wednesday 24th fourteen more miles to Parkatta. The hills falling less abruptly to the Indus provide more space for cultivation, and so there seems to be a little more prosperity. The young headman of about sixteen years was efficient and obliging but over-expectant for baksheesh.

Next day only 12 miles to Gol. The sandy going is not the best surface for chapplis; otherwise it was the easiest stage on the trip so far. The camp lying near the inhabited part of the village made for difficulties with the women and children constantly prying, because on trek one does not include a 'tent-necessary', i.e. Loo. We watched an old man weaving homespun. Each village makes its own cloths on the village loom, and everywhere, on the move or at rest, one sees folk carrying a ball of wool and a spinning spool winding their thread.

The 26th. Skardu at last after 19 intensely hot sandy and difficult miles. The expanse of shingle and sand between the hills and the river is very broad, the only relief being the luscious and tasteless mulberries that in profusion in the occasional villages.

Skardu is the capital of Baltistan. It stands where the Shiggar River meets the Indus, the latter then making a sweep around a massive rock that bears some resemblance to Gibraltar, being completely detached from the surrounding mountains. The small town is huddled beneath this rock on the side facing away from the river. There is a Rajah, and a bazaar where an enterprising banniah keeps European provisions of dubious age, but nobody should gamble on his ability to provide any particular item. There is also a fort and a barracks for a detachment of the Kashmiri army. Only a special permit from the Maharajah allows one so much as to approach this fort.

We avoided the dak bungalow and pitched camp on an eminence just above the barracks and a stone's throw from the post office where we collected our first dak since leaving our respective stations. An ex-army padre called Bate lives in the dak bungalow with a young Mr Grant under the pretext of setting up Grant as a missionary, but after a year's residence here neither can speak a word of Urdu or Balti, and depend on an English speaking servant. Padre Bate was pleasant

[66] Polyandry = polygamy in which a woman has more than one husband.

enough, but Grant appeared to be a mere lazybones, unqualified and unordained. Both displayed more interest in partridge shooting and fishing, and local expeditions in pursuit of them.

Our shikaris had evidently arranged between themselves that we should both go to the Aransu nullah up the Shigar River. We disagreed with this plan when it was divulged and tossed for it. Steel won. However Mahomed Bat recommended me to try another nullah in the same direction where he believed I should get my ibex and be away for sharpu and other game while Steel was still on the trek to his goal.

The march to Shigar village on the 27th was only 15 miles including 3 miles back up the Indus to the ferry, a large flat-bottomed rowing boat capable of carrying men and animals. At each crossing the current takes it a mile downstream whence it has to be towed back; a time-wasting business. There follow three miles of soft sand, blinding glare, and intense heat, to a steep climb up a rocky declivity, a long stretch across the top of the hill; then steeply down to the Shigar River flowing from right to left. As we approached through cultivation to Shigar village a bunch of urchins with buttonholes of verbena (?) greeted us, but there still remained a long way to the polo ground and our camp site.

Having inquired that evening of the Tahsildar the way to the post office where the Skardu postmaster had agreed to forward our letters, he said: “Come, I will show you myself.” In fact he took us to the village school to see rows of goitred children in the charge of several equally goitred men. Work stopped instantly. A bow was produced and we were led to a stone bench, the place of honour, surrounded by urchins while the masters one by one displayed their skill, or lack of it, firing arrows at a target emblazoned with elaborate flowery devices painted on a wall a few paces away. We had to compete rather erratically. The victor was crowed with a steel cap and garlanded with some dirty wool, and then performed to the hoots and yells of his fellows. The Tahsildar’s action having bewildered us, he now proceeded to tell us that those who had been entertained like this customarily presented the school with a ‘Budu’. Now, what on earth could a Budu be? Steel whispered to me that it could be a sheep on which the school could feast, so we left it at that, handed a rupee to him and departed.

On the 28th we proceeded to Wazirpore on the other side of the river, and this involved a perilous ferry on a skin raft. Lack of timber can be the only reason for such an inefficient craft. The crew of four men inflate by lung power about two dozen goat skins to be attached by their tied-up legs to a skeleton framework of brushwood. The platform so formed measures about 12 by 12 feet in which spaces are more evident than the framework, and which stinks like stale sausages as one steps gingerly aboard. One is then punted and rowed across by the crew who wield unbladed sticks. One drifts miles downstream, and over shallows the waves created by the current all but wreck the flimsy vessel. One is soaked and just prays for a safe landing: at least Steel’s khansama certainly did. The waste of time taken by towing it back upstream and the reinflation later every crossing is as excessive as the amount of baksheesh demanded. The crossing was succeeded by just as tough a battle for baksheesh with the band of coolies from Shigar village, the custom in ordinary circumstances being a standard half-anna per mile for a 60 pound load plus an extra mile of baksheesh for the march, and double this for ponies carrying a two maund (160 lb) load. This, however, appeared derisory to these people who had, so we learnt later, been spoilt by some American tourists proceeding to Askole a short while previously. Americans with their huge

retinues may be splendid people, but the contents of their pockets vastly outstrip those of poor British subalterns. This particular quarrel was only quelled by the shikaris wielding sticks.

The 29th was a day of respite; the only one since leaving Srinagar. Clothes were washed and mended. I wrote letters, fired four practice rounds, and sketched.

Next day I climbed the Wazirpore nullah, straight up from 8,000 to 13,000 feet, or thereabouts. I carried a pocket aneroid barometer with an altitude scale. We stopped just below the snow at the foot of a glacier, after a six hour walk during which the thinner air required ever quicker breathing for the lungs. Mohamed Bat had indicated the campsite yesterday and I had said: "What, just up there?" Against the background of a 16.000 foot peak behind it, it had looked no distance at all. The path lay beside a stream which had to be crossed several times, a simple matter in the early morning but not one to be taken lightly after midday when it becomes a raging torrent from the melting snow. Until we reached the loose shale and turf slopes where cattle from the village, including both sheep and oxen, graze, I recognized rock roses, mallows, blue cranesbills (?), and rhubarb, which made for excellent eating. It was amongst the short turf that we pitched camp, and there saw many short-stemmed alpine plants which included a vivid dark blue columbine. With us came two local men whose job was to cut and bring firewood from the shrubs growing below. I bought a diminutive ram which made a welcome relief from the incessant chicken that we had had to buy on the march.

On the way up we passed a stone shack, the local herdsmen's summer shelter, outside which was a churn consisting of a wooden tub in which was a cogged wooden wheel on a broomstick spindle. Wound once or twice around the spindle was a leather thong with a handle at either end which, tugged alternately by the operator, spun the cogged wheel to produce butter.

Rose early on July 1st and climbed about 1,000 feet to the north-west from where we watched a herd of ibex grazing on the far side of the nullah next door to that of the camp. At 8.00am they ascended to an inaccessible ledge to sleep. The members of the party took turns to watch them resting between whiles until the herd began to return downhill, when, suddenly, at about 3 o'clock a cloud enveloped us, snow fell and then rain. We could see nothing and so descended to the camp site.

The next day clouds, snow, and rain dept us in camp. I wrote letters and read Anna Karenina which I never really enjoyed.

3rd July was a fine day. We rose early and climbed back to the observation ridge and found the ibex in a more favourable position which decided us to stalk them. We slithered down the precipice, vainly trying not to dislodge stones; crossed a very slippery snowdrift and crept around a subsidiary ridge. There they were about 200 yards above us climbing to their daily rest. A puff of wind up the nullah and away they went jumping from rock to rock, not in panic, but none-the-less positively away. We had expected to find them just over the ridge and level with us. Had I not been so fiendishly short of breath… at any rate no puff of wind would then have frightened them.

We lay out all day watching crows circling below us; the sun roasting us; the shadows froze. We climbed the nullah again to no purpose, finally climbing back to the observation ridge to my near exhaustion, reaching camp at 7.30pm. (Rising early here means 4.00am to be on trek by 5.30am.)

Mohamed Bat rose early on the 4th to observe, leaving me behind. I joined him after tiffin to see two ibex a very long way off, to be told anyway that they were too immature (Nuff said).

Back disconsolately to Wazirpore , 5 July , it being useless to remain unless prepared to wait a week for the game to lose their fright. Marched 3 miles up river to Nandu village; the tiffin coolie, having been sent here yesterday to enquire, had returned reporting game. The rush of water down the nullah rendered climbing impossible. Incidentally I had left my 60lb tent at Wazipore and had taken to a choldari for lightness.

Climbed the Nandu nullah to 10,000 feet on 6 July to camp in a most awkward site on the sloping face of a stony glacier. We crossed the stream four times, a fearsome venture even in the early morning, although the hill-men and coolies took to it like Lady Blank stepping daintily from her Rolls in Bond Street. For me, trying to take soundings with the khad stick and gripping with both hands, I was almost swept away. At last, this looks shallower. Assaying one foot, it is all but swept off my body. Try again, Hullo, a stone: Hell, its rolling. Here it's firm: now for the next foot … and so on.

Reconnaissance in the afternoon revealed no game, so we decided to leave next morning. It was a pity to waste another day, but I was not sorry to leave the difficult and precipitous milieu.

Tuesday 7th. Rain all the afternoon and evening, so we stayed in Nandu village. Some dak from Shigar contained an advertisement for Daimlers!

Having climbed next day on to the foothills behind Nandu we trekked at that height above the river bed to the Gollopore nullah, but the rain and clouds blotted out the landscape. There, just below the snowline, we awaited the baggage in a Balti hut where the sheep and cow herds lived. The Baltis and their labadar had been haggling with the tax-collector regarding the value of their products for tax purposes. They were eating a mixture of curdled milk and flour from a communal bowl, while seated around a blazing wood fire. All was black with soot but the party was cheerful. Food over, the lambadar lit his hookah, but only a privileged few were allowed to participate.

We found succulent big mulberries near Nandu village, but I was told that these are less popular than the common type because of the sharp flavour. Baltis must find sweetness hard to come by. Steel wrote to say that he had killed one ibex and wounded another on the 4th.

On the 9th we rose early and climbed the hill above the camp, and at once began stalking a herd of ibex. They were on the near side of the adjoining nullah and somewhat above us. We climbed behind the ridge which separated us. Although it was not precipitous it was cluttered with big boulders, most of them rocking under our feet, so each had to be tested before stepping on to it. Mohamed Bat, through carelessness on one, nearly went to Kingdom-come. We arrived to within 200 yards by 9.15, but, uncertain as to their size, I said "We must get closer to make sure", so we repeated the process. A cloud descended which could have proved fatal, but it was a good cloud because, when it cleared, there they were a mere 80 yards away. Having decided on the best head I bowled him over first shot, then came five more shots the last knocking over a second one as he rounded the corner to safety, which he did achieve limping badly. Nevertheless I felt triumphant; but it was not to last, because on reaching the spot where the first casualty had rolled head over heels down the hillside, we found a pool of blood and a trail leading up and away on a line obscured from the firing point. We followed as far as we could that day only to return to camp

miserable and empty handed. A couple of Baltis were dispatched to search for both wounded animals.

I wore out two pairs of grass shoes today. They are admirable for silent 'fly-walking' on rock, but are not durable, especially in wet conditions. They are secured by a slit in the pattu sock between the big toe and the rest through which a twisting strip of grass rope secures the shoe to the foot, preventing it from twisting off sideways. An ordinary sock is worn under the pattu one.

The 10th broke wet, so a late morning in bed. I did nothing but sketch. The two Baltis brought back the skin and head (41") of the first ibex. From their description it cannot have proceeded much further than the place where we gave up last night. The skin, in poor condition due to summer weather, disclosed that my shot can have penetrated only 2" or so above its heart.

Having risen at 3.00am on the 11th we endured a long westerly walk by cattle-track over the ridge behind the camp to the next nullah where there was a glacier which was most difficult to cross. Thence we surmounted yet another ridge to a further parallel nullah; difficult going amid the crashing of boulders bumbling to right and left. At 9.30 we spotted an unapproachable herd, which we quietly watched while it rained, in spite of being frozen stiff by the icy wind as we lay beneath our respective boulders. At 3.00pm they began to descend. Although I could see no possibility of approaching them Mohamed Bat promised. Somehow or other we did indeed get to within about 100 yards. There were five good heads; so I aimed at one and fired. One can blame the long tiring day, over-anxiety, the bitter cold, but to little purpose. One more wounded ibex: it was a humiliating experience. This occurred around 6.00pm; lowering clouds overhead, darkness approaching, the bivouac in the intervening nullah miles away, pursuit was impossible. It was a depressed bloke indeed who reached the bivvy that night at 8.30. The fatigue had destroyed all appetite, and he fell fast asleep at once.

Sunday 12th. A wet day. The ibex shot yesterday was brought in, another 41 incher with the unusually narrow spread of 13 inches. Returned to Golopore nullah camp.

Remained in camp sketching on the 13th. The second ibex wounded on the 9th was carried in today. The shot had penetrated his rump; and just why the vultures had not disrupted the skin more they did is anyone's guess.

Returned to Wazipore on the 14th, passing a hill on which folk from the surrounding villages were celebrating a Muslim festival to the rhythm of a tom-tom. It resembled a Khattak dance. Recovered the tent and two coolie-loads of baggage entrusted to the lambadar.

The next morning we set out for Shigar at 6.30, but we only reached it at 4.30 owing to the skin-raft team turning up about 1.00 in spite of the dak coolie, who had been dispatched in advance, having warned them. They were consequently peeved at the paucity of my remuneration. Steel appeared while we were waiting for the raft. He secured three ibex, the best a 43". His intention was to look for sharpu in a mullah behind Shigar, but owing to the ferry raft's late arrival he could only send his tiffin coolie across with us and remained himself on the far bank. Mahomed Bat maintained that no good sharpu were likely to be found hereabouts, and on his advice I opted to make for black bear in Kashmir proper, and so once again bade Steel farewell.

The Rajah of Shigar supplied some excellent apricots, and his coolie (our chota shikari) being the only man throughout the trip who expressed satisfaction with his pay, Shigar rose in my estimation.

Thursday 16th. A hot march to Skardu, and the baggage late arriving. Padre Bate invited me to tea tomorrow at the dak bungalow, and Steel finding no sarpu with better than a 10" horn arrived at 7.00pm.

We stayed put for one day in Skardu completing the arrangements for pony transport. At tea with Padre Bate met a Colonel Holmes of the grass farms from down country for six weeks leave in Kashmir. A friend had recommended that he should stay ten days in Gulmarg, after which, being incommoded by a fussy and sluggish wife, his wearisome journey over the Deosai Plain had left him only eight days for shooting. His shikari begged us to explain to them the near impossibility of finding anything worthwhile in so short a time without the most extraordinary good luck, whereas his friend had led him to expect a bag of three ibex; sharpu, red and black bear, all complete during the trip.

On the 18th, ten easy miles to Satpura passing a peacock-blue lake about 1,000 feet above the Indus. It was backed by red mountains falling steeply into it. Here was a plague of flies. The Satpura route wastes a day's march, but it avoids the steep climb of 8,000 feet in five miles over the Boorj-i-la (la = pass).

After a long climb, from rocks and flowers to grass slopes, and then over a rocky lip covered in snow, we came on the 19th into the immense saucer of the Deosai Plain, broad grassy downs 30 miles across standing between 12,000 and 13,000 feet, an altitude which renders them passable for a mere three months per annum. Rivers and marshes cross it at intervals, and snow capped hills surround it. Myriads of gnats, buzzing and looking like mosquitoes, caused more irritation of my exposed anatomy than any place else I know. I do not exaggerate when I say that I counted no less than fifty of them striving to probe my left puttee[67]. The rest of my clothing was similarly beset. In camp peace can only be found beneath the mosquito net.

Every few hundred yards one is met by shrill blasts as from a policeman's whistle. Marmots are responsible. They sit bolt upright above their holes shrieking and looking like bundles of mustard-coloured fur about two feet high. They let one approach to within 50 yards before dropping like stones into their burrows.

Shooting them is easy, but recovery of the body is rare, even where residues of their guts are to be found on the threshold. I desisted and do not speak from experience.

The 20th. Crossed the Lal Pani (red water) and Kala Pani (black water) rivers and pitched camp. My tiffin coolie piggybacked me across them. Gnats worse than ever until a wind sprang up. Steel produced some strong smelling dope which deterred them pretty effectively.

It was 20 miles to Burzil on the 21st. A gradual ascent to the southern limit of the Deosai, and over the watershed where much snow lay on the rocks surrounding a cold looking lake. There was no visible track and loose angular stones and boulders made difficult going for the ponies. The descent to the turf of the Chota (small) Deosai was rapid; then from it the path falls gradually into a

[67] Puttee = a strip of cloth wound round the leg from ankle to knee for protection and support.

valley between steep hills. We camped some way above the village where we met an apparently moneyed and Spartan gunner on his way to Askole for a more than 20,000 foot climb; shikar no ambition.

On the 22nd we marched 26 miles downhill to Gurais in 7½ hours. At Burzil we joined the 10-foot wide track used annually in the relief of the Gilgit, a pine-clad mountain landscape, and amid the thick grass was an abundance of wild flowers, such as delphiniums, balsams, meadowsweet, meconopsis, etc. Beside us throughout the trek ran the Krishenganga River.

The next day's march of 18 miles brought us to Charpattnar (or Zerkuss) five miles beyond the normal stage to Karagbal. It was downhill to the point where we left the Krishenganga, and steeply uphill afterwards.

Friday 24th. We reached a village about four miles west of Bandipur and thus were back in the Kashmir vale. The track climbed to a 3,000 foot pass, thence about three miles on the level, and then very steeply downhill for 6,000 feet to Bandipur. From the top the view was wonderful, but the hot climb in sunshine into the thick damp mist on prolonged descent. The hitherto separated flies and mosquitoes were here in consort. I sent for a Bandipur barber for a haircut.

Steel and I separated again on the 25th. His thick, bristly red beard would have done justice to a Viking. I endured a fiendishly hot march with an uncomfortable belly pain to Shiu (?) above which we hoped to find a black bear, but found another sahib there instead, and so had to stay below. For most of the way we had skirted the Wular Lake, a vast expanse of placid water bordered with villages and small craft. I dieted on milk.

The following day the sahib was proposing to have a beat and to be leaving tomorrow; so with his permission we climbed a nullah to a camp site above Shiu and I spent the day lazily curing the chill.

I spent the morning of the 27th lazing, and in the evening tried for black bear. The procedure is to creep silently through the wood, all senses alert; then to sit absolutely still and as concealed as possible on the lee side of a clearing watching for movement. The apricot trees formed the salient point of our tactics. Although at this season the fruit is nearly over, there is nothing else for a bear to look for. I cannot say that I enjoyed this method of' "still hunting", and certainly my chill did not add to the fun. Actually, the ruler of Kashmir being a Hindu, bear hunting after 6.00pm is illegal, because his sacred animal the cow has sometimes been mistaken for a bear, a law not strictly observed.

July 28th. Rose at 4.00am for another fruitless try. Later moved camp uphill to Imbirzelwar. The hills, the dwellings and the intermittent cultivation remind me of nothing so much as Herefordshire.

The 29th. Try, sleep, try, is the order of the day. Plenty of droppings indicate that bear are about, but nary an animal.

After three more unsuccessful days I decided to quit; the weather had turned wet, which made an added incentive. So on Sunday, August 2nd, a ten mile march brought us to Sopor. A green level land greeted us as we left the hills, and the way led along dykes frequented by numerous kingfishers. The town, on the Jhelum below Srinagar, is a jumble of tumble-down wooden houses and open green spaces, and there is a wooden bridge over the river. It was all rather public for a

camp site. I searched in vain for privacy and had to make do with a compound partially enclosed by a ruined wall next to the police station, through which ran a path, the thoroughfare for men, women and children. Having arrived there at midday it was about 8.30, raining, and had gotten myself into bed, after having at last shaven off my curly black beard, when who should appear but the head policeman. "You have no right to be camping here on government land." I told him that, had there been any real objection to my presence there, he could so easily have told me earlier in the day, and that he could find me through the Game Preservation Department if he really wanted to, and "Go away"- because it was all to obvious all he wanted was some palm oil.

To circumvent any possible trickery during the night I took special precautions for the safety of my rifle etc, and wrote a letter to the Game Preservation Department explaining the circumstances and providing my address, which I delivered to the Department next day.

Monday 3rd August. Rain. My three tonga loads reached Srinagar about 3.00pm, very bedraggled and very bored, having also witnessed what appeared to be two acts of deplorable deceit inflicted by our drivers on the urchins who stand by the roadside selling bundles of green fodder.

Feeling that I had nothing smart enough for Nedous Hotel, I elected for the houseboat recommended by Mahoumed Baba by the river bank opposite the Band. It was fairly comfortable, but the noises from neighbouring boats, and the bumping when these boats shifted their moorings during the night, made it unpleasant.

Also annoying was the need to procure a shikara every time one needed to 'go ashore' and their demands for increasingly greater baksheesh. Moreover touts selling carved wood, papier mâché etc, pester one through the day refusing to take no for an answer.

On Tuesday I settled with Mohamed Baba and my late staff, leaving behind various stores for next year, and arranged for a car to Pindi tomorrow. One, Harrison, bound for Ladakh invited me to dine with him at Nedous and there I met Steel (enduring digestive troubles) and we arranged to share the car.

5th August. The car arrived late, and then wasted time replenishing petrol and oil. The streets were lined with police, and we passed troops parading to fire salutes in honour of the Maharajah's state return from Jammu. All this, punctures, and a defective oil circulation, delayed us, and a state car, driven slowly refused to give us the road, so that we reached Murree not till after dark: and this involved giving chits to policemen for contravening local regulations. Occupied a double room at Chambers Hotel, and what a low style of pub it was.

I left Murree at 3.00pm on the 6th having had lunch with Bill Morse (my OC Company) and his wife, who were spending some leave there. Meanwhile a sahib bound for Srinagar had purloined our Bewick and left us with a scruffy broken-down Overland. It was transport and there seemed no redress. I put up at the Pindi US Club for the night, the equivalent in Bangalore having mutual temporary membership arrangements with sundry clubs around the country. There were packets of sappers dining there that night and we kept things going until 1.00am.

7th August. Departed this evening for Mona Remount Depot in the Punjab and changed in the middle of the night at Lalamusa and again on the morning of the 8th at Malakwal, to reach Mona at 8.00am. In the absence of an officer I was assisted in my choice by Sub-Conductor Clinton who

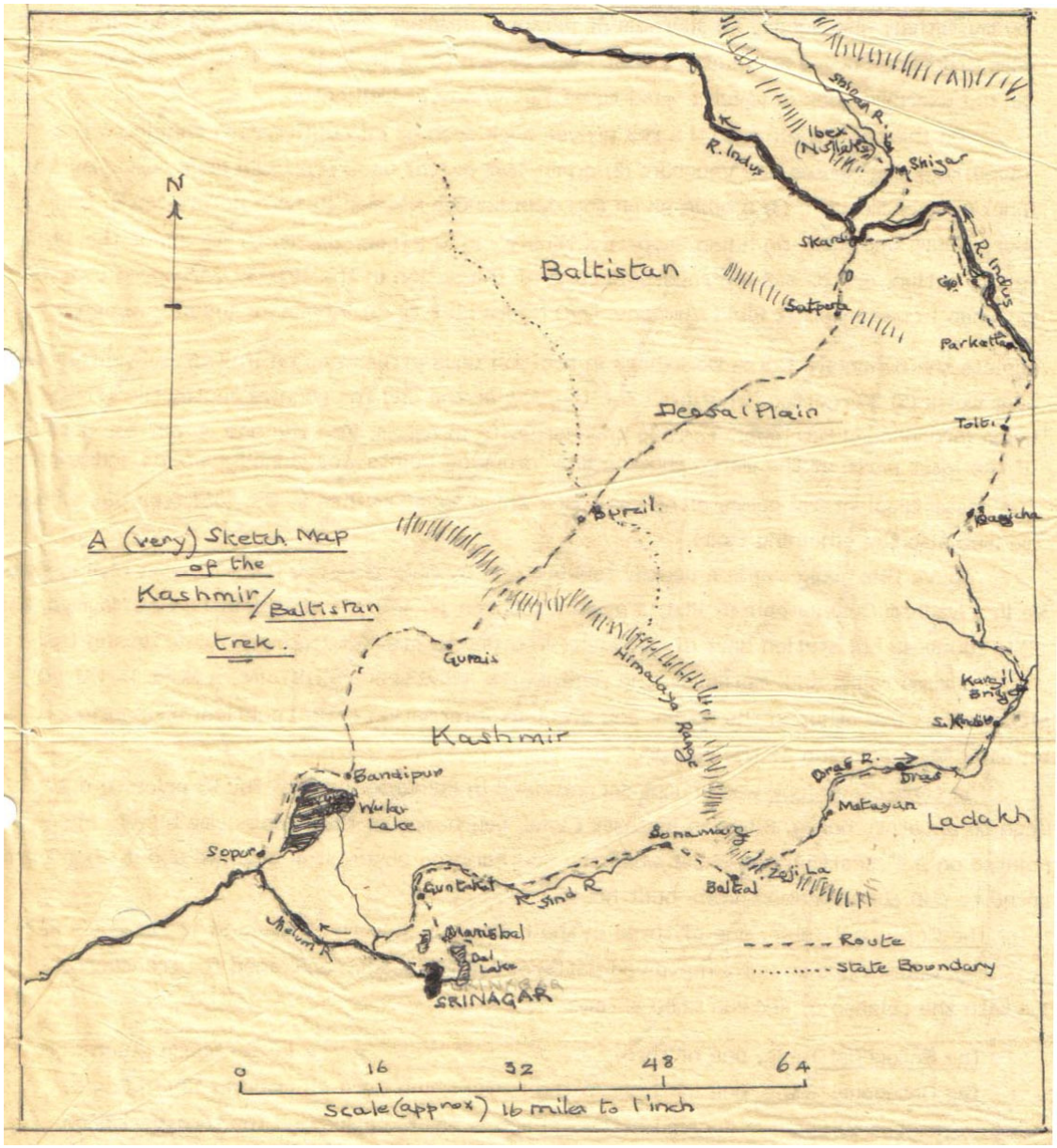
entertained me for the rest of the day at his house. He had many interesting hobbies including photography and water colours. Left Mona with my remount, which I intend to train for polo, at 6.00pm, changing at Malakwal and Kundian, to reach Mari Indus on the 9th morning, whence back to Manzai on the 10th.

By late 20th century mores, shikar stands condemned, but conditions have radically changed. The tradition dates from before the myth of the goddess Diana; before the cultivation of crops provided alternative nourishment. Nowadays modern cameras provide a much more attractive objective; if only interchangeable lenses had been invented in the twenties shikar would by then have been well on the way to ostracism.

For what occurred until the spring of 1926 my photo album is my sole source of evidence:

It was back to military training interspersed in August and September with the making of a new hockey ground, levelling the area, making mud bricks and laying them over the entire surface. The whole brigade was involved under our supervision. The brigade sports followed in November, and in December we blew up No 1 watchtower which had become superfluous for the defence of the camp, and which in a dissident's hand would have constituted a danger.

9 Company marched to Splitoi in March 1926 (south from Jandola on the road to Sarwekai and shortly after passing through the Shahur Tangi). We pitched camp alongside the Scouts Post and proceeded to replace an Inglis bridge (a WW1 invention to circumvent enemy bridge demolitions) with a less vulnerable ex-NW railway steel girder bridge which the railway had discarded for another capable of bearing heavier loads. It was an intriguing challenge to our ingenuity and safely accomplished.



LADAKH - 1st April to 30th June 1926

Ladakh, its principal town Leh, is the easternmost province or region of Kashmir, sometimes described as Western Tibet. The Lamas here wear red robes whereas in Tibet they are yellow (if the new Chinese regime has not obliterated them). I had planned to go there the previous year and had left much of my equipment with my agent in Srinagar, Moh'd Bāpa, on my return from Baltistan in 1925.

I set out on April 1st from Spltoi camp where we were engaged on bridge substitution, taking a lift on the local 'beer' vanette to Manzai, our permanent station in Waziristan. I spent the night there in the brigade mess, and was dismayed to find no cash available, a commodity useless during the

past few weeks but now essential, until with luck the O.C. of the mountain battery, one Teesdale, lent me Rs30 to see me to Rawalpindi.

'Bubs' Angwin, of my batch, met me at crack of dawn at Pindi station on the 3rd, and as arranged, deposited my baggage in the hired car which was to take me to Srinagar. After breakfasting at the club and cashing a cheque there with the secretary, followed by some shopping, I departed around 11.30. There was a thick mist beyond Murree which turned to rain at Domel, making it necessary to spend the night at Gārhi dak bungalow, a night of heavy thunderstorms. The wet weather persisted through to Srinagar, and the consequent landslips delayed arrival there until 6.15. The game office had closed. I put up at Nedou's Hotel and walked thence to Moh'd Bāba's on the band (see my previous notice about pronouncing 'a' in Indian words) only to be told that 7 of the 8 Ovis Ammon blocks had already been allotted. So I immediately sent a note by peon to the Game Office to establish a priority for my claim. I forthwith ordered stores and next morning learned that luck had attended my stratagem.

I was however in need of some dental treatment, and in fact this kept me kicking my heels around the town till Wednesday 7th. Besides my Ovis Ammon block I was given a pass for the Chang-Chen-Mo for Tibetan gazelle, which I was, alas, unable to use owing to the unduly long time it was to take finding my Ovis Ammon. After a bug-bitten restless night in the dak bungalow in Kishti I reached Gāndabal at 9.15 on the 8th where I joined my shikāri and camp staff which had been sent there in advance to prepare transport in readiness for immediate departure. I encountered there an old acquaintance in the 5/11th Sikhs, a disappointed man whose application for Ladakh had arrived too late and having therefore to change his plans completely. We walked together as far as the suspension bridge between S. Kharbu and Kargil where our ways parted, he to follow my last year's route to Baltistan.

A detailed description of the route thus far is otiose since it is identical with last year's to Baltistan. Nevertheless it is worth noting the climatic differences. The earlier month of April meant snow in abundance involving laborious plodding through it as from the gorge on the Srinagar side of Sōnamarg to beyond the Zōji Lā, and the risk of avalanches during the warmth of daylight sunshine made it essential to begin the trek over the pass from Bāltal at 5.30 am before dawn. Breakfasting at 9.15 on the far side I found a crisp layer of ice had formed between the shell and the albumen of my hard boiled egg. (Such are some of the inconsequential details which impress themselves on the memory.) The snow gradually dwindled as we proceeded, and five miles beyond Drās there was none.

After my companion had left me I strode a further 5 miles beside the River Suru where I branched right through open cultivated country as far as Kargil, a small town with a bazaar.

Next day (the 17th) entailed walking 12 miles to Mulbekh between 07:00 and 3:00 o'clock, crossing the Suru River and traversing plateaus to reach the Wakha River. This flows amid fields and villages before entering a narrow gorge between precipices which finally opened out again at Shargol. Mulbekh boasts an impressive lāmāsary on the cliff above it and the dak bungalow is sited out of sight of the village.

On the 18th, soon after leaving Mulbekh, I came upon a colossal standing Buddha carved on the face of a vertical rock to the left of the road. A mile beyond this the track swung left from the

Wakha River to begin a steady climb up a dry watercourse between shale slopes to cross the Namika Lā at 13,000 feet. Thence we descended another similar watercourse to the Sangalumah River where we turned right upstream through a broad valley containing Waziristan-type irrigated 'kachis'.

I here came across the first of innumerable 'chortens', square-based pagoda-shaped and whitewashed; said to contain the stamped moulds made from the ashes of cremated lāmas. There were also samples of Māni walls soon to become commonplace, many about 7ft high, up to 100 yards long, with a flattish pent top covered with flat stone slabs contributed by all and sundry, each engraved in the local calligraphy with the prayer "Om māni padmi hun" (the final 'n' pronounced in French nasal style), which can be interpreted as '0 God in the Jewel of the Lotus'. Woe to anyone blasphemous enough to pass a Māni wall on the lefthand side: a minus mark on the scale of merit towards Nirvana. Merit towards the desired end can however be enhanced by the mechanical repetition of the Māni prayer from flags emblazoned with it fluttering in the wind, in miniature waterwheels, or swung manually while walking, a shaft serving as axle to a small circular box to which a miniature weight is attached on a chain. Only such Ladākhis who have travelled into India will ever have encountered wheels applied to vehicles. Transport is restricted to coolis and pack animals.

The Ladākhi's clothing is possibly derived from Chinese tradition, but is perhaps unique in its application. Long ankle-length woollen smocks; for men kept double-breasted by long woollen cummerbunds wound around the waist which serve as pockets to carry small portable possessions such as the metal-lined wooden bowls from which they drink their green brick tea, flavoured with rancid butter. Across their smocks women drape, from over one shoulder and pinned(?) under the opposite armpit, either a cloth or a skin over-mantel. Boots are soft and ankle high. However, most unusual are the headdresses. Men wear skin hats on their oily pigtailed heads fitted with pointed flaps to either side twisted at an angle up or down according to the prevailing mood or circumstance. The crowns are roughly cylindrical but less high than were the old European silk 'toppers'. The women more spectacularly cover their heads with a 'perāg' made of red cloth with numerous rough turquoise discs stitched to them. They begin in a horizontal line at eyebrow level; swell slightly over the head, and taper behind to a point near the waist. Silver ornaments often dangle from them. The hair beneath is plaited into numbers of narrow ropes spread at regular intervals across their backs. And stitched(?) to their hair beside each ear is a black flap (of skin or wool?) which stick out like butterfly wings above the shoulders; each a rough semicircle of about 6" radius. I hope for their sakes that these contrivances are laundered periodically.

Having today spent an hour over tiffin I reached Kharbu at 1.30.

Monday the 19th was bitterly cold. Off at 7.30, I proceeded up-river until the path bore left up a ravine when a blinding snowstorm all but obliterated the view. After crossing the Fōtu Lā at 13,446 ft I arrived at the fairy-like little township of Lāmayuru which is dominated by a big lāmāsary on top of a precipice behind and above it.

The path thence next day led down a precipitously enclosed gorge to reach the Indus after 8 miles. The Indus is crossed by a suspension bridge about half-an-hour’s march to the east, i.e. upstream, and after yet 8 more miles I came to Dumkar, scenically dull, where we pitched camp for the first

time this trip. Until now it had always been in a dak bungalow. On the morrow we transferred to another site 5 miles up the Dukar River to reconnoitre the area for sharpu, but to no effect.

On the Thursday we climbed a loose shale slope to the NE to a ridge overlooking a valley behind which was a hefty mountain. From there we went SE across snow on a 1/1 slope to another viewpoint, but we drew blank again. Snow obscured the view as we huddled around a fire for an hour before returning to camp in the early afternoon.

We planned for the morrow to cross the ridge to the next village while the baggage proceeded by the Indus plain. At 8.30 we saw about 20 sharpu, 3 with horns legitimately long for shooting, but conditions prohibited any approach until 1:00 when we made some insufficient progress, so at 4.45 we elected to pitch camp in the village, by when I was afflicted by a sore throat and a running nose.

On Saturday (24th) we spotted the same herd at 7:30 and froze like waxworks until it seemed expedient to proceed and eventually to find ourselves within range at 2:30. I aimed …… the cartridge misfired and the click of the bolt scattered them. Returning Lo camp I fired three practice shots with complete success.

We made a wide counter-clockwise sweep next morning only to find the herd at 12:30 way up in front, but trying to approach it out of sight„ we found that it had drifted down into the valley below. We rushed top speed downhill but too late. Again we froze stock still. As soon as we deemed it expedient we dashed to intercept them, but it was too late; the quarry was now half a mile off and drifting still further away. We returned disconsolately to camp arriving at 5:30 by when I had added a sore heel to the sore throat.

The throat gave me a sleepless night, so I remained in camp and wrote a note to the medical missionary at nearby Kalchi requesting throat medicine, to which he kindly responded with Melloids and a gargle, and that evening came with a colleague to see me.

Tuesday (27th) was a cold day spent searching for sharpu way up into ibex type country but we saw only small specimens. So deciding to waste no more time we departed the next day for Nurla, 14 miles away. The road passed the missionary, Padre Burroughs's house in Kalchi. I spent the morning there and was invited to partake of a splendid English lunch, and I met there Mr and Mrs Kunick from the Moravian Mission at Leh.

Thursday we made another 14 miles to Suspul through a dull sandy landscape with intermittent brown undulations, the road running roughly parallel with the Indus, and passed several groups of red lāmas. From there next day, branching left away from the river, we eventually descended through a series of villages to Nimu after 11 miles of tough sandy walking.

We reached Leh on May 1st, a calendar month after my departure from Splitoi. It was another tough 18 mile march, the road lying well north of the Indus, rose, then debauched on to an at first gritty, then shingly plain. The loose sand from Pituk onwards made for particularly tough walking. One enters Leh through a narrow passage in the town wall to find oneself in a broad street, to one side of which is a row of Lombardy poplars sheltering bazaar shops. I was informed that polo used to be played here. If so it must be very different from the European version of the game, which is known to have derived from an Asiatic one. Behind the town and slightly north east of it a big

lāmāsary stands above a vertical cliff overlooking a shelving plain whereon are numerous māni-walls arid chortens. Awaiting me, as requested in Srinagar, were letters from home including one from Andrew Montague Browne.

Sunday (2nd) was spent photographing and replying to yesterday's (nail. Most unfortunately one of the film packs that I was using proved defective. Each sheet in a pack was attached to a paper strip which, when pulled, transferred the film after exposure from the front to the back of the pack. In this instance the paper strip had become detached from the first film so that, unknown to me, every exposure had been taken on it, and my snapshots of Leh are thus disappointingly few. I also visited the Moravian Mission, there to obtain relief for my throat infection, where I met an old German, resident here since 1898 with but two furloughs home. He upraided me for wearing a woollen muffler, and declared that a bare neck like his whatever the weather was the best way to avoid a sore throat. However, he did provide me with some aspirin and pastilles. (I have since then followed his advice.)

So on Monday (3rd) having obtained a pass from the Tahsildar, and after changing about Rs200 notes for cash, with which to pay for cooli and animal transport, we parted late from Leh for the 8 miles trek to Gōleb Bāgh. The sandy track crossed a broad valley behind a row of villages after crossing by bridge to the south bank of the Indus 4 miles from Leh.

Next day having passed Shushōt where cultivation seems to peter out, a narrower and more stony stretch of the Indus valley brought us to Marsalang, 12 miles in all.

Thence it was 12 miles to Upshi where we turned right away from the Indus up a narrow gorge to reach Miru by 2:30, having 2¼ hours at tiffin en route. Here cultivation resumes and we watched busy villagers, both sexes, adults and children, sowing the seed. They concentrated on one field at a time singing as they toiled.

On the 6th, Thursday, we continued up the gorge to Lātho where the landscape opens into downs, the remnants of snow persisting in the river bed. And then came Gya where we discarded the pack ponies hired in Leh, because the high altitudes would have defeated them, and took 8 local yaks instead. Perhaps they were yaks as they resembled the yaks displayed in picture books. On the other hand I have since read or heard that they were probably 'zhos', a cross between yaks and domesticated cattle; pure yaks being considered too wild for transport usage. I cannot adjudicate. We arrived at what the map describes as Shagrot at noon too featureless to deserve any name; but further on where the 1/1,000,000 map is marked Tiarnak, which the yak owners called Shagrot, we stopped for the night after enjoying sunshine all day

Quitting so-called Shagrot at 8:00 we reached the 17,500 ft Tagalung La at 10:45. The snow there proved too treacherous to negotiate, so we climbed about 500ft to a ridge beside it before descending to a nomad's campsite in the so-called Zāra valley. The Zāra riverbed was bone dry but a valley beside it yielded a trickle of water. The apparent drought was blamed on the unusual paucity of snow the previous winter. We saw many hares and some kyang, the name for a wild beast faintly resembling a miniature mule.

On Sunday (9th) we awoke to find a snow-covered landscape. Although snug enough in my eiderdown fleabag and blankets, my sponge was frozen stiff, which phenomenon was repeated nightly throughout my three weeks on the More Plain, which is shown on the map to exceed

15,000ft elevation throughout its length. I sometimes woke in the night breathless, and soon learned, where possible, to follow contours rather to cross them at right angles. The More Plain extending about 16 miles North-South (and averaging more than a mile in width, formed the spine of my ammon block. It was flat and flanked by rolling downs somewhat in shape like Salisbury Plain magnified. Craggy mountains were to be seen in the far distance. These downs are grazing land for Ovis Ammon, a wild sheep whose rams mature to become about twelve hands high at the withers: this despite the seeming sparseness of the grass. Their massive horns curl forwards each side of the skull and can measure well over 40" around the 'diameter', even though they are all inevitably well blunted at the tips from butting during the rutting season.

Sharpu, already mentioned, inhabit lower elevations, are much smaller animals, as are burrhel whose horns spring more horizontally from the head with the tips curling backwards.

There is no timber hereabouts and my staff made daily collections of kyang dung to fuel the camp fire, and never was a cooked hot meal in the evenings however untoward the climatic conditions.

To resume the narrative: The baggage followed the Zāra valley while I was led to one flank crossing two dry valleys to the third one where flowed another trickle of drinkable water. We reconnoitered for game finding only 2 small buffhel, 4 ammon nāpu (ewes), 5 kyang (not game), and many marmot holes.

Next morning (10th) two of the staff searched yesterday's ground and reported only 2 small nāpu, so the shikari and I made a couterclockwise chakka from the confluence of the Zāra and Rukcha rivers, up a subsidiary valley and back to camp over several ridges spotting in the distance 8 mardin (rams). There was plenty of water in the plain nearby where duck abounded, a big yellow variety, white headed, and with black-tipped wings.

It snowed all the morning of the 11th, but it cleared for the afternoon. We marched via Sangtha to Pogmor. Both are shown on the map as villages but they were deserted. Here we found an ample water supply. We saw only hares and kyang on the way.

Every kind of weather assailed us during the next two days. Eventually a brief break enabled us to get out and we spotted 9 mardin all too small to shoot. It was too cold to eat tiffin and in the resumed cloud-cover we had considerable difficulty in finding the camp site again.

The plan on the lovely morning of the 14th was for the shikari and I to scour the hills to the SE of the camp while the tiffin cooli sorted out those to the NE. After trekking about 6 miles crossing several ridges, suddenly at 11:15 a snowstorm reduced visibility to 150 yards. Having achieved the next ridge we huddled around a kyang dung fire until 2:00 when the tiffin cooli somehow found us, and, owing to the persistent snow, I left with him for camp.

We descended to the plain and kept the hills to our right hand in view, which involved diverting into several valleys, so that we did not reach camp until 5:15, just half an hour before the shikari.

After another snowbound morning the shikari spent the afternoon spying out the land beyond our reach yesterday but found nothing. I spent the day writing letters.

The next few days were boringly monotonous. The quickly changing weather persisted and we moved camp regularly with no game being spotted. At last on Tuesday (25th), a really fabulous day based on one of our previous camp sites, I collected an ammon carrying a 43" horn. Unlike

ibex, last year's quarry, ammon, a sheep, is edible, so retaining the skull and the head and neck skins for preservation, the carcass was apportioned as between camp staff and our transport drivers. We had not lacked for food since we were last able to buy any, but the ammon provided a very appetising interlude.

On the morrow we found another 5 good ammon in the middle of a flat plain, and thus unapproachable, but on Thursday there were 9 about 1½ miles up the nallah in which we were camped. The shikari reported them so we set off at once. Alas, they must have heard our approach scattering immediately. Later after tiffin we found yesterday's herd again and at 5:00. I shot my second good head. The rest of the herd seemed bewildered and remained standing about, even closing in within 100 yards of us, and they did not disperse wildly as we descended to collect the kill. With two heads the legal limit we could do nought but watch them.

We hoped to find gazelle in Fridays sunshine and high wind, but only females were available. That night it snowed again so we decided to quit the ammon block without delay. We left the block in the direction of Gya, and I could guess that we were taking a short cut over the Kiameri Lā. The route involved several steep climbs and drops and we were on the go till after 5:00.

We continued down yesterday's nallah on Sunday (30th) joining the Gya River near Shagrot. During tiffin at Gya skylarks sang and the fields were green with young crops. We were certainly weary when we reached Mire (13,000ft) at 4:00, but glad of a warmer evening and night: and we saw a wolf.

Sleeping late on Monday made an excuse for a day's rest, and I sent the dak cooli to Leh with no less than six letters to post, and hopeful that he might return with some dak for me. Could it have been the days rest which induced Sultana, the khansama, to feel feverish, and Mohd Khan, the shikari, weary on the morrow when we saw four unshootable sharpu and watched a mustard-coloured fox chasing a hare?

On Thursday (3rd June switching campsite about a mile and searching a nallah west of Chagdo we found nothing apart from a tail-less rat (some kind of guinea pig, I wonder?) Descending further towards the Indus on the morrow we saw one shootable burrhel head amongst a bevy of smaller ones, but no practicable means of approach. However after another futile day Sunday (6th) brought mist over the mountains which evolved into sporadic snow falls, but in spite of them I bagged my 2 permitted burrhel in the afternoon, and inadvertently wounded a third, and that led us a futile but terrific dance over ibex-like crags to catch up with it, delaying our return to camp until after nightfall at 7:45. A further endeavour next, sunny, morning also failed when the blood trail petered out on stony ground that yielded no tracks. Local villagers searching more widely were equally unsuccussful.

Tuesday (8th) found us once more in fertile country around the village of Musho dominated by a big lamasery. Wednesday was hot and climbing about the fiendishly loose gravel hills in the neighbourhood proved a waste if time. However the dak cooli, back from Leh, brought a letter from home forecasting a general strike in the UK on the 3rd and 4th inst. Then, hurrah! a repeat expedition on the Thursday yielded my two permitted sharpu. The second was only wounded by my first shot, but luckily it succumbed to the second.

We were back in Leh on Saturday (12th). A survey party left the dak bungalow as we arrived, and new arrivals the same day included a RAMC major and his wife, an Italian Lloyd Trestino (?) Countess with her Bombay manager, and a French woman artist - incipient tourism. I had tea and dinner in civilised circumstances with the Kunicks (the Moravian missionary and his wife).

I shall not detail the march back to Srinagar. To avoid any chance of overstaying my leave we marched double stages involving some 20 miles each day: tough going, and in view of my Khansama's continued weakness I granted him a daily pony. Before crossing the Indus on the 15th, I spent two hours with Padre Burroughs at Khalatse. He was curious about the possibility of installing a hydraulic ram to provide irrigation from the river.

When the frosts cease, dak bungalows are notoriously bug-ridden so I nightly had my tent pitched and in my camp bed I remained scatheless.

I recrossed the Zōji Lā to reach Sonamarg about 7:15pm on the 20th, arriving soaked by persistent rain. The pass was in a filthy state, and perforce the late arrival had to involve staying in the dak bungalow. We spent two days resting there, I in my tent writing letters while it poured with rain outside. It took us only from Wednesday to Friday in hot sunshine to arrive back in Srinagar where I engaged a room in Nedous Hotel. The cost of the trip in loose cash, excluding the hotel and Mohd Bāba's bill, was Rs886. I can find no records of the rest.

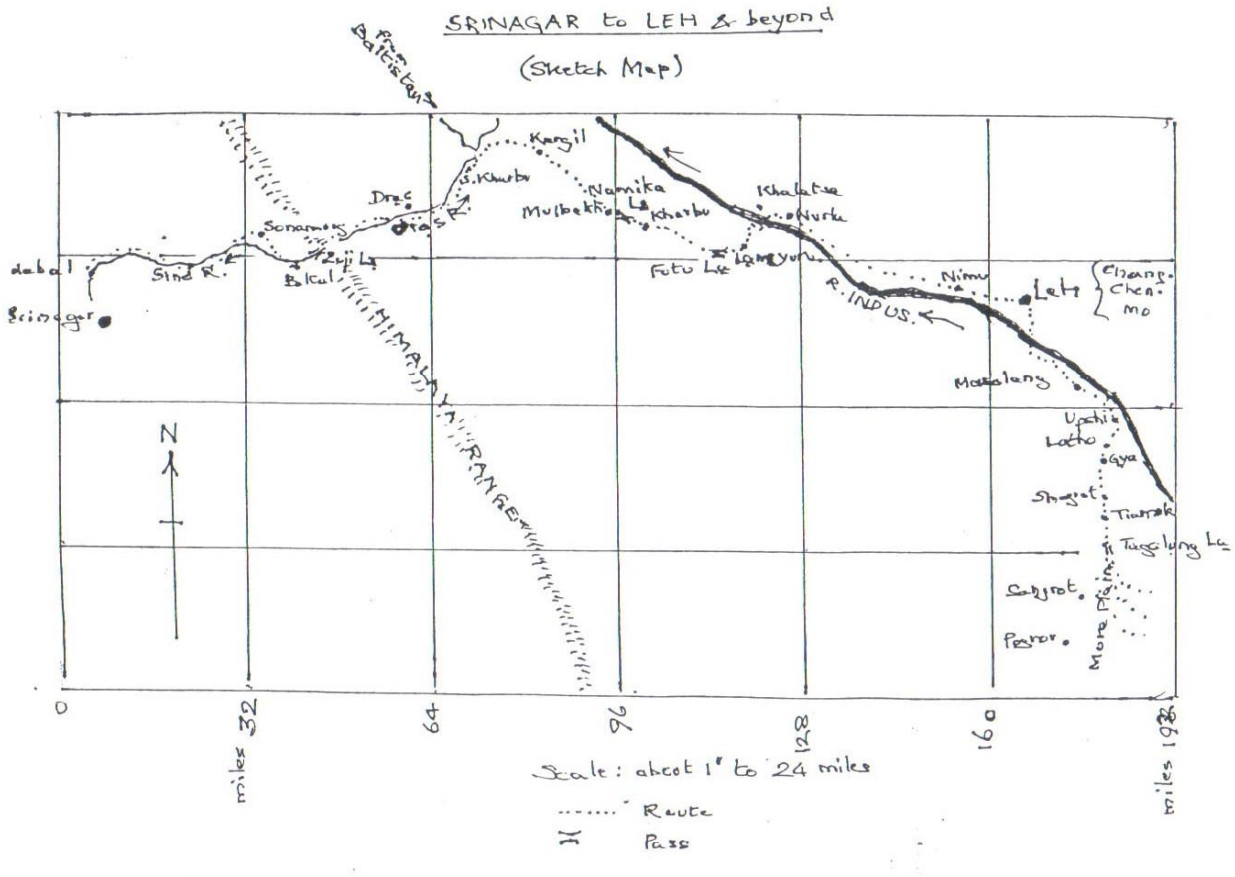
OBITER DICTA

I recall that the UK mail awaiting me in Srinager included a roll of slim news-sheets, such as were printed (privately?) for public information during the recent general strike. Although I had been warned as to its possibility this was the first that I knew of its actuality, and my first reaction as "Gosh, let's keep things in proportion and remember the millions of square miles of the planet completely untrammelled by such strictly local catastrophes."

Half a century on and all is changed. Technology ensures instant worldwide awareness of every trouble however local. Ladākh in any case must be completely transformed following the Chinese invasion in the 1960's. To counter their attack in Ladākh Indian troops were flown in and maintained from the air. Now there is an airport at Leh, not merely for defence purposes, but admitting tourists as well. There is also a motor road replacing the old cooli/pony track, so that at long last the ladākhis have become accustomed to wheel traffic, and they are doubtless by now corrupted absolutely by alien commercialism and western influences.

Incidentally, evidence of such corruption was displayed in a fairly recently published press photograph which disclosed wrist watches peeping below the sleeves on more than one of the Ladākhi male wrists.

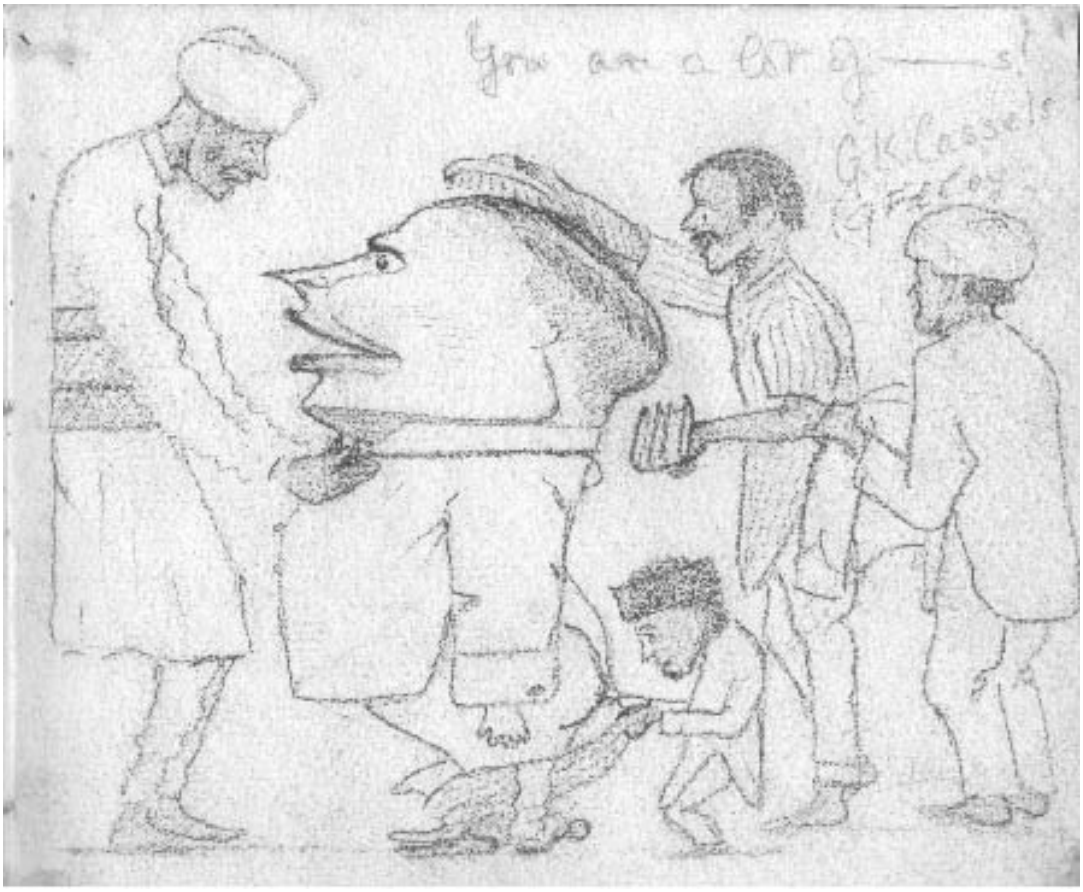
I know nothing about the route taken by the road linking the Pakistan and Chinese Republics. It may, or may not, have impinged upon Baltistan. If it did, then the similar repercussions on its inhabitants will have rendered them equally unrecognisable to anyone like me who knew them in the inter-war years.



1926 Waziristan/Bangalore

My three months privilege leave (to compensate for the isolation from civilized life during a Waziristan posting, the third extra month of annual leave was granted) spent on shikar in Ladakh (see previous section) terminated at the end of June, and I arrived back to the dreary wilderness of Manzai to find Bill Morse (O.C. 9 Fld Coy) had been posted as staff officer to the Chief Engineer Northern Command (Murree in summer, Rawalpindi in winter), and my fellow-subaltern Gilbert Cassels[68] (caricature below) was just off on his 9 months of leave plus furlough in the UK, as was allowed to all British officers in the Indian Army after every 3 years service in India. So, there was I aged 25 in sole charge of 230-odd chaps, a privilege available to British Service subalterns only when heavy war causalities deplete their seniors.

[68] "Cassey": farmed in Argentina during the 1950s and retired to Merfield House, Rode (Somerset) in the early '60s with his wife and daughter Christina. I sometimes visited his tenant (Colonel) John Cameron, an O.W. and ex-Sapper of my father's generation - but to me both fellow railway enthusiast and a very good friend.

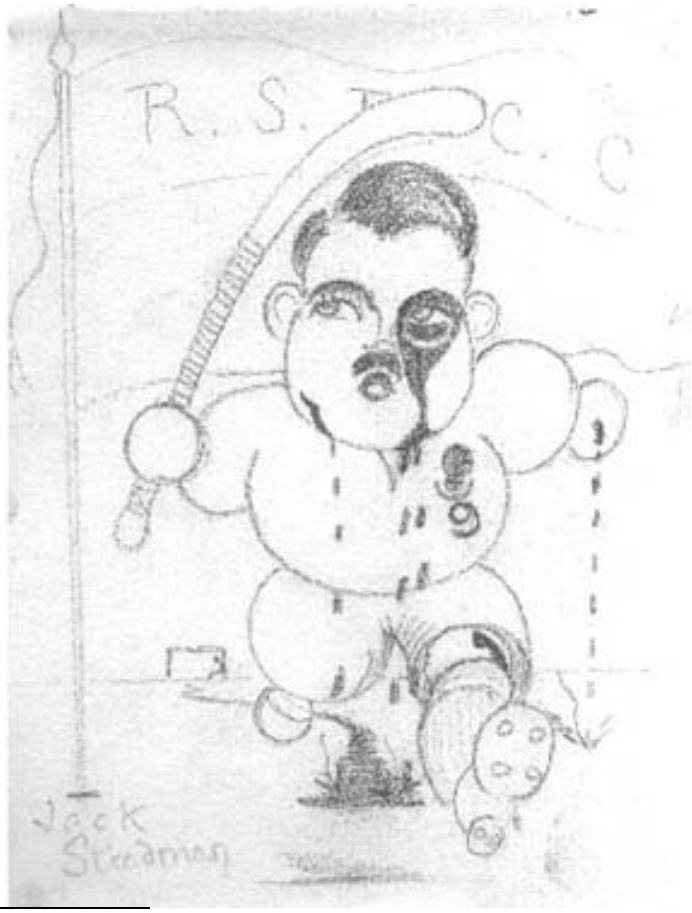


There were no special excitements to start with. July was enlivened by a tamasha which 9 Coy staged to amuse the garrison. It involved knocking together a mini-imitation railway train with sappers dressing up as railway staff, police, sadhus, and some Arab passengers! The serious aspect of the month was a routine training course of musketry followed by field works: e.g. trenches, breastworks, and a 'stick-and string' suspension bridge.

When left 9 Coy for Ladakh, we were at Splitoi, between Jandola and Sarwekai, just about, having completed the substitution of a replaced N.W.R. railway bridge for a WW1 service pattern Inglis Bridge woefully vulnerable to any marauding tribesman with the simplest explosive charge. It so happened that three similar projects awaited execution on the Waziristan circular road near the camp site at Tauda China, one or two marches short of Razmak, the famous permanent brigade garrison which I never saw till ten years later. The C.R.E. Waziristan District ordered us thither and we spent most of the next three months usefully and interestingly employed. Infantry and Mountain Artillery from Razmak protected the campsite and opened the road daily for us and the Razmak Fld Coy (No 12 under Capt. R.E. Wood R.E.) to perform our allotted tasks. There were three bridge substitutions, one for each company separately, and one for us in cooperation. Our first was a comparatively short span, but it covered a deep (50'?) cliff-sided algad (dry watercourse liable to spates in the wet season), which complicated the assembling of components and the split in the working party personnel etc. The two other sites were on the flat just a few feet above the flowing Takki Zam. All went smoothly to plan. The significance for me was responsibility, not merely the engineering, but administration and discipline. Madras Sappers, in point of fact,

seldom required orderly room reprimands or punishment. Of course my Indian Officers, a Subedar and 4 Jemadars) were always genial, tactful and supportive, but the whole affair revealed to me the implicit satisfaction to be derived from responsibility. Another outcome was a head for heights, not for me a natural aptitude, but the sappers skipping carelessly along planks laid between the steel bridge transoms, I could not but follow suit and the fear evaporated.

On return to Manzai we had immediately to prepare for handing over our camp site, mules, and equipment to our successors in the brigade, 13 Fld Coy. whose O.C. was Capt. Jack Steedman[69] with Dennis Swan (O.W.[70]) and 'Boy' Whitman his subalterns. We exchanged advanced parties to prepare for the final transactions. Four or five days in the train brought us back to Bangalore during November. Our first 6.30 morning parade incurred a reprimand from the adjutant Capt. V.A.S. Anderson. We had, in Manzai adopted the universal custom there of wearing shirt tails outside the shorts, and I had forgotten that back home they had to be tucked in, hence the shouts of wrath when he encountered us on parade. It was but a momentary affair, and V.A.S., Freddie French and I spent a happy Christmas holiday period under canvas somewhere to the south near the Mysore Road on a duck shoot.

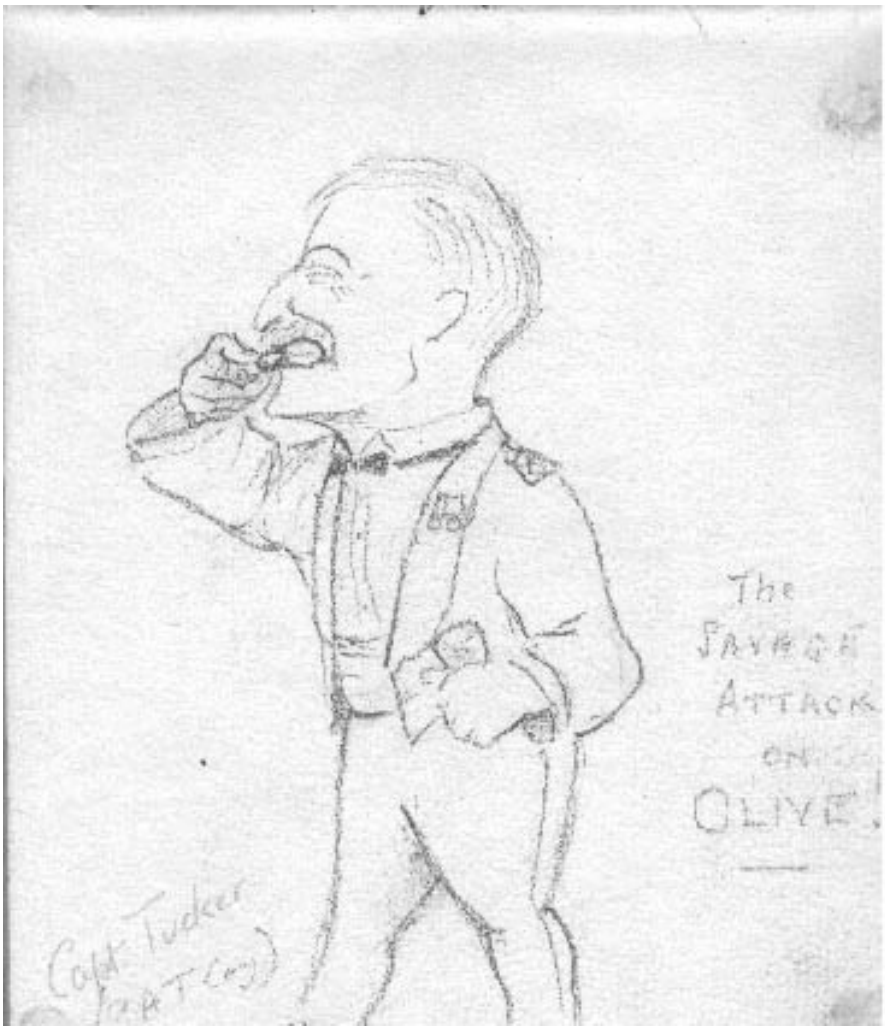


[69] Later became Lieutenant General (a very senior rank, one step below full General), and later still to be 'godfather' to me. Retired to Camberley in Berkshire, not far from Wellington, where I used to cycle over to visit him occasionally. I believe he was in charge of (or had responsibilities to) the War Graves Commission, and I recall him taking me to visit Wargrave (near Henley-on-Thames) once – a moving place to visit, especially as an adolescent.

[70] "Old Wellingtonian" - past pupil of Wellington College

1927 - Bangalore/UK

The year opened with the arrival of Neville Patterson, my Bulford companion in 1923 on posting to India. He had applied for Madras sappers, but in the intervening years he had undergone an Electrical and Mechanical course with the result, to his and my disappointment, that after three months he was posted to Bombay to take charge of the harbour defense searchlights. One would need to be very urban-oriented to tolerate such a city and its stifling damp heat.



My crunch came in April when, after ten months commanding 9 Fld Coy, Capt. P.A. (Tommy) Tucker arrived having completed a supplementary course, as undergone by all wartime commissioned sapper officers whose initial Chatham course had been strictly elementary.

I was forthwith ordered to hand over to him, a painful experience however inevitable and just. My posting was to command D1 Coy. There were two depot Coys, D1 & D2. The corps adjutant, a captain, was responsible for D2 Coy, and his deputy, a subaltern ran it. Its job was to select about 20 recruits a month from about 200 applicants, and to supervise their training in drill, musketry, field works, and to their elementary trade and education certificates. Educated recruits were only

accepted to fill electrical and survey vacancies, the rest came straight off the fields. Coy's function was to administer the corps HQ staff, clerks, band, police, etc., all trained recruits, other sapper and NCO reinforcements for service units, all sappers from wherever undergoing artificer trades training, and all NCOs above L/Nk training for further promotion. The posting tended to become ever more gray from monotony.

However I had now after three years become eligible for eight months leave and furlough i.e. 2 months leave on full pay and the rest on basic rates without Indian army emoluments. Experimentally, I opted for a Lloyd-Trestino passage from Bombay to Venice, calling en route at Taranto or Brindisi - I forget which. Memories of the voyage are only gastronomic: copious ways of treating veal, and the nightly parade around the saloon of gigantic ice cream models of architectural monument. Venice in hindsight was remarkable for its emptiness - no avionics - and for reasonable hotel accommodation in May hard-by the Dog's Palace. The Lido beaches fenced off into sections as between hotel frontages were uninviting.

I with two companions from the ship made for Paris by train through Switzerland, and how unimpressive seemed the Alps after Himalayan experience. After a night in Paris we made for Calais and the white cliffs of Dover.

My headquarters were of course with the family in Northwood. Memories are scanty. Capt. 'Bud' Stein of the Royal Canadian Engineers, who had undergone the Chatham training course with my batch, happened to be in England again. He had a small car in which we toured the West Country as far as Lands End, spending en route a night with my great-uncle Bernard Paynter at Hendford Manor, Yeovil.

I underwent a driving instruction course with a South Kensington firm. No plethora of cars then; no street parking. Wheels were wood spoked, the handbrake to the driver's right, and the spare wheel outside the body on the same side. Three forward gears, and an even lower geared reverse, were not synchromeshed; double de-clutching was de rigueur and the crunch from misjudging axle speed in gear changing was shattering and shaming. Driving licenses were issued at the start of the course; in fact not till the mid-thirties were tests instituted.

I became a member of 'The In & Out', the Army and Navy Club in St. James's Square as a London (?)terre, and to be able to return hospitality, and I recall accompanying the family to Whitby on their summer exeat.

My Bulford C.R.E., Col. Philip Hodgson, now lived in York as Chief Engineer Northern Command. He and Dolly several times had me to stay. I think that Dolly realised that I needed initiation into female society and took steps accordingly. Amongst others she one day invited Enid Scatchard, the daughter of a Tadcaster doctor, to a tennis party at her house, and we took to each other instantly. The romance was short-lived. The Scatchards had me across and drove me to nearby Leeds, and there I discovered their addictions to bookies (I had burnt my fingers in Chatham) and fortune-tellers (superstition my anathema). I don't know how Dolly got me off this hook. I believe she reported the rush home to 'my sick mother's bedside!

1928 Bangalore

A drab beginning burgeons into brilliant blossom. Back to Bangalore in late January meant resumption of depot duties relieved by polo, hunting, and the social round. The officers' mess with its large compound used for training ponies to stick and ball in the intervals between the 6.30 - 7.00 am parades and 8.00 o'clock breakfasts was at No 1 Promenade Road. No 2, to the east, approachable through a gap in the compound wall, was the Commandant's bungalow, he **Lt. Col. R.C.R. Hill** *(left picture below)*, married but with his wife in England, elected to live further away, and his official bungalow was occupied by the bachelor Major E. Bradney, who as Superintendent

of the Park, supervised the workshops and trades training. Being too big for him he elected to share his quarters with **Bob (Dick) Richards**[71] *(centre picture below)*, the subaltern in 33 Fld Troop then commanded by **Capt. Maurice Jeakes** *(right picture below)*, who occupied no 3 with Kathleen[72].

Dick, home the previous year, had arranged for his half-sister, Peggy Smith, to be shipped to India to spend a few months together, the bungalow providing ample room for both. I can barely now recall the months, let alone dates when what follows happened. I suspect her arrival to have been late May. I was friendly but paid no special attention. It was on a Saturday in Bangalore Week that anything significant began. There was a race meeting that afternoon, and a certain Dick Pedder of the H.L.I[73], one of whose battalions then occupied the British infantry barracks, and who had been several years my junior in the Hill at Wellington, invited me to a small bachelor luncheon party at the US Club. This was a jolly affair, and we were liberally plied with – could it have been a champagne cocktail or a rum punch? - Anyway a potent brew. I did manage to climb to the topmost row of seats in the racecourse stand where I found Peggy Smith alone and sat beside her.

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[71] Dick Richards - "Uncle Bob-Dick" - my mother's half-brother. Retired to his hometown of Birmingham where he was employed (I believe) in the family company which specialised in making steel-framed hospital beds.

[72] Kathleen Jeakes (his wife); Maurice Jeakes subsequently became another of my godfathers. They retired to Ingle Spring, a beautiful house in the village of Stanford Dingley in Berkshire. Maurice died suddenly in 1956; his wife Kathleen never quite got over his loss, but lived on in the house for many more years. I used to cycle from school to visit her every now and again.

[73] H.L.I. – Highland Light Infantry

My unsteady legs militated against descent, but we must have entertained each other adequately because there we sat the entire afternoon with never so much as a thought for a book-maker.

The following Saturday was the evening for the annual ball in the so-called Opera House of modest size for its title, and stripped of seats for the event. What Dick was up to I don't recall, but Peg had the use of his T-model Ford (I was too impecunious to run anything better than a buggy.) She drove me to the ball; we danced often together, and in the early morning we made a roundabout diversion back to our quarters, during which I 'popped the question'.) It met with surprise rather than agitation, and I was asked to bide a couple of days for consideration, which for me amounted to two sleepless nights. In the dusk of Monday I called with trepidation at the bungalow. She was alone, and the gently disclosed answer was 'YES'! But it was stipulated that the matter must remain secret until her parents' approval was forthcoming which meant clandestine meetings for the next six weeks. The P&O[74] unloaded the mail every Friday in Bombay, which involved outgoing home mail being posted on Thursdays in Bangalore, and receiving incoming mail midday on Sundays. It did proceed overland to and from Marseilles, but six weeks was the minimum period between putting questions to and obtaining answers from home. Dick evidently put up a strong case for me. We played our part efficiently. R.C.R. Hill had organised a club dance party but I was rejected as too tall, and the day after assent was received and broadcast, Peg's hostess thought fit to apologise to me for having invited the wrong young man, St George. Only the Jeakes later confessed to guessing the truth. Sammy Elkington[75] too had premonitions from some episode out hunting.

We did enjoy a short relaxation in the Nilgiris, but it was later during another hunt that disaster befell. I was several yards in front when I heard a crash behind me. Her mount had stuck a hoof in an ants nest, tripped and rolled with her right arm ulna and radius crunched under the pummels of her side-saddle (she was too short-legged to ride astride.) I bound her arm as best I could to my hunting-crop, gently remounted her on my horse, and led the two mounts on foot to the nearest village where I engaged a bullock cart to take us back to the 'meet'. (She later said that she had been mentally unaware of all this!) The arm was set professionally at the British military hospital as soon as we got there, and thereafter she spent a painful period in her bedroom awaiting shipment home. That was not the end of her troubles. The fractured bones were bent and required re-breaking. In fact her elbow was never again completely flexible. We subsisted for months on weekly letters; hers in left handed calligraphy.

I sometimes wonder to what extent Dolly Hodgson deserves our blessing for this happy outcome.

[74] "Peninsular and Orient "shipping line.
[75] Sammy Elkington, retired to Woolavington, Somerset, before (rather unexpectedly) "taking the cloth" and becoming a vicar.

MARRIAGE AND RETURN TO UK

1929 Bangalore/UK (twice)

Wedding preparations dominated the first part of the year. Physiotherapy hastened the recuperation of Peg's fractured arm. I was granted leave for June and July to enable the wedding to take place on Saturday, 29th June, in Sutton Surrey, where the Smith family lived. When asked for a suggestion for the honeymoon location, my mind picked on the Torcross of our 1922 survey course, but the hotel was fully booked. Instead we spent a week or ten days at Hallsands a few miles beyond towards start point. It involved a train journey to Kingswear opposite Dartmouth, whence by taxi the hotel, arriving just in time for dinner. The proprietress greeted us with "I got your telegram saying the wedding had been postponed and booking single rooms in lieu of the double". But she was not surprised to learn that my best man 'jug' Stuart of my batch and one of Peg's local friends had evidently conspired in a practical joke! This period of peace was succeeded by a week or more of steady packing of Peg's kit plus an assortment of wedding presents for our return to Bangalore. The P&O S.S. Razmak[76] bore us between Marseilles and Bombay, a minor fact impressed on the memory because the same vessel had transported her on the same journey the previous year.

During my absence R.C.R. Hill had been posted to Poonah as Chief Engineer Southern Command, and replaced by Tarn Bassett[77]. The Bassetts were charming people, but were married comparatively late in life. We had 14 months to go prior to my eligibility for 'marriage allowance', permitted only at ones 30th birthday. As the saying then was - we were 'living in sin'. But Tarn went further than this in believing no married man could undistractedly apply himself to the efficient training of a field unit, and I was greeted with:- 'sorry young man, but you will have to join the M.E.S.. This signified the 'Military Engineering Services', for me the post of a 'garrison engineer' maintaining or constructing military buildings probably in some dull isolated station: certainly goodbye to soldiering. I rebelled and forthwith applied for reversion to the home establishment.

We were booked to join the troopship, S.S. Dorsetshire, some time in October. Poor Peg encountered at once the awkward situations that can arise for military wives, because I was told to collect a draft of infantrymen due for discharge from a Staffordshire battalion in Secunderabad and escort them to their depot in Lichfield. Peg had thus to supervise the loading of our baggage in Bombay and its discharge in Southampton about 4 weeks later. In point of fact the loading team had ignored my label of 'WANTED ON VOYAGE' on one trunk, so that we entered the Mediterranean and all other passengers were donning winter clothes in place of khaki drill; mine could not be found. Luckily the ship's quartermaster issued me a spare other-rank's greatcoat, my sole warm covering when I marched the contingent from Lichfield station to the barracks, wearing otherwise my khaki drill uniform, shorts and solar topi.

After a day or two unpacking in Sutton posting orders from 'the War-house' sent me without delay to Shrewsbury to be assistant to the C.R.E. Welsh Area. Almost poverty stricken, we found

[76] S.S. – abbreviation for "Steam Ship"
[77] Retired to North Pertherton, Somerset, I believe – remained friends with HEMN throughout their retirements.

apartments in the town prohibitively costly. Instead we rented a primitive tiny bungalow in Bayston Hill about 3 miles south on the A 49. I recall the tiny oven alongside an open fireplace, oil lamps for illumination, drinking water from a roadside standpipe 50 yards away, and for washing up and baths merely rainwater as collected in tanks from the roof, and liable to run dry in summer. We did just manage a car, a Mini Morris costing about £90 or £100 new.

1930 - Shrewsbury

Was the impulse to 'quit India' a mistake? My C.R.E., Lt. Col. Morrell, had taught us map-reading at Woolwich and we got on splendidly. But the jobs! An office boy would have sufficed. I travelled frequently to such places as Hereford (an ordnance depot), Beachley Head (a boys trades training centre), Wrexham, Newport, Cardiff, Brecon, (Barracks), Trawsfynydd (then a live ammunition artillery range), and Anglesey sites for territorial camps. I was the bearer of instructions, and returned with reports, but never was I responsible for a decision.

We had bought a newly marketed Morris minor for around £100. Petrol consumption was light, and driving on duty helped to enhance my paltry bachelor subaltern's pay packet.

Peg was pregnant as her crisis approached I was dispatched with a party of territorials to St Helen's Bay, a north-facing beach on Belfast Lough, and a fellow subaltern accompanied me. We were to teach them field-works. The blokes were necessarily holiday-bent, and our mission was incapable of diverting their eyes from their watches.

Before departure I had taken Peg to her parents' home in Sutton, Surrey, and I returned from Belfast to be met with near tragedy. Jane had been born a little prematurely on 12th July when Peg was simultaneously, and seemingly unexpectedly, found to have acquired an appendix on the point of bursting, which the doctors declared to be too dangerous to operate upon. Morrell sent me straightaway on leave, and for some weeks I remained off duty. How long the crisis lasted, I cannot remember. The worst moment occurred one evening when a London consultant was summoned who reported to us late at night that he could do nothing and fear the worst. Never before had anxiety hit me and it was to become oppressively permanent, only to be relieved at long last when after weeks of slow recovery the poisoned organ was eventually removed at, I think, Wimbledon Hospital. Weeks afterwards Jane was found to be hydrocephalic

1931 (spring) - 1933 (autumn) - Edinburgh

Col. Morrell must have perceived my semi-boredom, because early in 1931 he conveyed to me his ability to recommend me to the Director General of the Ordnance Survey (OS) and inquired if I would like to be transferred to that department. I did not hesitate. He may have recalled my interest in maps and field sketching at Woolwich. In those days the OS was entirely a sapper concern, its civilians only clerical and financial staff, despite its civil service control, the Ministry of Agriculture and Fisheries. Sapper officers were on loan for a maximum of five years from the War Department. Apprentice boys were selected from applicants straight from school to be trained in draughtsmanship, computing (7-figure logarithms), lithography, printing, etc. At 18 or thereabouts they were enrolled as sappers and underwent the full recruit's course at Chatham thereafter to

serve anywhere in the UK as required until completing their 21 years of colour service, after which they carried on as civilians until pensionable; in fact a job for life.

My transfer became effective in late March. I spent about a week in Southampton, the London Road HQ complex, meeting my immediate superiors and learning about the organisation before departing to my posting as Division Officer (DO5) in Edinburgh, where I was responsible for the up-to-date revision of all the 1/2500 scale plans in Scotland, and soon afterwards all of northern England, including all Yorkshire and Lancashire when the York-based division was abolished.

Our problems sprang from post-WW1 inflation which the 'Geddes Axe' had been designed to cure. Under it no government department escaped reductions in staff. The OS had been rendered incapable of filling in the gaps in the plan due to manpower shortage during the war, let alone coping with the enormous housing development had obliterated all the landmarks, thus necessitating new trigonometrical breakdowns to provide us with a framework from which to make a re-survey from rectangular coordinates.

.Another crass government decision added to our dilemma. Ramsey Macdonald's chancellor instigated a hitherto unimaginable land valuation tax. How were land values to be assessed? From OS plans of course! Our slender resources had to be diverted from full to partial revision; i. e. disregarding buildings and concentrating on the less prominent boundary fences. Division officers were directed to dash full speed around their respective areas to interview every urban council to discover if any, using their own methods to keep their housing estate plans up to date, would guarantee their accuracy. In my vast area the sole guarantor was Seaham Harbour, Co Durham. Fortunately the government suffered a defeat, to be succeeded by a National Coalition with Conservative support. The land tax and other Labour extravagances were immediately quashed. My reconnaissance meant long absences from home driving our new 12HP 6-cylinder Austin, from which, thanks to cheap nightly lodgings, I amassed a fair implementation from travel and lodging-allowances to my monthly pay packet.

One other job factor of slight interest:- all my sapper revision parties worked in uniform save those in Glasgow, where mufti had to be permitted to avoid abuse and bottle throwers, such was the loveable Irish element even then.

Now to family affairs. We first lodged in the Craig Royston House on the banks of the Forth just beyond Fettes School, where Harry Fabian Ware happened to be the Art Master. He and Armyne were fellow guests at the hotel whence sprang a friendship that survived several decades. It was through them that we met the Lumsdens to whom we became no less strongly attached. E.S. (Bill) Lumsden was a RSA and a very accomplished etcher, and Mabel, his wife, especially noted for coloured woodcuts.

We soon found a furnished terraced house in Dean Terrace overlooking the waters of Leith, and within easy reach of the OS office in Claremont Crescent, but for most of our time in Edinburgh we rented No 4 Gordon Terrace, also furnished, the property of a friend of Gran Smith. This was hardby, but raised well above, the Dalkeith Road with its trams from Princes Street, and it provided us with a semi-rural view which included the remains of Craigmillar Castle.

By the time of our arrival even Peg could not but notice poor Jane's deformity, and the consultant in Charlotte Square, to whom we were referred, notified us that no remedial action was possible. Our distress can be imagined.

What creatures of chance we all are. Scientists aver that millions of sperm, each differing individually, and stemming from countless ancestry, race to fertilize one ovum. Then comes individual choice. Had it not been for the devastating shock, Jane would have been provided with a companion, and it was only in the 1940's that condoms were abandoned.

We were fortunate to find one 'Jessie' to help with Jane, the cooking and household chores. She was the widow of a miner from the Glasgow side of Scotland.

In September 1931 were two weddings, a half brother and his sister to a sister and brother respectively. On the 8th Dick[78] married Marcia, and on the 25th it was Phil[79] and Kyff. Both were in Edgbaston where the Evans family lived. I did have to attend periodical conferences at my Southampton HQ, but I don't believe any helped us to attend either of the weddings, but attend we somehow did. Later Phil's house in Croftdown Road (No 59), Harborne, provided us with a very homely, if somewhat southerly, rest-house.

Among our visitors were, naturally, my mother and Peg's. The latter stayed on once to enable us to embark on a ten day of fortnight's holiday on the Norwegian fjords from, and back to, Grimsby docks. In passing I might add that we interchanged visits with Eric Bolton (Madras sapper) then a garrison engineer with his newly wedded wife Margaret.

We became very attached to Edinburgh because of its many facilities to enjoy the arts: picture galleries, music (Donald Tovry, Director of music at the University, ran weekly concerts in the Usher Hall during the winter preceded by Sunday evening introductory lectures using a piano to explain the forthcoming program), many other orchestras besides, two theatres and cinemas galore, and more bookshops to the square mile than anywhere else so far met with. Orders to leave came all too soon.

[78] Dick Richards – half-brother of Peg – mentioned earlier
[79] Phyl – Peg's younger sister, became Phyllis Evans when she married Kyff.

1933 (autumn) - 1935 Southampton

I had been promoted Captain in 1930, the year that my 30th birthday entitled me to marriage allowance. It was particularly pertinent in late 1933 when a posting to Southampton was ordered. We travelled south in search of a house and found one to suit us in Bassett Crescent, just north of Southampton Common through which I was to walk in fine weather to the London Road OS offices. For the first time in our lives, furniture was required without the possibility, as universally available in India, to hire it on a monthly basis. Fortunately for us it was an era of trade depression, and we were able to procure all that we needed cheaply at Edinburgh's many second-hand shops. Had we not existed in comparative poverty in Shropshire, I doubt if we would have saved some of our increased income for a rainy day. We were also pleased and surprised to find that civil service regulations required us to submit just three estimates from removal contractors in order to ensure our furniture's free transportation.

My prospective Southampton landlord must have referred a Post Office inquiry to the OS HQ because, soon after my return to the Claremont Crescent office to clear up for transfer, I received a P.O. request for a name for the empty we house in Bassett. Having much else to consider, I pulled a 1-inch map at random from the rack behind my desk, closed my eyes, opened the map and pierced with a pin. The nearest village to the pinhole was Bilsdean, which solved the problem.

The move went smoothly thanks to the hospitality of Martin Hotline and his family already living is Southampton who put us up temporarily. I believe he was then occupied with experimental methods in the use of air photography for survey purposes. My new job sounds to have been dull but actually that was not so. It was O i/c Stores[80]. My staff maintained the quantities of expendable materials to meet requirements. My attentions were focussed upon testing for quality and specifications, visiting exhibitions and manufacturers of lithographic and letterpress printing machinery and of optical scientific instruments to keep up to date with new trends, and to suggest to them possible directions for improvements. One journey took me as far as Glasgow, but the majority were to London: all were by rail. Indeed, for economy in our changed circumstances we substituted a 9HP Wolsley for our recent Austin. It was a small cylinder small variety of the then famous Hornet, but alas a comparative failure. Cylinder linings wore out; there was gearbox trouble and the seats were inflatable air balloons which all too often required the foot pump. (Incidentally individual front seats were introduced only after WW2.)

Nanny Ingram soon joined us to look after Jane. How we came by her eludes me, but this kind and faithful person remained with us until we settled in Churchland Farm.

There were no cultural facilities in Southampton, nor did it have an attractive shopping centre. The docks were paramount and the traffic in passenger liners and merchant shipping never ceased. Bournemouth was luckily near enough to fill our few luxury and cultural needs. We were obviously in closer touch with Northwood and Sutton and with the Hodgson family. Philip was now a Colonel and held the post of AG7 in the War Office; his job the worldwide postings of RE officers. They lived in a London suburb, might it have been Wimbledon? I recall accompanying Dolly one

[80] Officer in charge of Stores

evening to the old and fated Queens Hall where Toscanini conducted, amongst other things, Debussy's la Mer which filled me with never-to-be forgotten excitement.

Sometime during this period Peg's father, Dan Smith, died. Gran Smith spent a few weeks with us and in Harborne before making up her mind to settle in Moseley, a Birmingham suburb, close to where she spent her youth finishing with a university degree.

A final item of interest relates to my first meeting with 'Pongo' Wheeler[81] who joined the OS in Southampton from a survey project in West Africa (Gold Coast?), just about a week before I was due to quit in November 1935.

[81] Pongo Wheeler: retired to Brent Knoll, Somerset, where he lived with his wife Nancy in Woodbine Farm, across the road from HEMN. A chronic smoker, he died of emphysema in the 1970s - I remember him taking off his oxygen mask to smoke cigarettes shortly before he died. A bit of a train buff like myself.

RETURN TO INDIA AND WW2

1936/1939 INDIA

When my OS service was about to close, I set on a return to India. An Aldershot CRE friend, whose name escapes me, warned me that India was too remote from public notice for anyone with ambition, but I elected to follow enthusiasm.

Furniture was removed to storage in Southampton, and for a few weeks embarkation leave we went to Moseley where Gran had nobly offered to undertake charge of Jane and Nanny while Peg accompanied me for a restricted spell overseas.

It must have been February that we landed in Bombay and proceeded at once to Bangalore. Mike Gilpin kindly housed us while we collected our hired furniture, kitchen equipment, staff, etc. for residence in 4 Spencer Rd, with the Parkers and Boltons in nearby bungalows. We were about 1/4 mile NW of the old Sapper Lines. I emphasize 'old' because we found all Assaye Lines abandoned, apart from what could be transformed into married quarters. The old 'Monkey House' – the customary nickname for the Corps HQ building – was now the British W.O.'s and N.C.O.'s Mess[82]. (They were almost entirely engaged in workshop trades training.) The new Monkey House, company lines and parade grounds, were about a mile further east, beyond Ulsoor Tank and the old field troop lines, in a corner of what had always been our field-works training area known as Meeanee Lines. It involved earlier rising for morning parades, and more transport, cycles and cars (now in general use). We had bought and shipped a 16HP 6-cylinder Austin, which we collected a few weeks later in Madras. Our staff included Sandy, who had served James Pirie for eleven years, and who was to stay with me for the next seven. There was a tendency amongst the British to despise Indian Christians. Admittedly religious distinctions were ignored in the Madras Sappers, and at large felt less intensively than in northern areas, but no bearer could excel Sandy (his Tamil name was a long one and never used) for honesty, reliability, and a genuine interest in his employers, despite, or because of, his Christian background.

One of my early assignments was to proceed to Trivandrum, the capital of Travancore (now part of Kerala) to reconnoitre and recommend a safe area for the Maharajah to construct a rifle range on which to train his private army. This involved us in a unique tour of southern India.

I forget how long it took us. There was no direct route, so we chose to go south via Salem, Trichinopoly (famed for cheroots), Madura, and Tinivelly to Cape Comorin. The Western Ghats stop short some 15 to 20 miles north of this 'Lands End', and what a tame feature it is compared with ours - a flat beach with a flat background a few feet above sea level. We no more than paddled there. Thence it was a mere 50 miles up the West Coast through a continuous forest of coconut palms and an unbroken line of native dwellings. Trivandrum, a walled city, contains Hindu temples and images in customary style, and it was the terminus for a system of canals: in fact so many rivers draining the Western Ghats, cross-able only on ferries, and the so-called lakes, separated from the coast only by narrow embankments, rendered Travancore almost as aquatic as Venice!

[82] Warrant Officers and Non-Commissioned Officers

Several young men were attached to me as guides and assistants. There was no evidence of drug addiction, but before midday they were invariably drowsy and quite useless. Peg and I spent every afternoon on a secluded beach to the south where one could relax in calm sea-water for endless hours unchilled. It took about a week to choose a suitable site amongst the universal tapioca fields (the staple grain of the district) and to produce a field sketch with my ideas for firing points and target zones, after which we returned northwards as far as Cochin, our final sea bathe, and then turned inland to arrive back via the Nilgiri Hills and Mysore. We were not sorry to be free of dak bungalows for a while.

Minor exeats took us several times to relax on Nandidroog (a rocky eminence 1800 ft above the wide 3,000 ft Deccan Plateau; at the southern end is a precipice where Typoo Sultan of Mysore delighted to fling his prisoners of war to their deaths), three weeks with my Coy training them in pontoon bridging at Nanjangood on the Cauvery River south of Mysore, a months holiday at Somerdale, a tea-planters house, 6miles from Ootacamund off the Mysore Road standing at about 6,000 ft; log fires every evening. The Forbes[83] were simultaneously at Wellington or Kotagiri on the far side of 'Ooti' and we met several times. And there was a day in October when we joined forces with the Forbes to watch the Maharajah of Mysore's birthday processions from, by daylight, and back with torches to, his palace. We spent Christmas at Hampton's Hotel, run by an ex-RIASC officer whom I knew, in Coonoor, also in the Nilgiris, and a weekend visiting the Jeakes' in Madras, Maurice having elected to retire so as to become secretary of the Race Course. Towards the end of our Bangalore sojourn, 'Uncle' Ray the Corps quartermaster, came to inspect our bungalow and poked his stick through one of the ceiling timbers declaring it unfit for habitation due to termite infestation. We were moved to No.1 Knoxpet Rd, hardby the Ulsoor dhobi-ghat, where clothes were daily bashed on flat stone slabs to wash them. It was luxuriously capacious and much closer to the Meeanee Lines complex.

[83] Sir John and Lady (Agnes) Forbes: John was HEMN's best school friend at Wellington. He later to become DVN's godfather. Retired to Allargue House in Scotland where he became head of the Forbes clan in the region - leading the Lonach marchers every summer. At the time of their marriage, the Forbes were penniless; Agnes on the other hand came from a wealthy branch of the Farquharson family and with her came the Allargue estates - a happy combination of wealth and title!

All the above sounds like, and indeed was, fun. But there was also a serious side. I took over the command of No.12 Fld Coy due for Waziristan in March '37.[84] My predecessor, who shall be nameless, was par-excellence administrator rather than a trainer of troops. For instance, I inherited a card-index which he had compiled for desk use listing detailed particulars of very man in the company. Men constantly came and went. They worked for and acquired promotions in trade and rank, all necessitating index alterations. It may have been quicker to refer to the index than having to call for a man's sheet roll where the same information had to be recorded, because when anyone was transferred his sheet roll accompanied him. This index did not survive long with me as I strove to concentrate on training and efficiency. Actually I was not satisfied with 12 Coy's performance until 1938, and our early reputation in Waziristan was rather murky. I must refer you to the R.E. Journal of June 1984, the off-prints from which I distributed for an account of the two years to 1939.

Turning now to family matters, Peg in March'37 accompanied the 12 Coy troop train north as far as Mari Indus where she boarded a night train to Rawalpindi. She reported by letter that the train stopped in the middle of nowhere; the engine driver and guard requested her (the only first class passenger) to verify that the signal was red and that she should accompany the driver in his cab to the next signal box in order to verify his report. India was a land for strange occurrences. From 'Pindi she travelled by hired car to Srinagar where she came to share a houseboat on the Dal Lake with a Molly? whom we had known in Bangalore. The plan was that I should join her on leave before she returned to the UK to resume charge of Jane, but as recorded in the R.E. Journal article, we stagnated in Bannu on account of the build up for operating against the Faqir of Ipi and his incipient rebellion. British wives not already resident in Bannu were forbidden entrance, but Peg defied the authorities and appeared surreptitiously, and we stayed together for a short while with Jug Stuart, my erstwhile best man, now Garrison Engineer, and his newly wedded Flossie(?) ex-Hartnell, being the sister of the famous fashion designer with Royal connections. She in fact acted as his agent amongst the high and mighty in the Raj. It was a short stay. Very few wives remained in the threatened community. In any case I succumbed to sand-fly fever (sand-flies are tiny enough to penetrate a mosquito net), not repetitious like malaria, but painful to head and eyes and leaving one with a weakened physique. In fact all military leave was blocked until the following October when I was granted ten days to be spent in luxury and lassitude as never hitherto experienced in Kashmir. We parted after a night spent in 'Pindi with Brigadier and Mrs. Davison, he then C.E. Northern Command, the parents of Armyne Fabian Ware. (They eventually retired to live in Aboyne on Deeside where we visited them from Allargue [85] .)

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[84] H.E.M. Newman's field experiences in 1937 with 12th Company are recorded on pages 663 to 666 of "Indian Sappers and Miners" by Lieut.-Colonel E.W.C. Sandes D.S.O., M.C., R.E. *(Ret.)* published by The Institution of Royal Engineers, Chatham, 1948 as per Appendix A to these memoirs.

These same experiences are also recorded in much greater detail in an article written by H.E.M, Newman and published in The Royal Engineers Journal Vol 98 No 2 Year 1984, per Appendix B to these memoirs.

[85] Home of Sir John and Lady (Agnes) Forbes, mentioned earlier

Peg sailed for home as quickly as possible and set out to find a suitable home to relieve Gran from the care of Jane and Nanny. (Surprisingly I have as yet omitted to record that Gran's family called, and referred to her as Mousedear. Could that been one of Phyl's infantile aberrations?) Her first letter to me indicated that Southampton was involved, to which I recall an immediate cautionary 'For heaven's sake, war is threatening and Southampton will be high on the list of ports for bombing'. The outcome was to rent a bungalow, Tinamara, in Harmans Cross in Dorset midway between Corfe Castle and Swanage.

It was here that I visited the family on 3 months privilege leave in the summer of 1938, and for my curtailed furlough due in early 1939. 1938 marked my initiation to air travel. I flew from Marseilles in an old-fashioned 'prop' monoplane, the cabin slung below the wings. We landed at Lyons and Paris, where I changed planes for Croydon, where Peg met me driving a second-hand Hillman Minx. The sole episode within recall relates to a meeting with the local District Council just after my arrival where I sat dumb while Peg argued for a reduction in the rates, comparing hers with her neighbour's. She declared my presence gave her confidence in spite of my inability to contribute. To add a week or so in my home, I spent some of my frontier-acquired wealth on a KLM flight back to Karachi. This involved an evening flight from Croydon to Amsterdam with free overnight hotel accommodation, followed by an early morning start from there to Amsterdam with free overnight hotel accommodation, followed by an early morning start from there to Athens, stopping at Frankfurt and Budapest en-route. The plane was a Douglas DC2: a row of seats either side of the fuselage sufficiently spaced to permit backs to fall horizontally and leg rests likewise to rise. No cabin staff; no inboard service: refreshments only as required from the cafe-restaurants at the stopovers. We arrived at Athens with light to spare for a taxi to the Acropolis which, since tourists came only by ship or rail, was unencumbered with crowds, enabled us to examine it all by ourselves. A shudder woke me to find the ceiling lights swinging in our luxury hotel. It was my first earth tremor. A similar one occurred in Razmak shortly afterwards. The approach roads and streets are now much improved from their pot-holed state in 1938. Next day we over-flew Crete to Alexandria, thereafter landing at Tel Aviv, and Baghdad. Thence following the Tigris the pilot circled around Ctesiphon to let us view the archeological wonder from all sides. Incidentally our pilot's maximum flight altitude enabled us throughout to enjoy a view of the landscape, traffic, etc. The night was spent not very luxuriously in Basrah. On the last day we stopped in South Persia (might it have been Jask?) before reaching Karachi in the late morning, encountering a rare phenomenon in that arid district, a heavy rainstorm with sheets of water flying right over the nose of the aircraft as we touched down. Tarmac or concrete runways were then unknown. The airfields were just plain grass or dry sand or gravel according to local geological conditions. I reached Bannu at the weekend and spent it with the Pettmans, Walter having relieved 'Jug' Stuart. Penny had been born and I attended her baptism.

The journey in 1939 from Bombay was a replica of 1938 except that I was met at Orly(?) airport by Peg and Gran and the Hillman Minx. We spent several days in Paris, my first encounter with that city. Our hotel was close to the Arc de Triomph and Champs Elysée. We walked in the Bois de Boulogne, groped around the Louvre, and watched a performance of Giselle at the Opera House. (I cannot imagine Adams's commonplace score whipping any ballet company into sparkling enthusiasm.) From Paris we drove via Versailles and Chartres into Brittany as far as Dinard and St Malo. Returning via the less attractive Normandy coast to Boulogne. Other tours included our first

visit to Allargue via Greta Bridge in Yorkshire, over the Pennines and through the Lake District. Less extensively we visited Cheddar Gorge, Wells and Glastonbury, and another reached the far west coast of Cornwall. At our leisure we explored the Isle of Purbeck (so-called) and westwards to Dorchester and Portland Point. I played squash with Walter Pettman, happening to be on leave in Swanage, and visited my old prep-school who had removed themselves there during WW1 when the Northwood building had been commandeered. Penny Pettman (now Baker) tells me she was parked for a while with Peg and Nanny, but when or why, or for how long, is a mystery.

WW2 Part I: India & Burma 1939 - 1943

Late in August 1939, a War Office letter instructed me to report by a certain date (28th - 30th or so) to Western Command HQ in Chester with a view to embarking back to India, and thus shortening my furlough by a couple of months at least.

We drove north by car and I duly reported to be told to report back daily at 10.0am, until a firm timetable could be revealed. Chester hotels seemed fully booked so we resorted to greater peace and quiet in Wrexham, a short drive to the west. After two or three days, orders for entraining were issued and it was at the station that Peg and I parted for indefinite years. Our destination was undisclosed. Eventually we detrained at the quayside in Paisley and were ferried without delay to the troopship anchored off-shore, there to remain incarcerated until our arrival in Bombay. It was not until several days after hearing the PM's broadcast to the nation that war was declared that we weighed anchor for the anti-submarine zigzag course though the Atlantic. Some relaxation of nightly blackout was permitted after Suez, but the Bombay quayside was a welcome sight.

Surprise, surprise! There was Sandy to meet me with a trunkful of uniforms which he had selected from my stored luggage (no anxiety about entrusting him with the keys before my departure), and orders with appropriate travel warrants to proceed direct to Mandalay to take command of 13 Fld Coy. This entailed a train to Calcutta, a British-India ferry boat to Rangoon, and another train to Mandalay. I found 'Kitch Saergert, the OC categorized as unfit for service having contracted TB. Kitch of all people! On his first arrival in Bombay the press praised his heroism for rescuing an Indian girl from street thuggery. Court proceedings had delayed his expected arrival at Corps HQ. Thereafter he was a tower of strength on the polo field and in all he undertook. The poor chap left with his wife for Canada, his original home, where he was shortly to die.

I was to spend six months or so living in the Burma S&M Mess. The Madras S&M had hitherto served in Mandalay, 15 Coy its permanent representation there with personnel interchanged from D1 Coy in Bangalore. To find 13 Coy there was to me a surprise. The Burma S&M had been instituted as part of the newly ordained Burmese Army to take over from Indian Army units. Previously the BMP (Burma Military Police) had been the sole armed organisation for patrolling the Burma/Chinese frontier. Rowan Stack with two or three subalterns in support assembled and were training the new unit from scratch. 13 Coy had helped with drill, field works, and trades, and was due to hand over equipment and quit when the program was completed.

Mandalay beside the broad Irrawaddy was hot and stifling. Luckily the local monsoon was about to cool it down. The sapper lines were just north of the vast walled and moated fort with a lamasary of yellow robed monks between it and Mandalay Hill from which emanated every evening the clamour of multi-pitched gongs. News of the 'phony' war was minimal and locally ignored. My CRE at Army HQ was stationed at Maymyo in the Shan Hills to the east and I used an ancient open Ford car to visit him from time to time. Westland and Joan Wright also lived there with their three daughters, and I spent several weekends with them. He represented the Indian Survey Department, based on Dehra Dun, to keep the Burmese maps up to date. I also enjoyed ten days leave that I was granted for a trip in an Irrawaddy paddle steamer north as far as Bhamo. We anchored regularly overnight, stopping by day at many 'ports' to interchange passengers and goods, sticking on a sandbank and helping to drag off other steamers similarly stuck. Much

countryside was flat with the exception of two narrow cliff-flanked gorges. I spent all day at Bhamo interested in its largely Chinese population, and a bus ride around the neighbourhood. Returning I had to land at Katha on the west bank and complete the journey by train.

Come March 1940 and hand-over completed, I shepherded 13 Coy back to Bangalore by ferry from Rangoon to Madras. To be greeted by the Commandant on arrival with the baneful words: 'You are too old now for Coy command and you must turn your mind to more senior jobs. 'Poor Boy' Whitman, my 13 Coy successor, took them to Singapore where they were captured by the Japanese and remained prisoners of war till 1946.

Dick Richards and Marcia had been in Bangalore with their family, but in 1938 their eldest son took ill and died. Marcia thereupon left India for good, and Gran had sailed out to console and keep house for him. They lived in a large bungalow with an extensive compound at No 3 Brunton Road, and I was invited to share the accommodation. Located just off Trinity Road about midway between Meeanee Lines and Nilsandra Barracks, it was very convenient for my posting as second in command of the training battalion under Jack Steedman.

It was around now and the result of the British Expeditionary Force's evacuation of Belgium, that in view of a possible German invasion that the Isle of Purbeck was declared a restricted or prohibited zone. It was then Peg, and Phil from the bomb target of Birmingham, joined forces and evacuated themselves to Central Wales, renting a one time school building(?) in Llangurig. The accommodation was far from ideal, one large hall opening directly to the public highway, but somehow they all became happily occupied.

In due course I was transferred to the Monkey House as Superintend of Park, i/c Workshops and Trades Training, involving not only the peacetime establishment but setting up a new one at Jalahalli to the west where a hutted encampment and been planned to cope with the huge planned increase in service units required for the war.

It was at this time that I first became acquainted with Geo' and Patricia Richards[86] with their then diminutive twins. Also it was about now that officers in depot employment were ordered to hand in their revolvers, prismatic compasses and binoculars, because there were insufficient otherwise to equip those newly commissioned from the many training establishments up and down the land. Nor must I ever forget Monseigneur Vanpeen (spelling?) of St Mary's R.C. Cathedral, who every Monday evening gathered several of us, including John Forbes, to listen to gramophone records (78's). Cesar Franck and he came from the same region on the French-Belgian coast, and I heard much of his music there for the first time.

[86] Patricia Richards later became HEMN's third wife

In December 1941 fate set me upon a futile mission: advisedly 'fate' because I cannot imagine such decrepit human intelligence. Just after Christmas John Forbes and I set off by the narrow gauge West Coast train for Poonah. I forget his purpose; mine was to form a group to be known as 5 L of C[87] of which I was to be CRE. I was provided with a war-commissioned Captain to be adjutant, an ex-warrant officer subaltern for quartermaster, a clerk or two, and about four civilians straight from the Public Works Dept, donning officer's uniform without so much as a day's military training to serve as garrison engineers. There were several motor vehicles including a truck for some tools, and a caravan. Once assembled we entrained for Calcutta quayside where we boarded a small ship, too small to include our transport said to be following in our tracks. We disembarked at Rangoon and were next day ordered to entrain for Kyaito (ky in Roman-Burmese always pronounced like our ch), there to report to the commander of the brigade then trying to stem the Japanese northerly advance from Thailand. We were to offer help in preparing defenses. De-training after dark we slept on the platform, and at first light, I reported our presence to Brigade HQ for orders, to be met by the astonished commander:- "We're fighting. There's no one to spare for any working parties." Meanwhile an angry staff-captain had seen our white mosquito nets and told us never again to use them unless they were stained khaki, because their prominence invited Jap planes to drop bombs. Orders then came to report back to Rangoon, which we did, spending two nights there under what might be termed desultory night bombing, until the perplexed Army HQ shuffled us off to Taungyi where there was skeleton Brigade HQ under a Brig. Becher, recently KOYLI. His purpose was to help the Chinese 6th Army due to come west from Kengtung to reinforce their 5th Army now trying to stem the Japanese advancing up the Irrawaddy. Becher suggested that two of my GES might be sent west and the others east to ensure clear highways, and he and I reconnoitred the road east. A little later he and his Brigade Major went east to meet the Chinese only to find them completely self-contained and spurning ideas of help.

The early fall of Rangoon rendered the coming of our MT an impossibility. Luckily a local police superintendent was able to supply us with substitutes discarded by Europeans who had fled by air to India. He also replaced my revolver from a hoard of illegal pistols and some ammunition to boot.

How could we be usefully employed? Army HQ in Maymyo suggested finding and preparing emergency landing grounds for the RAF. Splendid, but the Jap advance had caused all RAF air-fields to close and basing all aircraft on Assam. Then came Jap bombing raids. The local inhabitants all fled into the jungle so that no civilian labour was forthcoming. A string of bombs straddled the school building that was housing us: no direct hit, but holes through the brick wall and broken windows displayed our personal good luck in escaping. Eventually circumstance led to our being ordered north entailing dispatch riders to my GE's since we had no radio equipment. We expected to retire via the Mandalay bridge, but, alas, Rowan Stack with his Burma S&M, soon to be disbanded, believing Mandalay evacuation to be complete had demolished several spans with explosives. We just had to turn east to Lashio, thence north with a swing west eventually to Bhamo and Myitkyina. It was a slow progress because Becher insisted on our staying put at each of our many halts until forced to move by Jap proximity, just in case a miracle might have halted them. By now my GE's who had hurried ahead were beyond my reach.

[87] L of C - Lines of Communication

Myitkyina lies on the west bank of the river and we were lucky to find the ferry still operating .We had to abandon our vehicles on the east bank and all equipment bar what we stood up in. We fired revolver shots into the car engines to render them unserviceable. Two things to emphasize:- no maps were available, and the Indian army retired to Assam by road well to the south. We were told at first to make north to Sumprabum before turning west, and I with my skeleton staff set out accordingly only to be stopped next morning by a dispatch rider instructing us to return to Brigade HQ in order to begin our exit from Mogaung about two days march down-river. We had been lucky. A civilian party who took the Sumprabum route encountered far worse conditions than we did.

Brig Becher called his staff to a conference in Mogaung warning us of the toughness ahead, suggesting that individual effort might be best because some could march more quickly than others, and that if injury or disease were to stop us we should lie up in a neighbouring village where we'd find the inhabitants sympathetic and helpful. I never heard of that advice was ever put to the test. Since he was unable to carry any further the cash reserves from his brigade safe in Taungyi he distributed it amongst us to alleviate any distress in our parties should they arrive penniless in Assam. This was quite unauthorized but preferable to leaving it as a perquisite for the enemy. The MO then distributed generous quantities of quinine tablets (3 to be taken daily) and chlorine for water-bottle replenishments. Five of us stayed together throughout: my adjutant, QM, a clerk and someone from another unit.

We just had to follow in the footsteps of the Indian refugees and others escaping homewards, and were recommended to make use of the caches of rice that had been established at intervals for all escapers. To begin with, the land was flat and the road straight; stray Jap planes flew by, sending us sprawling still and face down if possible under a shrub. This menace was short-lived. One day a convoy of trucks carrying Chinese troops (5^{th} Army I suspect) overtook us and we thumbed a lift. They were not friendly and next morning drove on before daylight. The villages were all deserted and we slept in the empty houses which were constructed entirely of bamboo, foliage in the roof, stout posts supporting them, and walls and elevated floors some 5' or 6' above ground, could be described as close split-bamboo hurdling. With mattresses sleeping on them might have been comfortable. We reached a point where rice cashes ceased and we became dependent on our haversack reserves which, of course were limited. So far we had been lucky in that one of our party had the foresight to bring two waterproof bags, one containing salt and the other match boxes which we each evening used to light a brushwood fire to boil rice in our individual mess-tins.

We came to a river, possibly a tributary of the Chindwin. There was a small assemblage on the bank under the control of a political officer, and two native boats with paddles still ferrying people across. We were told to board one straightaway as essential for rejoining our units, but my conscience has never quite ceased pricking at our assent. Thereafter the forest began, the narrow rocky path constantly changing direction and slope. From here onwards there came the stench of a corpse every few hundred yards, so it seemed, and nightly came the high-pitched yelp of jackals. We slept in the open under trees after the billy-can of rice, and when the monsoon rains began we did our best to build brushwood shelters against tree trunks, the frequent valley rivulets kept our water-bottles filled.

Hereabouts a rumour reached me that the eldest of my GE's had tried to steal a march by cadging a lift to India in an RAF plane from Myitkyina airfield only to be killed by a shot from a raiding Jap

fighter. I sought but never found firsthand confirmation, so I reported him missing when I reached Assam. For years requests came to report him killed, but I lacked so much as a crumb of firm evidence.

Our rice reserves ran out. We did pass one or two dumps of tinned goods assembled from RAF drops, and the man in charge issued one can each to passers-by, but by now only fruit or veg' were available: no protein.

Eventually a wide river in full spate, presumably the Chindwin, confronted us. Four Gurkhas trying to cross were reported to have drowned, so we spent four or five nights in a nearby village awaiting fordability. When it was deemed safe, the five of us, as did other parties, felled a stout bamboo and stripped it clean with a view to clinging to it in single file, so that if one stepped into a hole or otherwise endangered himself, the rest of us might stand firm in his support. We were very lucky because at this juncture there arrived a convoy of elephants probably being evacuated by the Bombay – Burma Timber Company. Anyhow they volunteered to carry our equipment across to be collected on the far bank. All went according to plan. The forest track now became even steeper and the hills higher, but mercifully the Assam Tea Planters Association had organised rest camps at day's-march intervals with bamboo platforms on which to sleep under almost rainproof shelters, and providing food to boot. Had it not been for them I suspect that I for one might have died of starvation. The final stretches were comparatively easy-going as we happened upon the partially excavated highway which eventually served for the counter-invasion of Burma.

We had often bathed our feet and splashed our heads in crossing streams. It was however only when we eventually reached Ledo after the 5 or 6 weeks of struggle that we were stripped for medical inspection. What a shock; I was a mere skeleton apart from a few leg muscles. Having reported our arrival here it was surprising to be told months later that AHQ had not been informed of my return. We were quickly deported by train through Margarita to Dibrughar on the banks of the Brahmaputra River. Having been rendered semi-deaf by my quinine pills I stopped taking them.

On my first morning in Dibrughar I was in a store shopping to replace some essential items left behind, when the Bishop of Assam (name now in oblivion!) who was based in this town spotted my woebegone condition and immediately offered me accommodation and care. How more Christian could one be? A row of bedrooms ran along one side of his compound and I was to occupy one of them. I attended his matutinal eucharist in his private chapel several times, and then inevitably malaria poured out. Quinine suppresses the virus in the spleen. It does not kill it and they take every opportunity to infest the entire system causing high fever and shivering muscles - even holding a cup of tea becomes impossible. When this occurred the bishop summoned the M.O.; regrettably no effective malarial medicine e.g. mepacrin, was then available in India. He thereupon prevailed on a brigadier billetted on him to summon a medical board, and their verdict was Category C, unfit for service, and authority for a travelling warrant back to Bangalore. Thus ended my 'illustrious' active service in WW2.

The journey involved the train to Army HQ in Goulaghat, a berth in a hospital ship down river to the west bank railhead (name forgotten), a stopover in Calcutta, followed by train to Bangalore, changing in Madras - quite an ordeal for a weakened man.

Gran[88] again put me up. Dick having left, she was renting a smaller bungalow - No 8 Brunton Road. (Poor Dick was moved around from job to job, but never to active service owing to the apoplexy he had contracted from a fall at polo. This disappeared later but whether from medical or natural causes, I do not know. I remained there shivering at three-day intervals. A spell of relaxation in Ratantata House, the Officers' Convalescent Home in Ooti, proved ineffectual. Jack Steedman, who had succeeded P.A. Tucker as Commandant (Tommy Tucker was soon reported killed in an air-crash on the Burmese frontier), had the good sense to post me to be the CO of No 3 Training Battalion in Jalahalli, where, although periodically out of action, I boosted my morale being occupied in training recruits and passing them on to Rowan Stack, who in the same location was busy forming the numerous new service units. (See the RE Journal extract from the December 1951 issue.

By now petrol was unobtainable. I had sold my old Hillman Minx before embarking for Burma in '42, but even the fairy-light Italian 2-stroke assisted bicycle bought on my return became useless. Whisky was rationed to one bottle per month; gin was unobtainable. Local beer never appealed. Luckily my Subedar-major put me in touch with his own supplier, which he guaranteed to be a completely safe producer of arrack, the native spirit, which I rendered palatable with homemade bitters using cardamoms supplied by my ex-planter co-battalion commander George Brooke.

Sometime in July '43, after Maurice Jeakes, recalled to the service, had replaced Jack Steedman as commandant, an Indian Army Order offered passages home to all British Service officers who had served over seven years in India. I accepted immediately.

I finally left my old Corps with very mixed feelings in late August, and poor Sandy was nearly in tears as we parted on the quayside in Bombay. The troopship, full when it arrived, sailed out comparatively empty which helped to make the voyage zigzagging across the Indian Ocean an enjoyable one .We certainly penetrated latitudes south of the Cape of Good Hope before switching north through the Mozambique Channel to Durban. We stayed in the rest camp there for a week under orders to remain within its precincts until 10am each day in case orders for departure should have arrived. Otherwise we came and went ad lib. We explored the town and several beaches to the south and roamed around the neighbouring sugar plantations. The eventual move was by train to Cape Town involving two nights and a day, enabling us to see some thing of the Veldt, and the dry stony Karoo before descending into a lush green valley full of vineyards. We spent another week in a rest camp before our final embarkation. The white South Africans we met were one and all charming people only too pleased to drive us around, provide meals and the entree to their exclusive clubs. Also recordable is the fact that my last shivering fit occurred on the Cape Town quayside preparatory to boarding. I had to sit on my suit case terrified lest I be rejected as sick person. Many months were to pass before the anaemic after-effects of malaria subsided.

[88] Gran Smith, Peg's mother

WW2 Part 2 - Europe

The voyage from Cape Town contrasted badly with the previous one: overcrowding in all classes, dual sittings at all meals. My cabin, formerly big enough for four, as I suspect, was crammed with ten Lt. Colonels sleeping in twin-tiered bunks.

The voyage was divided into four stages interrupted by anchoring for a week each at what we took to be (no information was ever vouchsafed as to our locations or movements) the Congo estuary, Freetown, and Gibraltar, while fresh convoys and escorts were assembled. From Gibraltar we were surprised one evening to find ourselves steaming east, and then next morning to be zigzagging vaguely west into the Atlantic. At last, alcohol exhausted and the bread weevily, we landed after six weeks from Cape Town at Glasgow docks. Anaemic depression had long deterred me from venturing on deck after dark lest I became inspired to leap the railings.

We entrained for Harrogate to obtain travel warrants to our respective homes. Just when Peg & co departed from Llangurig, I cannot recall, but my ticket was to Sutton Bingham, the nearest railway station to Halstock, a village south of Yeovil and just over the county border. Peg was renting a bungalow there called Cloverfield. Nearby was a farm owned by the Holloway family, Molly and Peg becoming close friends, indeed eventually Daphne's godmother. Petrol rationing restricted movement and I cannot remember any excitements. Molly was the local rep. for the Ministry of Agriculture touring farmsteads to check hygiene in connection with dairy products, and we accompanied her sometimes. German bombers were still active, and one night an explosion woke us. Evidently a bomber returning to the French coast had decided to offload his surplus bombs which fell some half-mile or so away without actually damaging anything.

About ten days after my arrival, I was summoned to the War Office to discuss future employment. Out of touch as I was with the then modern technology, I agreed on Survey and was posted to be AD (Assistant Director) of Survey at SW Army HQ in Salisbury. The HQ office was in Wilton House with the equivalent USA HQ to the north. But my office was in Salisbury town, a small detached building at the junction of Castle St. and the Wilton Rd. At least once a week I attended conferences at Wilton, and I was in technical charge of a Fld Svy Coy RE at Teffont Magna, their training and printing section busy producing maps for the coming invasion of Europe. Occasionally my boss, Harold Bazeley, at Home Forces HQ in Hounslow summoned me to confer. After some months my equivalent in SE Command in Reigate was posted overseas and I had to supervise his office as well as mine. While there, I remember the pop-pop-popping of V1 flying bombs passing overhead from France by day and night, but none fell nearby. Eventually I was touring much of the south and west looking for suitable premises to become map stores in towns selected by the planners for the issuing of maps to the Normandy invasion forces.

I was billeted in luxury at Bishop Down House, Bishop Down being a ridge at the NE edge of Salisbury. The owners, Dr and Mrs. Thornton, were kind people. Having spent several weekends in Halstock, the Thorntons invited Peg to stay. Dr Thornton, an ex-mayor, held a senior post in Salisbury Hospital, and having learnt about Jane's condition and that Peg was again expectant, arranged for her to be fully tested, and furthermore for a nursing home near his house where he could himself supervise the event and ensure as far as possible that no harm should accompany Daphne's delivery.

I experienced a vivid dream one night and reported it to Dr Thornton at breakfast. I was driving a car down a light incline in a street of shops when I lost control. It swung onto the pavement and finished square across the road. That morning I was due in Hounslow at a conference and was being driven by a young ATS in an army touring car. It was frosty. Shortly after the A30 from Salisbury joined the A33 from Winchester, grass verges and open fields, down a gentle northerly slope; black ice; car out of control; spins around finishing on the near-side verge. The steering was awry, so no Hounslow. Was it coincidence or premonition?

For my early education after this posting I had to visit the Army Survey Training Centre in Wales near Llangollen, of which 'Pongo' Wheeler was in charge. Lunching in the town I met 'Nan' for the first time.

In January 1945 I was ordered to join the Army Group HQ Brussels as AD Svy. General Montgomery lived away towards the front in his caravan, available only to his chiefs of staff. His appearances at our HQ were rare. Our offices, messes, and bedrooms were concentrated in one huge building. Health demanded an effort of will to get out and about into the city, which appeared undamaged. Throughout my year's service with this HQ, here and as we advanced in Muchen Gladbach, and later in Bad Oynhausen, we were allocated to our messes by rank. In ordinary regimental messes the ranks are mixed, making for a family feeling of comradeship, and under good leadership, mutual loyalty in all circumstances. Conversation in rank-segregated messes seemed restricted to speculating on who might get what job; in fact individual competitiveness. I was reminded of being sent to Madras in 1928 for three weeks to enable a staff captain at District HQ to enjoy three weeks leave. Here the ranks were mixed but the chaps remained individualistic rather than part of a team, and my reaction was to request the commandant on my return not to nominate me for the Staff College.

The job was office-binding in the first instance involving two nights without sleep. I had nothing to do with the Fld Svy Coys who were largely occupied in providing gunners with rectangular coordinates of their gun positions, reference points and distant targets. Map stocks and their distribution were among my responsibilities. Two of us did manage to spend an afternoon at the site of the battle of Waterloo and I recall two nights at the Opera House: otherwise it was sheer slog. After the Rhine crossing we moved to Munchen Gladbach to be installed in an 'ex-loonybin' (appropriate?), and eventually to Bad Oynhausen, which, earmarked for our HQ in advance, had been left intact by the RAF. The wrecked towns we passed through made melancholy viewing.

It was post-armistice that I became properly active. We scattered to investigate German HQ's and other military establishments. Stores containing maps relating to the invasion of Britain were ransacked and the contents consigned to the War Office. In particular we sought for the equipment they had devised to correct air photographs for mapping purposes. They too were sent home. I worked thus in Hamburg, Brunswick, etc. I spent a few nights in Frankfurt in a US army mess to consult with our senior survey representative at what had been the Allies combined HQ. My most interesting assignment involved a flight to Copenhagen to be present at a planning conference for connecting the Danish and Norwegian triangulation systems by simultaneous observations with theodolites on a lamp-bearing balloon launched from Denmark with an appropriate wind on a clear night for observation when roughly midway across the Skagerak. Pre-war each continental country was individually triangulated, but stopped short at frontiers. Now

the American and British Svy Coys were engaged on triangulating from and to fixations on both sides of every frontier to ensure that in any future conflict, gunners would be able to bombard distant targets with confidence across them.

The Danes welcomed our presence after years of German occupation, and I accompanied a small escorted party to explore Hamlet's Palace at Elsinore.

The owner of the Halstock bungalow decided to resume residence there, and Peg, having to move, decided on a furnished house at Rockford to the east and not far from the Ringwood-Fordingbridge road. Adjoining it was the ford that the hamlet's name implies, and the two yews grew in front of the house. It was an attractive house, but we became disenchanted with its thatched roof. Wife netting enclosed it but birds snatched straws for nesting and left debris scattered over all the beds below. The top of the rising ground to the east marked the boundary of the New Forest. I spent two short leaves there from Germany: the first by plane from Minden to Northolt, but later this facility was reserved for brigadiers and above, and the rest of us were restricted to train and ferry services.

Major General Geoffrey Cheetham[89], now the Director-General of the Ordnance Survey, paid a visit to Bad Oynhausen in early 1946 and asked me if would care to rejoin the OS. I did not demur and was transferred there in March. The Southampton complex had been bombed to smithereens in 1940. They eventually re-established themselves in Chessington (between Surbiton and Leatherhead) in Surrey, save for a small contingent engaged in small scale work in Southampton's western suburb of Crabwood. The Cheetham's housed me for about a fortnight. I was too busy to spend time house-hunting, so I transferred to a boarding house in Kingston, and Peg arrived and searched and decided on Highfields End in Ashtead, to be shared with Gran on her return from India. It was a large place and we were glad of her contributions to the rent.

My job at the OS was to be in charge of the Publication Department involving the publicising of available maps and plans, visiting agents, including a trip to Edinburgh to evolve a peace treaty with the rival firm of Bartholomew, which enabled me to see the Lumsdens, and supervising the maintenance of map stocks. The only drastic advance in equipment that I detected since 1935 related to the computers. Seven figure logarithms were out and manual machines involving the rotation of cylinders had been substituted. It could be reckoned a mid-way step to the big computer that I saw when invited to see the new premises in Southampton, employed not only in survey computation, but for administration; pay and allowances, bills, estimates, and stores.

[89] His effervescent wife Connie, became my god-mother – a wonderfully charming (and crazy) lady.

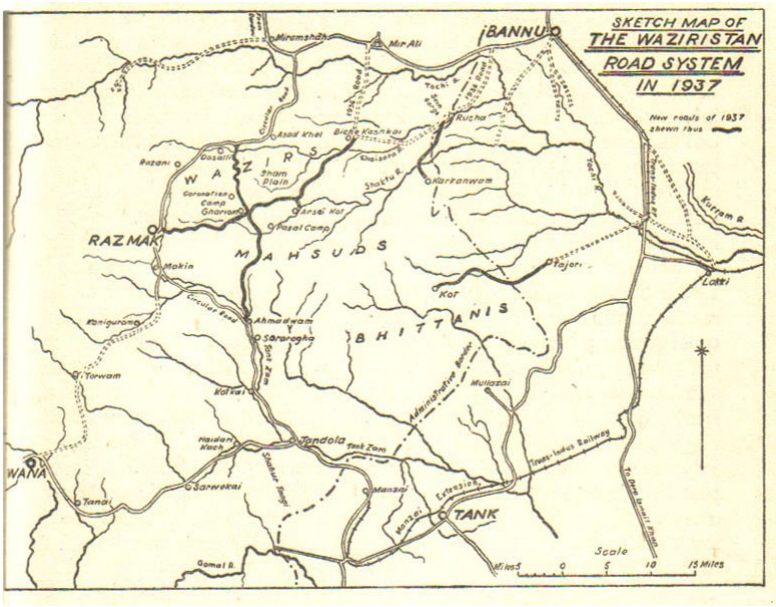
Obiter Dicta

- One day in the 1920's two Newmans shared a railway compartment from Rawalpindi. And discovered that we were first cousins once removed, his grandfather being my great grandfather. His name was Charles[90] and he was looking forward to his retirement from a Rajput regiment when he and his Australian wife proposed to go horse-breeding Down-Under. What stuck in my mind was his dictum that we Newmans should avoid the army because we were too individualistic. I myself believe that only the Sappers could have suited me, offering as they did such a variety of interests from which to choose. I fancy that changed circumstances will have diminished them
- Photographs have provided a number of ingredients and it is amazing how thick soup becomes when stirring the pot. I had intended far less detail when I planned this series, and I can only apologize for my self-indulgence and prolixity.

[90] This must have been Charles Newman, son of Arthur Newman and grandson of Edwin Newman.

Appendix A: Extract from "Indian Sappers and Miners"

By Lieut.-Colonel E.W.C. Sandes D.S.O., M.C., R.E. *(Ret.)*
published by The Institution of Royal Engineers, Chatham, 1948, pages 662 to 666



The military and engineering operations in 1936 were but the prelude to further adventures in Northern Waziristan. The Faqir of Ipi intensified his propaganda against the Government, and in spite of political pressure and some bombing by our aeroplanes, the tribes under his influence continued to raid administered territory. The only remedy was to resume operations on a larger scale. To this end, the Bannu, Razmak and Wana Brigades were organized as a Division, known as " Wazdiv," although the Wana Brigade remained isolated since road communication with Wana had been interrupted. Wazdiv and the 1st Indian Division, which concentrated at Mir Ali at the end of April 1937, were then formed into a single command called "Wazirforce". The Faqir of Ipi was in the Lower Khaisora region; but as the hot weather approached he moved southwestwards, and establishing his headquarters in some caves at Arsal Kot on the Shaktu *nullah* south of the Khaisora, continued to harangue his followers, distribute money and supplies, and send forth his emissaries to preach the gospel of hate.

The operations undertaken in the summer of 1937 took place in the area enclosed roughly by the old Circular Road, a rugged country in which water could be obtained only from the Tochi, Khaisora, Shaktu and Tank Zam streams and from a few springs. Fortunately, the services of no less than 6 Field Companies and a D.H.Q. Company of Sappers and Miners were immediately available. The 15th Company, Madras S. & M. (Captain E. H. T. Gayer, R.E.), which was due to return to Bangalore from Razmak, was detained in Waziristan, and with the 12th Company (Captain H. E. M. Newman, R.E.), which had arrived in relief, was flung at once into the battle. The 4th Company (Captain R. C. P. James, R.E.) and the 43rd D.H.Q. Company (Captain J. H. Blundell, R.E.), both of the Bengal S. & M., came from Rawalpindi with the 1st Division. The 2nd

Company, Bengal S. & M. (Captain G. C. Clark, R.E.), was sent from Wana to join them, and in May the 3rd Company (Major W. F. Hasted, R.E.) and the 5th Company (Captain W. L. D. Veitch, R.E.) arrived from Roorkee. This imposing display of engineering talent was increased in July by the advent of the 14th Company, Madras S. & M. (Captain Ll. Wansbrough-Jones, R.E.), and the 19th Company, Bombay S. & M. (Captain A. R. S. Lucas, R.E.), from Wana, and in August by the addition of 4 Road Construction Battalions specially raised for the occasion. The Sapper units were called upon to perform most varied tasks. They repaired bridges and culverts, built blockhouses, supplied camps with water, and even erected ice factories to provide ice for armoured cars and tanks. Operating with columns on the march, they demolished towers, made tracks, and built piquet posts covered with wire screens as a protection against bombs. All this in addition to never-ending road making, the supervision of working parties, and the building of two large defensible posts for garrisons of the Waziristan Scouts. Their labours found a counterpart in those of the Military Engineer Services, and together the two branches catered successfully for the needs of Wazirforce.[91]

On May Loth, 1937, the Bannu and Razmak[92] Brigades of "Wazdiv" were concentrated at Dosalli near the Circular Road between Razani and Asad Khel, and after a night march of 6 miles southwards over a precipitous range, the Bannu Brigade established itself on May 12th in Coronation Camp on the stony Sham Plain. Successive bounds forward over easier country brought the troops to Ghariom and Pasal Camps, whence issued the column which, on May 28th, wrecked the Faqir of Ipi's lair at Arsal Kot. The Faqir and his followers had decamped some days earlier, leaving behind them little but masses of literature and legions of fleas; but the 3rd and 12th Companies had the satisfaction of blowing in the Faqir's caves and completing the destruction already wrought in the village by the Royal Air Force. The 3rd Company was detailed to demolish the Faqir's personal cave and others to the south, while the 12th Company destroyed the few remaining buildings of Arsal Kot and some caves to the north. Accompanied by Lieutenant A. F. M. Jack, R.E. (Field Engineer), Major W. F. Hasted, R.E. (O.C. 3rd Company), approached the mouth of the Faqir's cave. Smoke was pouring from it, so they threw in a bomb and waited for the smoke to clear. Then, with revolvers cocked and torches held well away from their bodies, they dashed through the

Waziristan tribal village demolition – 1937. from H.E.M. Newman's

[91] More Roads (Waziristan, 1937)," by Maj. A. E. Armstrong, M.C., R.E., appearing in *The R.E. Journal,* Vol. LIII, 1939. Pp. 1-16.

[92] Pencilled note by H.E.M. Newman: "RAZCOL was beseiged in Razmak till June so could not have been in Dosalli."

entrance only to discover that the Faqir had fled. The 3rd Company placed 400 lbs. of guncotton in the largest of the four chambers composing the cave and smaller amounts in the other three, and the subsequent detonation of about 1,000 lbs. of explosive completely obliterated the place. Lieutenant R.C. Orgill, R.E., of the 3rd Company, blew in another cave with 400 lbs. of gunpowder, while the 12th Company demolished three more caves and flattened the remains of Arsal Kot.

The destruction of his headquarters lowered the Faqir's prestige and ended the first phase of the operations. The firebrand of Ipi was temporarily a fugitive. The second phase, that of roadmaking, lasted without intermission until October 15th, 1937. There were occasional clashes with hostile gangs, but no organized resistance was encountered. On June 1st, the 1st Division relieved the Bannu and Razmak Brigades in the Sham Plain and the two brigades concentrated in the Razmak area.[93] Meanwhile, the Circular Road, which had been damaged between Dosalli and Razmak, had been re-opened by the combined efforts of the Sappers and Miners and the Military Engineer Services. The third and final phase of the operations took the form of an invasion of the Bhittani country further south by the 1st Division and more roadmaking by the Sappers and Miners and civilian labour in one of the most fantastically rugged regions on the North-West Frontier. This, briefly, was the general trend of events after the downfall of the notorious Faqir.

From an engineering point of view, the second phase, that from the end of May to the middle of October, 1937, may be regarded as the most interesting, for it involved the greater part of the construction of 115 miles of motor road at a cost of £232,500. The scheme was to open up the country by a north-and-south road from Dosalli to Ahmadwam, near Sorarogha, and an east-and-west road from Razmak to Biche Kashkai on the Khaisora looproad built in 1936. These highways would cross at Ghariom. Work was started from Dosalli by the 1st Division on June 7th, and from Ahnladwam by contract labour three weeks later, and on July 10th the 12th Company Madras S. & M., turned the first stone on the Razmak-Ghariom section undertaken by "Wazdiv." The 4th Company, Bengal S. & M., and the 14th Company, Madras S. & M., also worked on this section. On November 20th, the Army Commander was able to motor from Ahmadwam through Ghariom to Razmak and "Wazdiv's" immediate task was finished. Meanwhile, the eastern branch from Ghariom to Biche Kashkai, some 21 miles in length, was receiving attention. The 3rd Company and a Road Construction Battalion started work from Ghariom on August 14th, and a fortnight later, work was begun further ahead by contract labour. All the new roads in Northern Waziristan were run, so far as possible, along watersheds instead of up valleys, a procedure which, apart from tactical advantages, reduced cross-water drainage. Water was pumped to the camps along the Ghariom-Biche Kashkai section by a 4-in. Victaulic pipe-line, 12,000 yards in length.[94] This section was completed by November 17th, when the main" Sapper" part of the operations ended. Roadmaking, nevertheless, continued in Waziristan, and in some of these projects a few Sappers were concerned. A 20-mile stretch of motor road from Tajori in administered territory to Kot in the Bhittani country was completed by December 2nd, 1937, a short length was built to Arsal Kot, and a branch from the Khaisora loop-road of 1936 was laid by a Road Construction Battalion from Rucha to Karkanwam. Early in November, some of the Sappers and Miners were

[93] Pencilled note by H.E.M. Newman: "Razcol was never in the Sham area."

[94] Annual Records, K.G.V.'s O. Bengal S. & M., 1937-38, p.28.

detailed to assist in the construction of two semi-permanent posts for the Waziristan Scouts, one at Ghariom and the other at Biche Kashkai. They supplied the skilled labour, and the Road Construction Battalions and infantry furnished the working parties. Each post was designed for 12 platoons of Scouts and held a 3-days' reserve of supplies for a brigade. Each had 1,200 yards of perimeter wall, 6 ft. high, with two belts of barbed wire outside. Within were water-tanks to hold a total of 48,000 gallons, and also barracks and other buildings for the garrison.[95] No risk could be taken of a shortage of water, for water-supply had proved to be the chief problem throughout the campaign.

The situation in the Wana area was becoming tense even before the operations against the Faqir of Ipi were started in the Sham Plain, and since the end of February, 1937, it had been necessary to run convoys from Manzai under escort by armoured cars because the road could not be piqueted adequately. Early in April, a number of Wazirs from the north were seen watching a motor convoy on its way through the 3-miles' length of the Shahur Tangi. Suspicions were aroused, and they were soon shown to be fully justified for a convoy was ambushed in the *tangi* on April 9th and seven British officers lost their lives. Among these was Lieutenant E. C. L. Hinde, R.E., who was on his way to rejoin the 19th Company, Bombay S. & M., at Wana. It appears that as the head of the convoy reached a point well inside the narrowest part of the deep gorge it was met by a long string of camels led by unarmed men. The first three lorries got past the camels. Then, on a pre-arranged signal, the cameldrivers drove their camels into the middle of the road, leapt behind some rocks to retrieve their hidden rifles, and opened fire at point-blank range, concentrating on the British officers, lorry-drivers and machine-gun crews. Those who survived, including a leave party of Sappers from the 19th Company, took up positions behind rocks, and with the assistance of an armoured car, defended themselves until help arrived at dusk.[96] The ambush was remarkable because the Shahur Tangi had a bad name with the Mahsuds, if not with the Wazirs. Until 1921 it had never seen a like incident, for the Mahsuds believed that any fighting in it would mark the end of their independence and they were furious with the Wazirs for entering it in 1937 to lay an ambush.

After the Shahur Tangi incident, all roads into Razmak were closed until the end of May, and the only mode of travel was by aeroplane. The Razmak pipe-line was destroyed for a considerable length, and the garrison had to rely on water from a tube-well outside the perimeter.[97] The incident, coupled with the transfer of the Waziristan Scouts to the north, resulted also in a gradual cessation of all supplies to Wana and consequently a stoppage of all work on the New Wana Project on which the 9th and 14th Companies, Madras S. & M. (Captains L. A. B. Patters and Ll. Wansbrough-Jones, R.E.), and the 6th and 8th A.T. Companies, Bengal S. & M. (Captains G. D. Mc. K. Sutherland and Hon. R. L. Napier, R.E.), were engaged. The 14th Company moved to Razmak in July, and the units left in Wana turned their attention to building piquet posts,

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[95] A plan of the Biche Kashkai Post is given in "Field Engineering (India)," appearing in *The R.E. Journal,* Vol. LIII, 1939, pp. 542-546.

[96] Obituary Notice of Lieut. E. C. L. Hinde, RE., appearing in *The R.E. Journal Supplement*, June, 1937, p. 189.

[97] Annual Records, *Q.V.O. Madras S. & M.*, 1937-38, pp. 42, 43.

strengthening defences and supplying detachments to accompany small columns. There was little fighting and not much excitement until, in October, a visit by the Commander-in-Chief entailed the re-opening of the road to Razmak, for part of which the Wana Brigade was responsible. The 8th A.T. Company then went out to build *sangars* to guard the road, and the Commander-in-Chief was escorted safely into Wana. During his visit he decided that the camp and its garrison should be expanded still more and that greater attention should be paid to protecting the buildings from sniping than giving them southerly aspects. As the Garrison Engineer was on leave, this decision threw the burden of much re-designing on the Sapper and Miner officers; but they did their best to meet the emergency, and when materials began to arrive once more from Manzai, the Wana Project took a new lease of life. No serious interruptions followed, although for a time there were occasional skirmishes with small *lashkars*. Then peace returned to Waziristan, and the garrisons of Wana and Razmak resumed their normal life.

Appendix B – Royal Engineer Journal Article by H.E.M. Newman

The Royal Engineer Journal

Vol 98

Number 2

Year 1984

Waziristan 1937 to 1939

12 FIELD COMPANY QVO MADRAS SAPPERS AND MINERS

LIEUT COLONEL H E M NEWMAN

The Author was commissioned in 1919 and joined 3 YO Course at the SME. In mid 1922 he was posted to 54 Fd Coy then part of 3 Div. Between 1924-29 he served in India with the Madras S&M, spending 2 Years in Waziristan with 9 Fd Coy. 192935 saw him back in UK with CRE Welsh Area and Ord Svy based on both Edinburgh and Southampton. He returned to India in 1936 first to the Madras S&M and Waziristan again before joining a skeleton Bde staff as CRE in Burma posed with the task of assisting the Sixth Chinese Army to move from Yunan via Kengtung through Taungyi where he was based. He escaped from this area on foot by the refugee route to Assam. He contracted malaria and was medically boarded back to Bangalore. Between 1944 and 1949, when he retired from the Active List. he was successively AD Svy Southern Command, AD Svy 21 Army Gp BAOR and AD Publications Ord Svy. A self styled Madrasoplile he hated the 5-year rule which prevented continuous service with the Sappers and Miners.

THERE was a gap spanning about a decade before World War II in the Historical Records of the QVO Madras S&M due to preoccupation during that War with the unprecedented expansion. The account which follows derives from the compilation which I was asked to prepare to help fill it. Luckily my wife had kept my correspondence covering this period, because without it I should have been helpless. Also luckily many details were supplied by the late Lieut. Colonel J B (Birdie) Sutherland DSO, OBE and by Colonel A M (Arthur) Field OBE, MC, particularly for the three months of 1938 when I was on privilege leave in the UK.

To assist the reader I list a glossary of words which may be unfamiliar to younger readers. Their first use in the text is in italic.

algad: a dry or nearly dry watercourse

badmash: enemy

band: wall

baniah: see footnote 2

bhisti: water carrier

bhusa: chopped straw

kajawahs: two per camel, not unlike stretchers

karez: artificial channel watering terraced fields

khad: scree

khassadars: locals paid by the Political Agent (PA) to keep order in their area

lashkar: a tribal gathering bent on aggression

malik: Head man

manza: a plateau

nallah: any valley, deep or shallow

narai: a mountain pass

paggri: turban

pakhal: felt covered rectangular metal tank to hang from a pack saddle containing six or seven gallons

tangi: where a watercourse narrows to a gorge

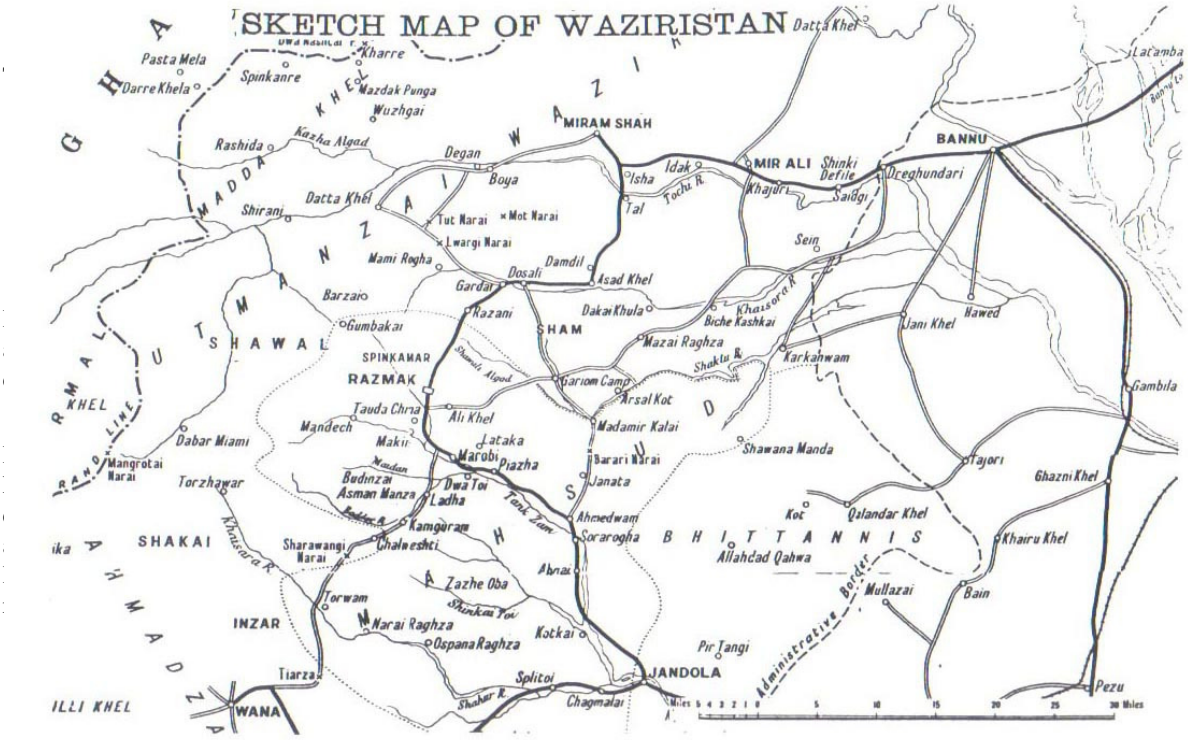

Photo 1. Michael Biddulph. Author, James O'Ferrall in Dosali Camp shortly before the night advance on May 9/10 to Coronation Camp

It had so happened that in the autumn of 1936 the parents of a Hindu girl had brought an action against a local Muslim for abducting their daughter, both parties thereby exacerbating the ever-latent communal discord. The case dragged on and became a grist to the dissident mill of the Faqir of Ipi (Ipi being a village near Mir Ali). He seized the opportunity to rouse the Daur Wazirs and other Wazir hotheads, and threatened to march on Bannu to prevent the return of the girl after the tribal elders had at last agreed to surrender her.

Bannu's small cantonment was bounded by its perimeter barbed wire fence. Its principal occupants were the Bannu Brigade, which, on operations, was referred to as the Tōchi Column (or Tōcol) named from the nearby Tōchi River. Included in it were quarters for wives and families, but none of these might proceed any further westward.

12 Coy was quartered in the Bannu Rest Camp while units of 1 Division (1 Div) passed through to Mir Ali, whence in a few weeks they were to advance into the Khaisora area to the south to engage Ipi's *lashkar*. Unfortunately, as so often happened, the enemy slipped away retreating to the remote village of Arsal Kot in the Shaktu valley. These operations, and the generally dangerous conditions, drastically reduced the convoys between Bannu and Razmak, and soon damage to the road was to stop them altogether.

We in 12 Coy, stranded and impatient to move, began partial mobilization. The peace establishment and pay-and-mess-book accounts were not affected, but equipment ledgers were closed, rations and fodder were issued on the active service day-to-day principle and eventually, after much importunity, the mules and equipment which had been handed over to 15 Coy's advance party back in Bangalore were restored. Locally, and elsewhere with sections detached, we were occupied on trivial minor works and on reconnaissances under escort for forward planning. Eventually, when the repairs to the abutments to a bridge in the Shinki *Tangi* had barely begun, orders came on 2 May to move next day to Saidgi en route for Dosali. There on 5 May we joined Tocol under the command of Brigadier Maynard. Tōcol with 1 Div and the Razmak Brigade (Razcol) together formed a single Wazirforce, and we were about to play our part in a bold and unusual frontier operation.

Dosali camp (Photo 1) lay some fifteen to twenty miles short of Razmak on the Waziristan circular road. It was close to a fortress-like permanent post on the northern bank of the Khaisora River which was manned by a detachment of the Tōchi Scouts. The Scouts were lightly armed militia, led by infantry officers seconded for the purpose, and they recruited Pathān tribesmen from alien regions to obviate blood feuds, and worked under the control of the Political Service to maintain law and order.

Armed reconnaissance, false rumours, and in fact all possible ruses had been used to persuade the enemy that our destination was Razmak, and even the units taking part were only told the true objective at about 1830hrs on 11 May. It was no less than an advance that very night on to the Sham Plain six miles south as the crow flies, but ten or eleven by the route to be taken. This was not by the Dosali *Algad* skirting the village of that name, but climbing up and along the knife-edged Iblanke Ridge which rises some 900ft above the river bed. To have been caught up here by any tribesmen from the adjacent parallel ridges to either side could have been disastrous, and by now particularly dangerous since the Faqir was reported to have assembled a large retinue by dispensing magic charms against wounds and death and by promises of loot to volunteers from beyond the Afghan frontier.

Tōcol set out in strict silence at 2100hrs leaving units of 1 Div in Dosali Camp to maintain it and later to develop the L of C (Lines of Communication). Tōchi Scouts led the way and soon we were wading the river and the climb began. The narrow ridge enforced a single file formation so that most of us spent more time at the halt than moving, but everyone kept closed up to prevent losing direction in the pitch darkness. The inevitable noise and confusion became terrifying. Boots clattered on rocks. Dislodged boulders tumbled down the *khad*. Pack mules lost their foothold and fell headlong scattering their loads, and their drivers followed as best they might to retrieve them. Not a few animals had to be destroyed. As dawn broke the column was still strung out along the ridge and rifle fire broke out ahead, soon to be followed by the crump of 4.5 howitzer shells from the mountain gunners; but the enemy had been deceived and the comparatively light resistance was quickly overcome. Nevertheless we

did not reach our destination till around 1300hrs by when the camp piquets had been established on the hills around. It was named Coronation Camp because on this day, 12 May, King George VI was crowned.

Our necessary supplies were dropped by parachute, but the water situation nearly spelled disaster. We were told to establish the brigade water point in an adjoining *nallah* running from east to west and we were forbidden to move beyond the right turn north where the *nallah* extended beyond piquet protection. However and wherever we scratched the flow was insufficient. At last someone broke bounds and water in greater abundance was discovered beyond the bend, but by the time the brigade major was so informed and the piquet line extended it was dark before the last *pakhal* was filled, and the last mule watered.

The algad track was fit for light tanks and animal transport by the 17th and on that day three battalions of 1 Div and 3 Fd Coy (Bengal Sappers) under Brevet Major Hasted, arrived in camp. MT could not make it for another week. These reinforcements were to hold Coronation Camp while Tōcol, with 3 Coy and 12 Coy, (less one section to maintain the camp water supply), advanced to Gariōm on the 18th, five miles to the south, encountering resistance all the way.

Gariōm lay at the far end of the plain at the confluence of the Shām Algad and a sizable tributary from the west. On 20 May a storm broke cascading hail stones up to 3/4in in diameter. Several sepoys caught in the open without their *paggris* fell stunned, and a thousand maddened animals ripping their tethers from the ground stampeded over and through the perimeter. Hail turned to heavy rain with thunder, and when this stopped devastation reigned. The algads were hurtling torrents full of debris a hundred yards, instead of a yard or two, wide. Tent holes were awash covering bedding, equipment and arms. Cooking pots, saddlery and ration bags lay under hailstones inches deep. The surrounding hills were alive with mules and horses. Luckily for us the freak storm had cowed the enemy during Tōcol's embarrassment. The animals returned to camp for their evening fodder and during the next day order was restored.

At 0100hrs on the 28th the column, less a maintenance party for Gariōm, made for Pasal Camp just short of the Shaktu River and one and a half miles from Arsal Kōt, encountering opposition only after daybreak. Next morning it was on to Arsal Kōt itself to find it evacuated. Rumours of vast caves able to hold 250 men and horses proved false; only four or five small caves were found, heavily infested with fleas, and none more than twenty feet deep, so that a mere fraction of the explosives carried were used to destroy them. 3 Coy dealt with the southerly caves including the one supposed to have been Ipi's, while we destroyed those to the north, and also flattened everything in the village left standing after the RAF bombings.

After having restored communications with Razmak, 1 Div relieved Tōcol on the Shām Plain on 1 Jun, and we, with Tōcol, marched South peacefully, apart from a little sniping one night, to join the Takki, or Tānk. Zām near *Sorarōgha* on 7 Jun. Ipi had tried to embroil the Mahsuds whose country this was, but he had lost face and the local māliks sensing possible contracts to build roads, kept a tight hold on their hotheads.

On 11 Jun Tōcol reached Tauda China, one day's march from Razmak, whence two 60pdr guns arrived by escorted MT to meet us. Next morning these were trained on Makin. After a couple of hours the Mahsud inhabitants, thus threatened, yielded up a notable *badmāsh* upon whose extradition the PA (Political Agent) had insisted. At long last 12 Coy reached its destination, by the back door so to speak.

Razmak derived its name from being situated between Razāni (Wazirs) and Makin (Mahsuds) and had been established in 1923 to keep the peace between these warring tribes. It was a permanent perimeter encampment 6,800 feet above sea level on a 1 in 50 sloping plain, the mountains lying reasonably well back. The barrack blocks built of local stone contained the Brigade HO; six infantry battalions (one of them British), leaving two to hold the camp when four were operating; a Mountain Artillery Regiment HO with two batteries of 4.5in howitzers; and amongst numerous ancillary services, a Military Dairy Farm where buffaloes were fed on *bhusa*, some imported green fodder and concentrates. Amenities included hockey and

basketball pitches, squash rackets, a bazaar, a cinema showing Indian and British films alternately, communal facilities for various Christian denominations, and buildings within unit lines for gurdwaras (Sikhs), mosques (Muslims) and temples (Hindus) to suit the interchanging units who served in the District for two years.

During the rest of June, while 15 Coy was employed in Razāni, 12 Coy worked in Razmak about the camp, and, restricted to short periods on "road-open" days, in repairing a short concrete slab bridge towards Razmak *Narai* which had been destroyed by the enemy.

On 10 July we were deployed for work on the new roads, being joined at the end of the month by 15 Coy (Captain E H T 'Lawney' Gayer) and by 14 Coy (Captain Ll. Wansborough Jones) from Wāna. There were to be two new roads, one roughly east by north from Razmak to Biche Kashkai (south of Mir Ali to which a road already existed), and the second south from Dosali to Ahmedwām (north of Sorarōgha). The two roads crossed at Gariōm where a new permanent Scouts' post was also planned. In this manner the previously remote Shaktu Valley was to be made easily accessible. The roads would be unmetalled, fit for MT, and wheresoever possible would run along watersheds (even up and over the Iblanke Ridge) to be tactically safer than in valleys and to reduce the need for cross drainage. The CRE Wazirforce (Lieut. Colonel Cyril Martin VC) and his Field Engineers decreed the general alignment, leaving the Sapper companies to peg it out in detail, to supervise infantry working parties where the going was clay or gravel, and themselves to work on the rocky sections. The Madras companies worked from Razmak. The other roads were all dealt with either by the units of 1 Div, or by local Pathān contractors.

For many weeks Razcol and Tōcol, each with a detached section from 12 Coy, alternated in garrisoning Asman *Manza* which overlooked the Mahsuds' principal town and arsenal Kāniguram. The camp was practically unsnipable, and the threat enabled the PA to maintain the good behaviour of the influential māliks.

From mid-August to the beginning of December a fervent Madras Sapper, Major G R (Mike) Gilpin, supervised the three Madras companies as local CRE.

On 8 Sep at 0915hrs 12 Coy was ordered to stop work and make for camp, and in two hours time, armed with enough explosives to demolish twelve watch-towers, was on the march to Tauda China. Next day we proceeded to Asman Manza with Tōcol, leaving Razcol with 14 Coy at Ladha. The objective was to punish Sher Ali, a local chieftain, who had been burning *khassadar* posts. Accordingly, on the 12th, Tōcol advanced west up the Baddar Valley on light scale, i.e. without tents and with two days' supplies. Sher Ali had fled, but the māliks, swearing loyalty on the Korān, led us to seven scattered shacks, no towers, which they declared to be the total of his properties thereabouts. The PA acceded to this improbable yarn and ordered them to be destroyed. They were so ramshackle that. razing them manually, some timbers fell unexpectedly and inflicted on us our only casualties for that year. One Sapper suffered a broken leg and Jemadar Ayyana a sprained back. They accompanied us back to Asman Manza on the 14th in camel *kajāwahs* thence to Razmak hospital by motor ambulance. Razcol arrived on the 17th to garrison the camp to enable Tōcol, again on light scale, to march next day to Torwām, a village on the Khaisāra (c.f. Khaisora) River towards Wāna. It was a peaceful operation with just one tower, one dwelling house and two shacks for destruction. We returned to Asman Manza on the 20th.

Having left a section with Razcol in Asman Manza we set out with Tōcol back on the 24th staging at Ladha for one night. Ladha to Razmak is 15 miles and Tōcol, without piqueting help from Razmak, was stretched for troops, so that we were ordered to man the three or four camp piquets before dawn till the final withdrawal of the rearguard. The Sappers were delighted with their unusual role, but we lacked the infantry's automatic weapons, signals equipment. and recognition screens, their training and practice. I kept my fingers crossed.

Birdie Sutherland joined us in October as planned and we said goodbye to James O'Farrell who left us in November. We worked then mostly from Ali Khēl, a sniper-prone camp beyond the Engamāl Narai. When khassadars were one night suspected of having contributed to the

sniping, their next issues of ammunition included tracer and with this they incriminated themselves.

Eventually the C-in-C was driven ceremoniously over all the new roads on 29 Nov, and next month peacetime procedures were resumed.

In spite of rumours of enemy groups and movements, 1938 opened quietly. Conditions in 1937 having precluded any individual training, the opportunity was seized to organise crash courses in education, and in military subjects to qualify NCO's and some promising Sappers for promotion; also, moreover, workshop courses for some 5th rate tradesmen to improve their rates of pay, and to the sending of higher rated men to Bangalore workshops for the same purpose. An apathetic trend amongst all ranks was transformed into one of enthusiasm which persisted throughout all our subsequent activities.

Arthur Field had been detached with a section of 3 Bde in Mir Ali since December 1937 spending much of the winter on camp improvements. He reported one day in early April that they were being kept in constant readiness to deal with mines. The menace began relatively harmlessly with spent cartridges charged with explosives and a detonator, became more serious when cylinders about 3in x 1in were introduced, and still more so when old cigarette tins included a charge of pebbles and nails to simulate shrapnel. Many were buried just below ground surface in the berms of roads on which infantry in single file were wont to move in operations. When scattered on or near rough tracks they were hard to detect. Often dung was scattered over loose earth for camouflage. During the months this phase lasted a few Sappers always preceded the vanguard on operations to seek out and destroy the mines. On one occasion Michael Biddulph fell victim and was hors de combat for two months. On another Birdie Sutherland was constrained to shoot a mule which had lost a hoof. Arthur was also called upon to booby-trap the stay wires of some telephone poles in Shinki Tangi using guncotten slabs in order to prevent Ipi's men from interfering with the Bannu-Razmak communications.

It was late May, when I was on three months privilege leave ex-India, that 12 Coy resumed operations, and these were in general less protracted and often perhaps more perilous than the 1937 series. In the first an enemy lashkar had assembled near Lwargi Narai, two days march from Razmak and midway between Razāni and Datta Khēl. Razcol joined 3 Bde from Damdil at Razāni on 31 May under Wazstrike (Waziristān District Tactical HQ) which was by then stationed usually in Razmak. On 2 Jun they advanced NW against strong opposition to Māmi Rōgha preceded by Birdie, now acting OC, with an escort of light tanks to reconnoitre the water supply. On the 5th, 12 Coy repaired some damaged bridges and retaining walls forward from Māmi Rōgha while the column advanced to Lwargi only to find that the reservoir there, which had taken a month to fill, had already been destroyed. 3 Bde with Arthur's section pushed forward from Lwargi to enable the mechanised column to relieve Datta Khēl which had been under siege by a lashkar armed with light "field guns". The force returned to Māmi Rōgha whence 3 Bde with Arthur's section were again sent forward to Lwargi to replace the khassadar's post there, which had proved ineffective, by a temporary post for a garrison of Tōchi Scouts. This consisted of an eight foot high perimeter wall surrounded by sandbags and it took a week to build with the reluctant help of infantry and gunner working parties. Tōchi Scouts occupied it on 14 Jun and all that night Māmi Rōgha was heavily sniped and several small calibre shells landed in the camp but failed to explode.

Next day the channel bringing water to the camp was sabotaged in a valley to the north, so that on 16 Jun 3 Bde mounted an operation to mend it and disperse the lashkar responsible. The advance guard with a Sapper reconnaissance party, who cleared rocks from the water channel, met stubborn resistance at once which intensified at Sarkai village two miles away. Beyond it the advance was assisted by the RAF bombing the surrounding hills, and the Sappers were able to reach the point where the channel had been breached, repairing it with sandbags and a stone band the while under constant sniping. 12506 Spr[98] displayed such high spirits and

[98] The VCOs (Viceroy's Commissioned Officers), i.e. Subedars and Jemadars, were addressed by name with the suffix "Sahib". However, owing to the scarcity of Dravidian personal names

devotion to duty under fire, giving inspiration and confidence to his comrades, that he received an immediate award for his conduct. The following day 3 Bde was relieved by Razcol and returned to Razani and Razcol returned to Razmak shortly afterwards.

On 10 Jul Razcol again met 3 Bde at Mami Rogha to mount a second operation under Wazstrike. The objective was Kharre near the Afghān border where Ipi's HQ was reported to be occupying some caves. On 11 Jul the column moved to Dēgan in the Tōchi Valley. Next day Birdie with a Major from Wazstrike reconnoitred in light tanks the road to, and the water supply prospects at, Wuzghai where the force was due on the 13th. The actual measurement of the water flow was performed under sniper fire. During the advance the Sappers cleared mines from the road without casualties, but several undetected mines damaged men and mules of other units. On the final stretch up a nallah, where a track for MT was required, snipers killed one Sapper mule and hit the British NCO's motor cycle. (One British Warrant Officer and one Sergeant accompanied every outstation Coy to supervise workshop training and the company equipment.) At Wuzghai Camp beyond the Tōchi, Birdie was walking to an orders group with the CO of the Green Howards and his Adjutant when the latter was killed by a sniper, and the waterpoint there was constantly under fire. The Sappers were unscathed but there were casualties to men and mules, and one Indian infantry British Officer was killed. On the morrow the column overcame strong opposition to climb the 4,000 feet to the Bazuma Narai, itself 7,000 feet above sea level. The landscape beyond was so formidably steep, broken and heavily wooded that the Kharre objective was abandoned and the exhausted column bedded down where it was without even the possibility of a perimeter defence. Fortunately the enemy was too busy recovering his casualties to interfere with the vulnerable troops. On the return march three towers at Wuzghai were blown. The charge in one of them failed to detonate, whereupon, covered by the Sapper demolition party, the rearguard having halted on the Tōchi side of the village, Birdie returned alone and entered the tower to investigate. All three demolitions had been provided with parallel trains of fuse in case one failed. He found the primer in the first train had detonated without igniting the instantaneous fuse, but that the primer's detonation had severed the time fuse of the second train on the far side of the cellar. He cut and relit this second fuse and just escaped to a ditch as the tower disintegrated. The stony nallah back from Wuzghai again inflicted casualties from mines because the rough terrain made it almost impossible to locate them. The two brigades dispersed back to their original locations on 18 Jul.

On that day Arthur Field handed over to the newly joined subaltern P.A. (Pat) Adams, who was a novice to the frontier. Arthur left for home leave from which he did not return. Birdie was therefore required to accompany the 3 Bde Sapper section for the third of these operations on an expedition to the lower Khaisora with the brigade so as to enable the Scouts to search the village of Zerpasai. It began with a difficult night march and the village was duly surrounded by dawn. The quarry had decamped. The PA chose a tower in another village for demolition.

12 Coy was honoured by the following awards for outstanding conduct during these operations:

Captain Sutherland	DSO	
Lieutenant Field	MC	
Jemadar Kondayya	IOM	(2nd class)
13710 Naik (Corporal)	IDSM	
12506 Sapper	IDSM[1]	

Regrettably I have no copies of the citations. The exploits of the two British Officers and of 12506 Spr have perhaps been sufficiently indicated, and I recall that the two others were decorated for notable courage and efficiency in mine detection.

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any unit might contain a dozen or so (for example) Munisamis. and thus to avoid confusion each other rank was addressed by his regimental number, even by his own comrades.

That August Mr Hore Belisha, Minister for War, introduced a promotion scheme to reduce age for rank. I was promoted among the many Sapper Captains forming a group then known as the "hungry hundred." The group stemmed from the large batches passing through the Shop (the old RMA Woolwich) during the latter part of the First World War; large in order to compensate for the heavy casualties among regular officers, particularly subalterns. Armistice Day suddenly provided us with a normal life expectancy. Promotion was a financial boon, but the jobs available were unaffected, and the prestige of rank was diminished.

Following those operations came yet others perhaps less strenuous. For instance on 9 Sep Razcol on light scale, i.e. without tents, though most officers now took lilos for their bed-holes, set out for Torwām, this time ostensibly to collect two 4.5in howitzers from Wanacol. On the 12th the CRE and I motored forward from Chalwēshti to the khassadar post on the Sharawangi Narai which needed 500 yards of new barbed wire entanglement to be erected next day. All was peaceful. Next morning at 0230hrs the infantry set out to storm the narai before dawn and they succeeded without opposition. We, starting at 0500hrs arrived and began work when rifle fire opened from many directions. We were not under direct fire, but it persisted and the job established itself as the noisiest in our entire two years. At Torwām we met. with Wanacol, a detachment from 9 Fd Coy under Captain Lionel Paton and Lieutenant "Buzz" Lloyd. We shared the water point duties. Despite searching for them no mines were found throughout this expedition.

Then on 29 Sep Razcol, with two of our sections, marched for an unknown destination. We made Datta Khēl by the MT track from Gardai, leaving one section with Michael Biddulph under Scouts' protection on the Lwargi Narai to dismantle their temporary post. Next day we left Datta Khēl for Murki *Karēz* on hard rations, meaning tea and sugar and pre-cooked Shakapura biscuits for Indian troops, and hard "ships biscuits" for the British. Actually there were evening rum rations for all barring Muslims who received extra tea. Murki Karēz, SW of Datta Khēl, had been visited by Razcol in peaceful conditions but they had never camped there. This year it had for some while been a proscribed area over-flown by the RAF with orders to drop bombs on any movement noticed in it. I went forward in a light tank to reconnoitre the water situation and found 9,000 gallons an hour gushing from an underground source. All was quiet. The water point was later installed in record time, only to be pulled back by the Commander (Brigadier H V Lewis) for safety. Shooting started before dismantling was complete, and one *bhisti* received unscathed a bullet through his paggri. Diverted to a channel the water became so gritty that it fouled the pump valves, and access for animals was difficult. The narrow valley was flanked both sides by steep scrub-covered jagged hills making the pinpointing of sniper positions impossible, and the fighting continued till 2230hrs. Next morning three of the four battalions reconnoitred a further 1,000 yards into the nallah stirring up the hornet's next once again, and once more 2230hrs marked the enemy's lights out. We had spent that day mending the karēz to produce an ample clean water supply at the camp site. No less than eleven unexploded RAF bombs, all of 1918 vintage, were detonated within the proscribed area, all still potentially dangerous in the wrong hands. Then on the way home from Lwargi we dealt with several mines. Reaching Razmak on 6 Oct I recollect speculation in the Officers' Club and Messes that night that Ipi's propaganda might well be proclaiming a victory, emphasising that about fifty of his troops (as estimated) had repulsed 4,000 men with 1,500 animals and costing us four men and five animals killed. Had it been worth the effort?

Birdie Sutherland left us for leave three days later. The next column occupied from 9th to 20th December. It was decreed necessary and urgent to overawe the Manzai Mahsuds for failing to control their hotheads. Razcol, with Wanacol, which included 9 Fd Coy under Lionel Paton and Bob Lindsell established a camp about four miles up the nallah leading NW from Kōtkai which is situated at the confluence of this nallah with the Tānk Zām. Wanacol remained there while Razcol on light scale operated forward into the heart of dissident territory expecting strong opposition. It never materialised, and the māliks burned the dissidents' houses, which was to have been our task, under the eyes of the PA. It had been noised abroad that Razcol would return the way it had come, and it transpired that a battle would have ensued had we done so. Instead Razcol proceeded forward to Ladha in peace. That night it rained heavily

until there was an inch or so of water in our foxholes, but it soon turned to snow which fell uninterruptedly until the next evening. Visibility was limited to a few hundred yards, and an enterprising enemy could have wreaked havoc. The hard going was physically exhausting, but for once not a shot was fired on this usually contested last leg to Razmak.

There was no respite for us at the beginning of 1939. In the first week, leaving administrative and workshop details behind, the rest of us marched the two stages to Damdil, coming there under the command of 1 Bde. This project was for building a road to run roughly due east along the Khaisora River and to join the existing network at Biche Kashkai. As the District Commander, Major-General Quinan, having tea in our mess tent, told us: it would be not only a useful short cut in troublous times, but would also dispel the belief held by the tribesmen that roadworks were to stop. Work began on 11 Jan with a large infantry working party down the river bed from where it diverged from the circular road. They returned to Damdil that night, but next day the road was completed to within 1,000 yards from their first camp site at Zerpazai, which they then occupied with one of our sections. The rest of us reverted to Damdil. The road was found to be adequate for 6-wheeled trucks, but owing to the wet state of the nallah bed one 4-wheeler sank to its axles. The last 1,000 yards was finished by noon on the 13th, and we, less one section with the Bde and less our mules and drivers, departed by MT for Mir Ali. Michael Biddulph, aware that two motor ambulances were to accompany the convoy, spotted one such broken down by the roadside, and when it reached Mir Ali he ordered it into the local MT workshop for checking. Work was under way when plaintive calls came from the inside. It was the CO of the 3/17 Dogras sick of a fever and due urgently in hospital. This ambulance had not belonged to our convoy!

On the 15th we moved by MT to Biche Kashkai with armoured cars and a half a battalion for escort, all of whom camped with us alongside the local permanent Scouts' post. The two ambulances were with us, together with three American "Caterpillar Diesel Road Builders", then locally known as "Monsters" (but later universally as bulldozers, with their MES (Military Engineering Services) operators under a Staff Sergeant; also a section under Lieutenant "Buzz" Lloyd from 9 Coy who had some experience with these machines in Wāna whereas we had none. Work on the road began on the 17th westwards along the north bank of the river. The CRE and I, reconnoitring forward, came upon some unexpectedly soft shale and a complex of intricate and deep sided nallahs which the air photographs, taken with the sun shining into them, had not revealed. The south bank proved to be easier, so, next day, with District approval, we began on a fresh alignment, the Sappers clearing obstructions on the raghzas, the Monsters coping with the cut and fill around the nallahs. That evening the 9 Coy details and the machines moved to 1 Bde's new camp at Dakai Khula whither also we went on the 20th. The work was finished two days later, one less than scheduled, and the CRE driving over all the new road at 30mph congratulated all concerned. In fact the time allowed provided for no drainage, so this road was unlikely to survive rough weather. It had been a peaceful episode apart from three long range shots one evening into Biche Kashkai camp, of which one wounded an RIASC mule, and another had smashed the glass of a Petromax lamp in our company *baniah's*[99] tent. This marked the end of road work for us. I was back in Razmak on the 24th coping with mountains of accumulated paper, and I spent the remaining few weeks handing over to the advance party of 10 Fd Coy and supervising our packing. Two sections meanwhile remained detached with brigades down country: splendid training for their subalterns whose exploits are unchronicled.

There were congratulatory letters from the Brigade and District commanders, and at last we made our final bow on the Waziristan stage at Bannu station on 27 Mar, carefree and unaware of the fate that would find 12 Coy, alas without me, mobilised in Egypt after so very few months, and waiting for the imminent catastrophe.

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[99] The Company *baniah* was a civilian merchant who contracted to supply a canteen and the ex-ration messing requirements, e.g. vegetables, to our satisfaction, plus a regular contribution to company funds.