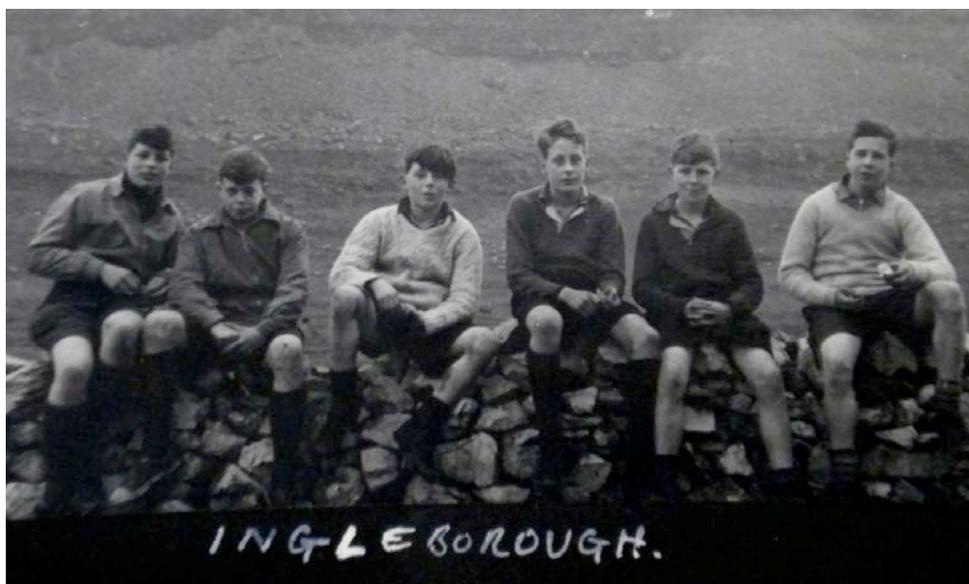


MOUNTAIN ADOLESCENCE



Alan on far right, 1957

Alan Macfarlane

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PART ONE

TWO WORLDS

LAKELAND LIFE

Preface

Lakeland Life is part of a series of books which describe my early life and education. *Indian Infancy* covers the years in India from my birth in December 1941 to my return to England in 1947. *Dorset Days* and *Dragon Days* (with Jamie Bruce Lockhart) covers our life from 1947 to 1954 in Dorset and 1955 at the Dragon School. *Lakeland Life* describes my home life in the Lake District from 1954 to 1960 and is paralleled by *Sedbergh Schooldays*, an account of my time at Sedbergh School in Yorkshire 1955-60. Later volumes will take the story on to Oxford University for six years and beyond.

All of the volumes are principally based on contemporary documents, especially letters written by members of the family. This volume is based on several sets of letters, my mother's to me and to my father (when she was away from him on home leave), my letters to my parents and my sister Fiona's letters to my parents. It is also based on a number of short diaries and accounts I wrote at the time of travels and of my first love affair.

There is hardly any of my own writing in the previous volumes, but from the age of fifteen I started to keep papers carefully and also to write with some kind of eye on the future. I also begin to remember this period of life more sharply, memory becoming much clearer from about the age of fourteen. I have not included many undocumented memories, relying mainly on what was written at the time in the attempt to see those changing years through the eyes of myself and my family in materials of the time.

I have also refrained, at present, from much anthropological or other analysis of what was happening to me, though I may increase this at a later point when this part of the picture can be set within the larger story of my life before and after the Lakes. At present this is a set of field notes taken at the time, describing a small boy of thirteen turning into a young man of eighteen.

I have not always been able to trace those whose letters I quote. Where this is the case I have usually just given the first name and a letter to shield their particular identity. I hope that if they recognize themselves they will get in touch and permit me to reveal their full identity at a future date.

ARRIVING

Moving North

I have told the story of my earlier years in considerable detail in previous books - Indian Infancy, Dorset Days, Dragon Days, so I shall not repeat that account. Here I want to take the story forward from our move up to the Lake District in the autumn of 1954, when I was approaching my 13th birthday through to my leaving to read history at Oxford in autumn 1960. This covers the five years, 1955-60, when I went to Sedbergh, a boarding public school about thirty miles by road from our home in the Lakes. It is a story set in an expansive period in British history, when the authorities of the ten post-war years was giving way to the 'you have never had it so good' era proclaimed by the Prime Minister Harold Macmillan. It was a turning point in popular culture with skiffle, rock and Teddy boys, as well as in higher literature and drama with 'kitchen sink' and the Angry Young Men. And it was a period when I grew by a foot, put on weight and passed through puberty.

I was born in Shillong, Assam on 20 December 1941, where my father had joined the army from the tea plantation where he was working. He remained as a plantation manager throughout the period of this volume, so my parents were away for most of these years. The family had originally returned to England in April 1947, that is my father Donald, my mother Iris, my sister Fiona (born in April 1944) and sister Anne (born in June 1946). After a summer in Oxford and a winter on the Dorset coast we had moved to a rented house near Broadstone in Dorset in January 1948.

There I had gone to kindergarten and my mother and Anne left me and Fiona in October 1948 with my mother's parents, Will and Violet. During the next seven years before going to Sedbergh my parents came on leave two times and I visited Assam for one winter holidays. My main companions during this period were my sister Fiona and my young uncle Robert, born in 1933 and hence only eight years older than me and already at Sedbergh school,

In September 1950 I went to the Dragon, a boarding preparatory school in north Oxford. I was a middling level student at the school. I was anxious and unsmiling for the first half of my time there, but was happy and a successful sportsman by the end. I was noted for my tenacity and reached the stream below scholarship level by the end. I was then accepted for entry at the school where my mother's three brothers had gone.

*

One constant source of financial anxiety was housing. As a retired Lieutenant Colonel in the Indian Army, it might have been thought that my grandparents would not have found it too difficult to buy a house. This might especially be the case since they could share the costs with my parents whose children they were looking after. Renting a house was expensive and non-cumulative. The rent for 'By the Way' at Broadstone, for example, was £16 a month, and this was clearly very cheap, presumably because it was owned by 'Aunt Nell'. In comparison, for the much smaller house in Broadstone the rent had been £30 a month and the house in the lakes was £20 a month.

So quite early on my grandparents made efforts to find a house to purchase, a few details of their search being recorded in my grandfather's diary. They were not above trying to find a Council House and the Diary in February and March notes this. On February 17 'Lambert ... told us about how he got his council house' and the next day

'Looked at Council Houses in Broadstone'. On 10th March 'Went to Poole Borough Offices about getting a house' and on the next day 'Sent application for Council House'. There is no further reference to this attempt, so it clearly failed. The Council may well have thought that with the pressure on these highly subsidised houses for the poor a retired Colonel did not have the strongest case. My life might have been very different if they had succeeded - what I would have said at the Dragon if I had been going home to a Council House I do not know.

In the following year, 1953, there are various clues to the fact that they were searching elsewhere. On 22nd August my grandfather noted 'Meet Richard at Blandford and see houses at Haselbury Bryan'. This was the village where their son Billy's recently married wife's parents lived. Nothing seems to have available and on September 8 he notes 'Went to see cottage near Somerton'. Then on 17 September he notes 'Went in Richard's car to Haythorn cottage Haythorn Common Nr Holton Mrs Goldsmith and liked it Phoned to Fox Agents'. On 21st 'Went with Surveyor of Tweedale and Riley to see Haythorn Cottage' and two days later 'Macaulays take V and Robert to Haythorn Cottage'. It looks as if some sort of purchase almost occurred as on 26th he noted V[iolet] and D'Angibaous [neighbours] sold Haythorn Cottage' but two days later on 28th 'Cry off Haythorn' and the following day they are hunting again, visiting their in-laws at Haselbury again and being met by their daughter-in-law Julia: 'Julia meets us at Yeovil and takes us to houses for sale'.

There is then a strange episode which looks as if they made an attempt to buy a plot of land, perhaps to try to build a house on. The enigmatic diary entries for October are as follows.

7: Burt sees Dr Walkers site

Told Macaulays

8: Sent application for Building advance to Dorset Council

9: Dr Walters offers site to Macaulays for 500/-

13: Wrote to Harker Curtis offering £350 for land

17: Rang up Harker Curtis about plot

19: We have secured Dr Walters plot

21: Went round land with Dr Walters

23: Macaulay sees us about plot

24: Dr Walters rang up re plot

I speak to her and give her Macs letter

26: Saw Whittle re plot

30: Sale of Quillet plot is off

Where this was, who or what Quillet is, what the wider plans were have not yet been revealed.

When my mother returned in the summer of 1954 the search for a permanent place to live became more serious. My grandparents were getting older, Aunt Nell was wanting to sell 'By the Way' and my parents do not seem to have been able to afford the asking price. So there a number of accounts in my mother's letters of abortive efforts to find a house. They illustrate well the strain it put on family relations and the difference in philosophy between my cautious grand-father and over-optimistic and ambitious grandmother. They also show how much of a whim it was to move from

Dorset to the Lake District and how the final shared purchase was fairly accidental as well. They possibly also suggest a very gradual improvement in the general financial situation as the miseries of the early fifties gave way to slowly rising salaries.

On 27th July 1954 my mother wrote *We are vaguely on the look-out for a house and Mummy is always answering advertizements but nothing develops.* Then on 23rd August she wrote *I'm beginning to look around vaguely for houses, not with any definite purpose yet, but I think its time we were thinking of moving on.*

On 30th August my mother wrote in more detail.

Mummy and Daddy went off on a wild goose chase this week-end to look at a house in Herefordshire going for £800, it looked lovely from the from the picture, on the banks of the river Wye with its own fishing and boating, glorious country etc. we had worked out where we would all sleep and the name of the boat we would have but of course they came back without having bought it!

Apparently it was terribly trippery with motor boats roaring past your front door and hotels all round, and then in the winter you are left in isolation as all the hotels close down. Of course there was bound to be a snag at that price and one never knows with M and D as they aren't really keen to buy a house when it comes to the point, I was sorry as we could then have stayed on here for your leave. Still I am a firm believer in something turning up.

The tension between my grandparents is reflected in the next account on 6th September.

Mummy nearly rushed off to Farnham to-day after another house but Daddy was so gloomy about it and the financial ruin they were on the brink of that she gave up the idea. It sounded rather nice but cost the same as this and is a very expensive place stiff with aristocracy and Major Generals. I don't know if we could afford to help towards buying a house, could we if it came to the point, I don't know how much if anything we are going to have of our commission after the Kyahs [merchants] have been at it.

My mother then left for a trip to Scotland to see my father's brother Alan and his wife Jean, leaving the house in Dorset in confusion and anger. She wrote from Scotland on the 11th.

I was glad to get away from "By the Way" really as Mummy was in such a rage that Daddy wouldn't let her look at a house somewhere that she put all her chickens up for sale, cancelled all her papers, stopped her racing and made Daddy stop his pools and generally made us all feel uncomfortable and the atmosphere tense. It is really hopeless as Daddy won't look at anything but the cheapest houses and of course there are snags. Mummy goes for expensive places which Daddy won't hear of. I think myself it would be best for them to stay put until Robert is "finished" and their expenses less, but Mummy must have her own way or everyone knows about it. So I think I shall be staying at Ambleside unless its awful. How I hate being homeless and dependent on other people.

Things were clearly coming to a head, so as she came back south from Scotland she stopped off in the Lake District. From Borwick Lodge, Outgate Near Ambleside, very close to where we finally bought a house, she wrote on 21st September to my father.

This cottage is delightful and I've fallen completely in love with the Lake District, so if they will reduce the rent I shall definitely come back here. The purple hills and green fields and fat sheep and rushing streams are so beautiful and peaceful, and there is fishing and riding and skating in the winter - the only snag is that this place is a mile from the bus stop and in the winter might be cut off if there was heavy snow - but I think we could risk that. It depends how much they're prepared to meet me over rent. I'm looking around for somewhere else more permanent as it would be ideal if I could persuade Mummy to come up here.

Five days later she wrote again announcing that she had rented a house, Beck House on the outskirts of Windermere.

I've had a busy week and have ended by taking a house - darling don't have a fit. I know its rash and expensive but I'll get a job or a peg or something - but this is the place to live and the house is heaven and we shan't need to go anywhere else for our amusements as it has everything - coarse and trout fishing, boating, sailing, golf and heavenly walks and rides. It'll mean we cant afford our continental holiday but we can go on a tour of Scotland and Wales instead and we have got to have a house and it'll save train fares for the girls. All this sounds as if I'm trying to justify a wrong decision, but I've never been so certain of a decision being right, the house is a gem, the owner is an architect and designed it himself. It has central heating and a garage and a small garden and inside is roomy but compact - beautifully furnished - 3 minutes from the bus stop but down a lane so not too noisy and very close to the lake by a back way. It is £5 a week and I've taken it for a year from Nov. 1st which is very reasonable as rents in this part of the world go shooting up in the summer but I've taken it at a flat rate. When I'm on my own I shall definitely take a job and also try to do a bit of writing and I'm sure will be able to make some money. Do hope you won't be cross, but Mummy's plans are so vague, that I want a home for ourselves terribly badly. I'm hoping I can persuade her to buy a house up here too, there seems lots of property going and it would be so handy for all the family. ... shall collect all our bits and pieces and return here at the beginning of November.

*

My parents and grand-parents seem to have been continuously on the move when they were in India and were used to organizing others to heave large numbers of boxes and trunks about. Although the distances were much greater, the presence of large numbers of servants usually made it much easier than it was to become in England. The move from Dorset to Windermere was a mere 300 miles. Yet the move was made more difficult by the absence of my father and by the fact that my grandmother was a great hoarder of things, as is revealed in the letters. Fortunately my mother was not able to throw away too much and the astonishing family archive which my grandmother collected was not lost. The move was repeated, but over a short distance, when the family moved out of the rented accommodation in Windermere to our proper house near Hawkshead in the early summer of 1955.

On 10th October 1954 my mother wrote to my father

A week of packing and more packing, mine is now just now finished but Mummy is still milling through old letters and magazines. I sometimes despair that she will ever get moved but I suppose she will! She has 10 boxes of Granny's to sort through too, she keeps pulling out huge albums of old newspaper cutting and saying they really are rather interesting and putting them back again! The confusion here I leave to your imagination, the garage looks as if an atomic bomb had recently hit it! Daddy seems stunned and wanders vaguely round picking tobacco leaves out of the welter of wire and squashed newspaper and stuffing them into his pipe. He is getting so vague, I'm really worried about him sometimes (no cracks darling, I can be almost efficient when you're not there to lean on.) I've taken over the cooking but Mummy just spends a bit longer over her racing. Anyway things always do work out and its no use panicking.

A week later on 18th October she wrote on further progress.

Another uneventful week, during which Mummy has pulled out such a mass of possessions that we now have to eat meals off a corner of the sideboard - she spends her time saying "What a dear little bottle" or "I'm sure I've got the saucer of this somewhere" and packing the dear little bottles and odd cups away, to-day we filled 4½ tea chests with the china of various descriptions and there still isn't room to put anything down! I've been wrapping and packing since 10 a.m. with half an hour off to boil potatoes and eat them, until 7.30 p.m. so you can imagine am pretty weary with a crick in my neck, and will be wrapping and packing in my head all night!

Four days later, on 22nd, she wrote

We got rid of a lot of stuff today, all the boxes of Granny's scrapbooks (8 large trunks!) and 7 tea-chests of China and all Mummy's odds and ends of furniture, it filled the lorry which was a large one! So now there isn't a lot to do, although there is still a lot of juba about - when nobody's looking I go round with a large waste-paper basket filling it and slinking round to the dust-bin - if Mummy catches me its fatal! Yesterday we cleaned out the garage which was enormous fun and filled four dustbins. Daddy has now decided to come up with me on 29th and Mummy is going on a round tour and following a couple of weeks later. I'm longing to go, it will be heaven to feel settled for a year, I'm tired of all this shuffling around and not having anywhere to put my things.... Life has calmed down here, the bulk of Mummy's stuff went off to be stored on Friday, filled a large lorry! I was very relieved to see the back of the tea-chests, and the house is looking a bit better, though theres still a lot lying about.

Ten days later, on 1st November, my mother wrote again from the other end of the move, Beck House in Windermere.

It seems about a month since I last wrote, can't believe its only a week such a lot has happened. I'm so relieved the move is over, and that I haven't got to pack or unpack again in a big way for a year. I'm a bit weary but very happy to be back in this lovely place and near the girls again, wish in a way I could have had it to ourselves but I suppose that's selfish really. We had a hectic last week at "By the Way", the whole

place becoming more and more chaotic and difficult to live with, it simply amazed me the amount of rubbish we'd been living with. Daddy and I set off at 6.30 a.m on Friday 29th and got here without incident at 5.15 p.m. Daddy flapped madly all the way up, that we would miss trains, lose luggage, not get taxis etc., I suppose it was quite an expedition for him as he has practically not been further than Broadstone for years! It was raining when we got here (it has been for weeks apparently, there have been heavy floods in Scotland and parts of this district) and we were pretty tired but Daddy got into a panic that we had no milk and made me go off with the agent to look for some! Eventually I returned plus some tinned milk which placated him, and concocted a meal, and we had hot baths and fell most thankfully into bed. Saturday was hectic as I had to check the inventory with the agent, shop, collect the girls and produce lunch for us all.... This morning the lorry arrived with our stuff, they hadn't been able to fit everything in but brought most of it. Mummy of course had thrown in endless bits of wood and old buckets and huge bundles containing the inevitable photograph albums wrapped in nondescript bits of material that I have been trying to stow away all day!

The final comment occurs three weeks later on 21st November, when my mother briefly notes *I got rather irritated with Mummy as so much of the stuff is utter rubbish, one trunk was full of old paraffin tins! But I daresay we'll be able to shift things somehow, have to!* The old paraffin tins may not have been entirely necessary, though they reflected a world where 'waste not, want not' was a deep part of middle class philosophy, and one which as I hoard old jars and tins I still understand. But it was extremely fortunate that the precious collections of photographs and papers from my great-grandmother were mostly preserved.

Iris Beck House Diary - additional

1955

January

- 1 Meet at Drunken Duck
- 2 Robert & friends to tea
- 3 Robert leaves. To Rydal for walk. Cold
- 4 Fiona & Anne riding. Didn't go.
- 5 Anne to Penrith. Didn't go.
- 6 Stephen Grieve for night. Film "Racing Blood"
- 7 Fetch Anne. Dry cleaners. Yvonne Clayton, tea
- 8 Riding 2.30 To Kendal - no film
- 9 Walk to lake. Snow.
- 10 Wet. Packed trunks
- 11 Tea Hendersons. Haircut
- 12 Film
- 13 Girls return to school
- 14 Alan returns
- 15 Washed hair. Mrs. Fothergill called
- 16 Very cold, thick snow

- 17 Took sledge to girls. Walk up Kirkstone.
- 18 Lovely day. Mrs Danson to tea
- 19 To Outgate to look at house. Lovely day. Took films.
- 20 - no entry
- 21 Water broke down
- 22 Anne for lunch. Film "Rainbow Jacket"
- 23 Fiona & friend tea. Lovely day.
- 24 Mummy & D to Outgate
- 25 Miss Helme to tea. Didn't come, went to look at house.
- 26 - no entry
- 27 Mrs Helme to tea.
- 28 To Ambleside. Lost broolly
- 29 Anne home. Tea at Mrs Fothergills.
- 30 Church. Fiona tea, Julia Wilcox
- 31 "Young Wives"

February

- 1 Fetched shoes
- 2 To Keswick. Collected broolly. Lovely day
- 3 Gardened. Snowdrops out. Lovely day
- 4 Mrs Henderson lunch. Talk on "secondary School Education in America"
- 5 Fiona & Anne To film "Long Long Trailer"
- 6 Lovely day. Walk to lake. Gardened. Fiona tea. Anne cold, stayed home
- 7 Anne in bed. Snow. Dentist 3.30
- 8 Anne home. Cold - Jig-saws.
- 9 Tea Mrs Scott Jackson
- 10 Cold. Stayed in
- 11 Cold. Bed in afternoon. Snowed.
- 12 Children and JKudith C. to lunch. Shopped. Very cold.
- 13 Anne & I walk, picked catkins, took cine. Played Mah Jong. Very coldy and depressed.
- 14 Snowed hard. Stayed in, cold better. Missed "Young wives"
- 15 Stayed in all day
- 17 Went to sale, all day. Blizzard.
- 18 Snow. Lovely day. *
- 19 Took girls out, to Outgate. Lovely. Tea at Vale View Hotel.
- 20 Anne sledged Played Mah Jong. Very cold. Snowed all day
- 21 Shopped. Took sledge. Cold, snowed slightly.
- 22 Very cold. Barty at Bowness
- 23 Dentist 4.30. 5 teeth out. Cold. Wrote Mac
- 24 Stayed in. Mummy to sale. V. cold
- 25 Anne dentist 3.30. Kept her home, coldy
- 26 Friona lunch. Shopped.
- 27 Fiona lunch. Lovely day. Played Mah Jong.
- 28 "Young Wives"

March

- 1 Coffee here. Only Mrs. Henderson. To sale at Outgate. Snowed.
- 2 Sale. Tea Mrs Morris. Lovely day
- 3 Lovely day. Children out to have haircut

4 Lunch club. Dentist 4. p.m. Didn't go
 5 Cold. Anne to lunch.
 6 Snowing again. Church
 7 To Kendal to collect typewriter
 8 Miserable day.
 9 To Kendal with typewriter
 10 Me 4.0 4 teeth out. Anne dentist 4.30
 11 Mouth very sore and swollen. Bed afternoon.
 12 Lovely day. Kids for lunch. Rested.
 13 Lovely walk with Anne, spring day. Tea. Heather Jackman.
 14 Typed
 15 Young Wives. Bazaar & Religious discussion.
 15 Shopped. Typed afternoon. Fishing starts. Teeth bad again
 16 Janet. Teeth bad.
 17 Stayed in, cold wind. Mummy sale. Better. Decision about house Passed! *
 18 Dentist 2.45 with Anne. 2 teeth out.
 19 M & D to Outgate. Slept all afternoon. Alan sick
 20 Walk to lake p.m. Church
 21 Snow in night. Took mags & got tickets
 22 Letter from Council. M & D to Outgate with Morton. Alan better.
 23 Girls return
 25 Alan returns
 26 "Yeoman of the Guard" 2.15
 28 To new house. Walked to tarns & Hawkshead.
 30 To Kendal. Get hamsters. Alan fished.

April

1 Fiona's birthday. Picnic to School Knot
 2 To see "Belles of St Trinians"
 3 Church. Walk by lake
 4 Mrs Hobson coffee. To Keswick. Order Fiona's kilt. Wet day
 5 Wet day. Shopped. Played Maj Jong.
 6 Wet day. Fiona dentist. All well.
 7 Verdict on house. £3,550. Alan to Morris's. Mrs Jackson to tea. Not coming. Mrs Chapman
 11 Picnic
 12 Me dentist. Fiona oculist 2 p.m. "Modern times"
 13 Fothergills to tea
 14 Alan fished School Knott. Girls return
 15 Bill Roberson lunch. Richard arrives. *
 16 Me dentist - 10. New teeth. Boys to tea
 17 Lovely day. Slightly better.
 18 Dentist 10. Haircut. Young Wives - Didn't go. Better.
 19 Better. Took teeth out! Went for row. Robert p.m.
 20 To London - night train.
 21 Mac arrives 4.20 p.m. [date ringed]
 22 Arrived 7.30 p.m.
 23 Returned
 27 Alan returns [to Sedbergh]

First experience of the Lakes

I remember the house well, stone and pebble-dash, standing over a small stream which ran under the garage and flooded from time to time when we were there. It lay down a little road off the main Windermere to Ambleside road a few hundred yards out of the town. [PHOTO]

The house had a relatively small garden, though big enough for miniature tennis. However, the path that led down for a mile or so to the edge of Lake Windermere more than compensated this for. It was very beautiful, as my mother describes in her letters. It entranced me with the unfulfilled prospects of huge perch and pike. It was a realization my 'Swallows and Amazons' imagination, and I also loved Bowness and the walks up through the bracken to Orrest Had, or to a little tarn about a mile beyond Windermere which I fished for trout.

*

A brief impression of those preparatory months in the Lake District, focusing on my own experiences and my mother's initial reactions to the wonderful scenery, can be extracted from a number of long letters she wrote in the period between November 1st, three days after she arrived, and early April 1955 shortly before my father returned home.

On 1st November she described a first walk.

Yesterday, Sunday, we spent the day saying "I wonder what Daddy is doing now" and hoping you were celebrating in some way. I flung the joint and spuds into the oven and we went for a walk down to the Lake in the morning. I can't tell you how beautiful the country is looking now the trees are turning gold. There are masses of trees (too many really) but at present it is as if the whole countryside had caught fire, and the bronze of the beeches against the smoky grey of the lake and the hills was indescribable. We got back in time to make the Yorkshire pudding and had a jolly delicious first lunch, and then the girls insisted that we go and see a wonderful waterfall near Ambleside. So off we set again, by bus and then walking. It was a beautiful (if strenuous) walk through woods and the waterfall most impressive, and we eventually got home at 5 in time for high tea and pretty tired but full of fresh air. The air here is almost like a taste - or have I told you? As you see I'm dotty about the place, do hope you'll feel the same.

I returned back from the Dragon School on 14th December and my mother wrote the next day:

Alan came back on Saturday, as I think I told you, in good form and very chatty, but yesterday morning (Tuesday) he started feeling low, and to-day has been in bed with 'flu - so I'm relieved I got him back in time to nurse him here. It's a childish variety, so I trust we shan't all succumb - he is running a temp. of 100.8 which is nothing much and has read two detective novels to-day and listened to the wireless without a pause and is no trouble. I went and collected the girls Monday afternoon in the pouring rain, had to bring their boxes back in a taxi which was irritatingly expensive - so now we a full house and for the last two days I seem to have been getting and clearing away meals all day! ... They [children] are so good and helpful (at present!) and its heaven to have them - Fiona and Alan are very pally and Annie is a bit left out but she's been making yards and yards of paper chains and so far no fights! The weather has been frightful, but to-day was a golden dream, a still, peaceful day with sun from morning to night -

something we haven't had for weeks. After lunch we left Alan to his 3^d murder and went out on our bikes exploring, the roads are terrifying, the traffic whirls along and there are some awful corners, I couldn't let the children out on their bikes alone, but we found a lovely road and a river and the views were exquisite. We shall have some good fishing in that beck, its nice and close. Alan rushed straight to the lake with his rod, but the experts say this is the wrong time of year so there isn't much hope.

Aged almost thirteen, my memory for places and incidents are starting to be recoverable and I can picture these scenes, especially lying in bed devouring the Leslie Charteris 'Saint' books for which I had a craze, as well as the Christmas described in the next letter.

My mother's next letter, written on 27th December describes in detail the Christmas celebrations, always the summation of our family life, though sadly without my father present. It is worth quoting fully as a vignette of our family dynamics and my interests at this time.

The shouting and the tumult is dying here, but there is still a fearful mess and "glitter" is getting into the food at every meal. Still it was fun, and the children were delighted with all their presents and the lunch was a success in spite of my heaving the boiling ham-water all over myself at a critical moment! Alan stayed in bed a full week with a temperature that wouldn't go down, but came down to the drawing room on the afternoon of his birthday and we pulled a few crackers, he was up for the whole day on the 22nd which was the day of our party. I had rustled up a few of the girls' friends and fortunately Alan has a Dragon friend living nearby and the girls brought along one brother so we had ten children together. The three boys retired into corners and made scornful remarks but otherwise it was a success I think, quite an effort getting the food collected but the only flop was the birthday cake which looked lovely but when cut turned out to be completely raw in the middle, fortunately the guests were all too full to want any. We played the usual games including Murder which consisted of everybody including the murderer rushing screaming downstairs every two minutes saying it was much too frightening but they insisted on going on playing! Alan had spent the previous two days saying that he didn't want a party and he was going out for the afternoon and what did I want to go and ask a lot of fleb girls for, but when it came to the point enjoyed it though it was rather a hectic beginning for him.

The next two days were spent in hectic last minute shopping and wrapping. Richard and Robert arrived on the 24th at lunch time so I've had eight people to plan and cook for on top of everything else, all rather overwhelming especially as we've had three days without shops this year and this evening we are absolutely out of anything edible and have one spoonful of tea for the morning. Robert departed this afternoon which will ease matters, I staggered back on Friday weighted down with fruit and he polished off four bananas before I had put the shopping basked down! I started the children off on their stockings on Christmas morning and then went off to early service and got back for late breakfast. We started on the lunch almost immediately, a large chicken which Mummy had ordered (I had got two small ones but we needed the lot) ham, and Christmas pudding plus the usual nuts and wine, it was all done just right and afterwards Richard and Robert took the two elder kids down to the lake and Anne and I cleaned and scrubbed and tidied and when they came back we had the tree, then tea, and then I was prepared to fall in a heap but Robert of course wanted supper, in fact they all sat down and ate baked beans except the kids and I who drank Bovril and went to bed.

In between we had played Murder and Scrabble, a new game which they had been given, and apart from the weather it was a most successful day only not perfect because you were missing but we toasted you in a variety of drinks and hope you were enjoying yourself darling. Yesterday Sunday there was a distinct feeling of anti-climax and every body was cross and tired, in the morning Richard drove us out to look at two houses at Grasmere which M and D had thought of renting but one was too isolated (a glorious place perched on the side of a hill with the whole lake stretched out in front) and the other too small with the bath in the kitchen. I don't know if they will ever decide on anywhere, I don't think Mummy really likes it here, I don't really know what they want.

This morning I spent washing and cooking and playing Alans new football game [Subuteo] while the others walked, and after lunch Alan and I drove with Robert to his friends house where he is spending the next week, and onto Grange to get petrol and there was the sea spread out in front of us, quite a surprise as one forgets one is near the sea here. We got back for tea and then out into the rain once more to the local cinema to see a funny film called "Up to his neck" which was extremely funny in bits, the cinema is very one horse but matey. ... I haven't started on my thank you letters yet, the children stand on their heads and write theirs at intervals and Anne is forever trailing me with a dripping fountain pen and asking me how to spell Edinburgh when I'm coping with several saucepans of boiling-over milk! Richard leaves on Friday and Robert on Sunday and then there are only two weeks of holiday left, life will seem very dull and quiet without them all but it will only be three months then till you come - unbelievable.

After my week away with my Dragon friend, I returned and remember going to the pantomime described in my mother's next letter, but not the freezing picnic. My mother wrote on 3rd January:

On Wednesday Richard drove us in to Morecambe to the pantomime, we did it in record time and all arrived feeling rather sick as it was a switchback sort of road but restored ourselves with bars of chocolate and ice-creams and the pantomime was terribly good, not too sophisticated or frightening and we all enjoyed it. Afterwards we had tea in the restaurant and ate cakes full of very mock cream and were feeling sick again by the time we got in but altogether enjoyed the afternoon... On Thursday ... the kids and I got our bikes and took our sandwiches out too, we crossed the lake in the ferry and explored some way and then ate our picnic in a temperature hardly above freezing. Quite mad! We got home at 4 p.m just as it was getting dark, pretty tired but full of fresh air - the only thing that terrifies me are the main roads which are narrow and full of huge lorries racing along far too fast - one false wobble and you've had it and I am scared sick until we get off them. On Friday Alan had been asked to spend the day with a school friend [Stephen Grieve] who lives at Elterwater, about 6 miles away, so Richard drove us there and then on to look at a house which is to be let. Alan's friend is a charming boy, and his mother is very nice, quite young and a widow, living in this tiny place with no car or telephone, but rather a heavenly spot with a lake and river and mountains.... On Saturday Richard drove the kids and Mummy to a meet and they all climbed enormous mountains apparently and saw the fox several times and came back very wet and bruised for their roast beef... I expect you've been listening to the Test Match most of the time, it is quite encouraging this time if we don't make a bish of it as Alan says.

A week later, on 11th January, my mother describes further events towards the end of our holidays.

The girls go back the day after to-morrow and Alan the day after that, so I'm trying to find time to wash and mend and list, it's a lot easier than last time anyway. Alan and Fiona are both looking forward to going back, but Annie is very undecided. I've asked if she can be a weekly boarder this term. Today has been perfect, the sun glistening and the hills looking plum-coloured and very close. The children went out to tea to-day with a family whose mother I met at a coffee party, a very large and posh house and very elegant inside according to their descriptions - rather out of my class altogether. We walked with them and back by the lake, it was ice-blue and the black trees etched against it were like a Chinese pastel picture - or have I said that before? Yesterday it snowed sufficiently to lie for a little, but not enough to use the toboggan - however we have hopes of to-morrow when there is to be more snow and we might even get some ice, solid enough to bear Fiona! She is getting enormously fat and bursting out of the new skirts I've made her. Alan knocks her over and sits on her frequently though, just to show he is far the beefier type. He had his friend to spend the night last week. An awfully nice boy and Alan was a different person with him around, obviously what he needs. They shot airguns and played trains and went fishing and were no trouble. We should have had another son you know, but its too late now - don't flap darling, my maternal instincts will turn full blast onto you now, I'll have you modelling in plasticine in no time at all!

I went back to school on the 14th and three days later my mother went for a walk with her father and gives another vignette of the new-found mountain land in winter.

Daddy and I went on for a walk up what is normally a road but is now a snowy lane, the views were wonderful, blue sky, white hills and all bathed in golden sunshine, just like that Swiss calendar we had. I must get the film put into the Ciné to-morrow and try to take some snowscapes. [see FILM] The air of course is wonderful but I feel sorry for farmers and old people and birds - we spend a lot of time feeding the latter and watch them through the window, the robins feed from our hands. Yesterday wasn't so nice as a blizzard was blowing and it was bitter, I went to church and got snow inside my boots on the way there and sat with my toes in an icy puddle all through the service. The chilblains are fearful as you can imagine and I had to thaw them out with warm olive oil when I got back. Still we can't complain as this is a very warm and comfortable house, and we're never likely to get cut off, but I spend such a lot of time feeling sorry for everyone else that I don't have time to enjoy my blessing much.

Much of the next couple of months were spent searching for a house to buy, as described in the next chapter, but there are occasional further pen portraits of the developing year. My sisters were at school at Charlotte Mason College in Ambleside and came home at week-ends. My mother wrote on 11th March of one such outing and a walk as spring arrived.

The girls came out at the week-end, Fiona brought yet another friend and we went down to the lake for a walk and then came back to tea and games by the fire. The woods by the lake are a mass of bulbs which I think will be daffodils, you should arrive just in time to see everything at its best, I do hope you will like this place as much as I do, I think you will because its very like the highlands only not quite so rugged.

I returned from the Dragon on 25th March and there are further descriptions of life in the few weeks before my father would return in a letter of 27th March.

Alan arrived on Friday evening a friend of his travels all the way with him and they seem to enjoy the journey. His sickness turned out to be nothing, thank heavens. He looks tired as usual after the term but very cheerful and is very absorbed with his electric trains and is really taking pains and concentrating on them which is a change. Yesterday afternoon I took them to see "The Yeoman of the Guard" as done by the Windermere Grammar School. It was very good I thought, though a bit wooden in parts - but Alan was most scathing and compared it unfavourably with Dragon School productions, wrongly actually! ...

This morning the sun was shining, so we took out our bicycles and went out to explore for a tarn where we can fish, we had a map but went too far, however we eventually ploughed across country and found the tarn, and had a lovely walk and got back in time to cook up the spuds for lunch. The views were exquisite as usual and it was so blissfully peaceful, though quite close to the main road.

I went over to see the new house we were buying in Esthwaite Dale on 28th March and this and other events of the time are recorded in my grandfather's diary.

28.3 Iris takes children out to Field Head. She walked to Tarn Hows and back to Windermere by ferry to Bowness

29.3 V[iiolet] and Iris and children go to cinema at Bowness - 'Knock on Wood'

30.3 Alan fishing

31.3 V went to Kendal with Alan and came back with 2 hamsters for Fiona's birthday [film of hamsters]

1.4 Fiona's birthday v. pleased with her 2 hamsters - Iris took children on picnic
2.4 Alan's term report came. 1st in form in classics
Iris and V. with children go to Bowness for film 'Belles of St Trinians'

A letter written on 3rd April describes my sister's birthday and further impressions.

We've had a very satisfactory week as far as weather is concerned, especially Fiona's birthday which was perfect - fortunately as we'd arranged an all-day picnic. I went into Kendal the day before and bought her a couple of hamsters, small cream-coloured animals rather like guinea pigs and rather sweet, she has called them Bubble and Squeak and seems pleased with them. Alan and Anne gave her a bird book and Mummy a jewel-box (not new!). Richard a Bible and Jean 10/- so she did very well. We collected two other girls and a boy and took lunch (I took it!) to a small tarn not far away, actually it was a goodish step, it took us an hour to walk there but the bright spring weather and the fields full of lambs were enchanting. We ate lunch and the boys fished and we played tracking games and got back to Windermere at quarter to 5 to find that a fishing rod had been left behind so the wretched boys had to go back and get it. Altogether a lovely day, although my wretched chilblains made my feet very sore. I have them on the soles and walking on them isn't much fun. Still I've done more walking this week than I've done for years as the children are full of enthusiasm for exploring and we've had several fine days running. One day, Monday, we took a picnic to the new house, and then walked up behind it and on and on, finally landed up at the Tarns at 3 p.m and were told it was at least 3 miles to Hawkshead where the last bus left

at 4. As we were all exhausted by then it was a formidable prospect but we made it with a minute to spare. The children were very game and full of fun and it was another lovely day. The air here is so wonderful it makes you want to walk for miles, but the flesh is weak, mine anyway. Alan has been doing some fishing between-whiles but without success, the weather is still too cold I think as very few have been caught. I hope he gets a bite before his enthusiasm wears off. His school report has come and is very good, 1st in Classics! This, he says isn't really up to much as its an un-brainy set, but he seems to be doing well all round... They all three look so much better after a week of holidays, fatter and pinker and colds gone, though I've been battling against one this week... Fiona now weighs 5 st 12 lbs and Anne not much less. Alan doesn't seem to alter at all!

Darling ...I do hope you aren't going to find life here too different and strange - I have so many fears mixed up with my feelings about you, and am terrified you'll be disappointed in your leave and this place - and me! No doubt unfounded, I hope so, I can't imagine that you will be able to withstand the impact of England in April even if all else fails. We went for a walk to the lake this afternoon and picked a bunch of wild daffodils and watched a man fishing, it was so glittering and peaceful, the peace is what appeals to me most, I feel I can't get enough of it.

The final letter before my father arrived was written on 7 April.

This week the weather has let us down and been unremittingly grey and drizzly, so we haven't been on any more expeditions, but the children have been very cheerful thought the house is so cluttered with straw, plaster, comics and hamster droppings that I can hardly bear to look round. Alan has fished several times but without a bite and is getting rather discouraged, do hope he'll catch a minnow or something soon ... They all look so well and rested, I'm quite loath to let them go back. I don't feel too exhausted either, the only chore I really hate is shopping, we seem to get through such mounds of food I'm for ever trailing round with laden shopping baskets and over Easter with all the shops shutting for days and days, it has become too hectic for words. They descend on the table like locusts 4 times a day, and Anne is at my heels when I'm cooking to lick all available saucepans, but of course I wouldn't have it otherwise.... Glad the fishing was fun if not successful, the trouble with Alan is that he hasn't really the right tackle and spends his time getting into mad tangles and losing spoons and flies and getting enraged. We went out this afternoon to a very promising Beck and fished every inch of it with worm and fly, but I fancy its still too cold. The wild daffodils are coming out and there are masses of them everywhere. Fiona is full of enthusiasm for her bird-watching and has found several nests, I hope it'll last.

The final period of that holidays is recorded in my grandfather's diaries, including the arrival of my father.

8.4 Iris takes children to fish at Troutbeck Mouth

9.4 Iris takes children out to Field Head for lunch

12.4 Iris to dentist. Alan goes off on long work by himself. Iris and children see Chaplin 'Modern times'

13.4 Alan spends day with school friend at Elterwater

15.4 Iris and Alan go fishing

16.4 Iris to dentist - had 12 teeth out. Young Morris and friend come to tea with Alan

17.4 Richard drove V and self and Alan to field Head. Met Wright.
18.4 Iris and Alan play padder. Iris to Kendal to have teeth adjusted
20.4 Richard and Alan on lake. Iris and Alan leave by 8.30pm train for London to meet Mac
21.4 Mac arrives in England. Iris phones from Piccadilly Hotel to say Mac's plane a day late
21.4 Mac arrives (G)
22.4 Mac Vauxhall car arrived – garage cleaned for it this morning. (G)
23.4 Iris rang 8am saying they will try to catch 10.40 from Euston. Mac arrived 8pm last night. Iris arrived back with Mac and Alan at 5pm.
24.4. Mac and family went to see new house then out to fish at Langdale
25.4. Mac, Iris and children drove to Kendal.
26.4 Mac and Alan go fishing Elterwater
27.4 Alan back to school. Mrs Greaves of Elterwater came in. She was seeing off her son at Station for Dragon School.

*

Among the themes to emerge from this account we can notice the growing, if unrequited, passion for fishing, the attitude to girls as 'fleb', the hobbies centering on electric trains and detective fiction. I was still a prep school boy, smaller than my sister (two years younger than myself), starting to delight in our northern home, and on the edge of puberty. My parents and grand-parents were on the verge of the move to their home in Esthwaite Dale where they would remain from May 1955 until my grandparents went south in autumn 1965 and my parents moved to the Hebrides in 1969. My family were together again in England for the first time since January 1952.

A Home in the Lakes

The account of the purchase of our first house shows how difficult it was to buy a house even for such a supposedly middle class family as ours at this time. Even though my grand-father was a retired Lt Colonel with long service in India and a reasonable pension, and my father a senior Tea garden manager in India, and they wished to pool their resources and buy together, it was extremely difficult – even in the north of England where property was supposedly cheaper. Since their retirement in 1944 my grandparents had lived in rented accommodation, and my parents likewise on their periods of leave. Thus the difficulty of buying a first home is familiar to many, but that it should have occurred when my grand-parents were around sixty, and my father in his forties is interesting.

First details of a possible purchase come in a letter dated 22nd January 1955.

Everything is in a state of flux here, as Mummy and Daddy are looking for somewhere to go and a few days ago we went to look at a house for sale near the house I stayed in when I first came here. It is only half a house, in the most perfect situation, overlooking fields and hills and lakes and next door to a farm and riding stables – isolated but not far from the bus stop... Don't know what will become of these negotiations but of course I would like to get the first house, and buy it off my people, it would be wonderful to have somewhere of our own but I'm not really hoping too much. Let me know what you think.

My mother then reverted to the more humdrum but anxiety-making details of daily expenditure, which are worth including as a background at this time. She wrote that:

bank wrote and said I had £173 and surely this would do for school bills, it will just but leaves nothing over. I know you must feel I'm simply absorbing money, but Christmas and school bills coming so soon on top of the house and move, coming on top of the new uniforms has given me no time to catch up. I do think Grindlays are a rotten lot, I think we should change to Lloyds. I haven't yet paid any school bills, just isn't there as I've had such large local bills this month – of course I'm not out of money but will be when I do pay the bills. This finance business worries me sick, because I just don't know how to economise any more, it isn't paying me to have my people, they drink pints and pints of milk and have lots of hot baths etc., but I can't really grudge it them. This worry over money is the only fly in my ointment, I have a drawer full of bills for electricity, coal, drink, Calor Gas etc., and spend my time wondering which I can leave over – what a depressing letter! Now I'm wondering how to buy a house! Have we got any commission left, and how are you going to get anything home for our leave if I spend it all. There won't be any more school bills till you come which is something. I have written a story this week, but as I haven't got a typewriter that doesn't help much. Oh darling I do hate wasting all my letters in this dreary way but it is my main preoccupation.

The next letter, dated on 26th January, returns to the question of buying the house.

This is really a business letter because we are getting involved with this house business and I want your permission to go ahead. The house we want to get is half of a big house, in the most divine position – quite near Borwick Fold where I stayed

when I first came to Ambleside. It is part of a farm, a riding stables, and has been done up from top to bottom – quite perfect for the children as its surrounded by fields and hills and theres a small lake about a mile away and of course Windermere about 3 miles away.

The owner wants £3,700 for it but might take a bit less – the point is that a building society aren't keen to lend Daddy the money because of his age, but wouldn't hesitate with us – we went to see a lawyer to-day and he was fairly certain we'd get a loan (presuming the society thought the house a sound proposition). We could get a 20-year loan, or a 10-year one, the latter would mean about £360 a year he thought. I know thats a lot of money darling – but you must offset it against what we would have to pay for holiday homes and travelling expenses for the children – and places to rent for our leaves – and this way we would at least have a house at the end of it. And I am sure that I can make something out of my writing once I get started. I would sit up burning any amount of midnight oil if I felt it would get me this house.

It is such a wonderful place for the children to grow up in, I would have no qualms about leaving them there – as it is I worry constantly about what we shall do with them and where they will leave their bicycles and airguns and electric trains. I know it's a gamble and that we can't afford it – but we've always gambled – from getting married onwards – and a few good commissions would see the whole thing paid off. I spoke to the lawyer about Income tax and he called his expert in who said as long as you were domiciled abroad you wouldn't have to pay double tax. He is looking into that carefully anyway, and of course the house will have to surveyed to see that it's really sound, otherwise the Building society won't play. There is no question of paying anything till November when we give up this place, my people will do the instalments till then – they'll also furnish it as they have practically enough stuff already.

Of course there are snags about the house – being semi-detached is one – but a big tall hedge will probably solve that. Anyway if you feel it doesn't give you enough scope when you retire we could sell it – but meanwhile it would solve all our difficulties. What do you think darling? I do hope you will agree. I've put you in a bit of a fix I know but I swear I'll make some money and help pay for it. This letter coming after my last one moaning about no money will send you demented I expect, but cheer up pet, it won't cost us anything till our next commission comes in and you said it would be a bumper one. Of course if the Building Society doesn't agree to help us well thats that!

The parallel account in my grandfather's diaries mirror these first decisions. He wrote in January:

Saturday 22: Went to see Field Head House at Outgate
Monday 24: Iris goes to see house – Field Head
Wednesday 26: Saw Handley the solicitor re house
Friday 28: Rang up RDC [Rural district Council] Ulverston
Saturday 29: Wrote to Owen and sent him application form to complete for advance to purchase house.

Throughout the following negotiations my grandfather kept quite detailed entries in his diary which suddenly leaps to life from March 1955 as if he was rejuvenated by the

prospective purchase. The story could be told through these, but I shall follow it in the words of my mother's letters to my father which are more personal.

At this crucial juncture, the postal service between the Lakes and Assam becomes fragile and my mother is not certain about what is getting through to my father. She therefore writes on 1st February:

I was so glad to hear that mine were arriving, but you obviously missed one or two, as I'd explained in detail the house we nearly got at High Wray - rented. Hope you have got my letter about the one we want to buy and that you will be as keen on the idea as we are - nothing more has happened about it yet, the Rural District Council who we hope will give us a loan, and will do something soon we hope. They are better than a building society as they don't demand any security except the house itself. It will be a godsend for my people to have this house as they've used all their capital and are in a very uncertain state and we can pay for it out of our Overseas Allowance alone, until such time as we can put down any lump sum.

Then she turns to the problem of recurrent costs.

While we're on the subject, I'd be grateful for some money this month please darling - I haven't been able to pay Alan's school bill yet. If you could send me £100 this month for that, and £100 next month to clear up bills, I can carry on till you come on that. As you noticed, we didn't seem to get any Overseas Allowance in December, haven't had January's statement yet. Don't get into a panic about leave, darling, we can always go and help in one of the local pubs if we're too utterly broke! I hope our financial straits aren't going to prejudice you against the house, because we don't have to start paying for that till after our leave. If you were here I would be wagging my little finger like mad. I want this so very much darling.

My father clearly received one or more of these letters and to my mother's great relief replied positively - using the expensive but safe message of a telegram. So my mother wrote on 6th February.

Got your wire yesterday, and was very relieved - it is very sweet of you darling, but I promise I will do my bit and I'm sure we shall manage alright. The form has been sent off to the rural district council and now we have to contain ourselves in as much patience as we can muster and wait for their verdict. We shall probably not get their support and will be back where we started from. The trouble now is to stop Mummy from ordering Dunlopillo mattresses and drawing-room suites ad. Lib - she has ideas far beyond any of our stations - but in fact there is very little needed and I hope I'll be able to curb her enthusiasm. Until we hear definitely from the Council we can do nothing anyway. I do hope you will like the house darling its not a bit the sort of place I ever visualized having, but what peace! Just fields in front and hills behind - but a nice pub called "The Drunken Duck" nice and handy for you! The children should be very happy there in an unsophisticated way which is after all the best. But I mustn't dream too hard, I expect they'll crash round my ears again.

The same letter also contained further disturbing recurrent accounts (which show that my sister's school fees had risen from £40 a term to £50 each, just over half mine at the Dragon), which my mother tried to explain to my father thus.

I enclose the account. The large bills are due to Christmas and the cheques I cashed were socks, hankies, gloves, tuck and pocket-money for school, and rail fares of course. I have since paid the girls school fees (£100) and so things are a bit tricky - having horrid threats that my electricity will be cut off! Still no Overseas Allowance, it would be handy to pay the rent. Won't start bleating as I expect you have sent some money but most of it will go on Alan's school fees I expect I still have quite a few bills outstanding. Once I've got straight I really shan't need any more! Anne had some story that you had bought a horse(s). Can this be true?! Can't believe it, just before your leave - though I'm sure you deserve a decent horse darling. Oh bother this money business, it is the one big fly in my ointment - but one thing is that we shall never have a more expensive time than this, so if we can keep our heads above water now we shall reach the shore, I hope! Oh darling what miserable letters but I am rather worried as the bank is so unhelpful! But only one more whole month without you, and after that nothing will really matter and we can starve quite happily as long as we're together!

One minor anxiety at this time was the enthusiasm with which my grand-mother took the hunting for furniture for a house which was far from purchased. My mother wrote on 12th February

No more news of the house, but Mummy went to a sale on Thursday to "have a look" and came back with everything in the sale including a bicycle! Not literally, but they are to follow. I can't imagine what happens if the house falls through. It is with great difficulty we've dissuaded her from rushing off to other sales this last few days, have awful visions of humping kitchen dressers and rocking chairs round for ever and ever! Actually the things she bought were terribly cheap, the chairs 2/- each! Even as firewood they'd be a bargain!

Six days later on 18th February days the house purchase is still on the top of my mother's mind and she tries to reassure my father as to the quality of the property.

The house business doesn't progress, in fact the Rural dist. Council doesn't discuss it until March 17th so we're all feeling a bit on edge, wondering what they'll decide and what we shall do if they say no. Mr Owen says he'll wait till then before putting it into the market, but it doesn't leave us much time to make other decisions - Building Societies take even longer to get cracking. ... Anyway we'll have to see what happens.

A particularly expensive piece of furniture is mentioned in my grandfather's diary. On 16th May 'Went to Pauls in Kendal and bought carpet for £38-16-0' and the following day 'Carpets look v nice in drawing room'. These carpets, which I remember as Persian, lasted for many years and followed my grandmother round to several more houses.

The only other note here suggests that my father had arranged for a further overdraft, or sent more money, for she writes *Thank you for arranging about the money darling. Sorry to have got so hysterical about it.*

On about 3rd of March things started to move on. My mother wrote that

We've just heard that the committee which sat yesterday has recommended our petition to the Council, so that's one hurdle over. I think we shall have to beat the old man down a bit though, he is asking far too much - but it is the sort of place that somebody might come along and see and be prepared to slap down the money for, just on the situation and the fact that it is National Trust Property and can't be spoiled - there is really no way to value a place like that. Still we shall have to be a little reluctant and not show him how frantic we are. If we get the Building Society loan, it will be bought in Daddy's name so there'll be no question of Income Tax or anything for us. The Bank Rate would have to go up just now.

The following week on 11th there is one of several allusions to an 'Overseas Allowance' which had been earlier mentioned as not being paid in January. How much this was, and whether it was a new arrangement (I can find no references to it in previous years) I do not know. My mother wrote *You don't mention why there has been no Overseas Allowance lately, I was reckoning to pay the rent out of that. Anyway I've written to the bank and said you will clear up the overdraft when you return, as I say we can always get a job to tide us over sticky patches. That commission will certainly come in handy!*

The following week on 19th my grandmother was still whizzing around buying furniture, and my mother also bewailed the cost of fishing tackle.

Mummy has gone quite mad over buying furniture and has about three times too much, she prances off to every sale and sees a much nicer bed or sofa than she got last time and the result is that to day we have 3 sofas and about 30 chairs - at the last sale she met some people she knew in Pindi [Rawalpindi, India] and brought them back to tea, wasn't it strange... . As for buying us new rods and reels - a multiplying reel alone is £3. I thought of getting Alan one for Xmas and was shattered.

A week later, in a letter of 27th, the matter of the house is still in the air.

The house business isn't quite settled, the surveyor has to look at it and value it, and then we shall make a definite and final offer, - should be sometime this week I think, it is hard to get the wheels of local government moving, but the Dist. Council have been very good and helpful so far. Do hope you are going to be pleased with the house, my worry is that you will be disappointed but I think time and the growing of hedges will improve it a lot, its in rather a raw state at present.

Two weeks later my mother is panicking about the whole decision and the huge sums involved.

The whole thing is becoming a bit of a nightmare, as with all this delay and time to think it over we are getting cold feet over the house. I wake up in the night sweating at the thought of all the money involved when none of us have a bean - but somehow I think we shall pull it off. We can't ever get as close as this again I feel, and the owner has been most patient while we make up our minds. The surveyor has been out to see it, and we should definitely get a decision this week as to exactly how much the council will give us. I think the present idea is that we go straight into it, more or less picnicking, and M and D stay on here. Anyway I should be able to let you know definitely by next week...

In the same letter, shortly before the arrival of my father, my mother admitted that she could not make ends meet and again expressed her aversion to arguing about money. She wrote

Next week we have a couple of tea parties and a visit to the dentist which is a bore, shall also have to get a few summer clothes for the girls. Won't discuss finance, but I'm afraid I'm running up an overdraft again, just can't seem to help it but we'll have to thrash it out when you arrive. Not the first evening though, we'll keep that separate and unworldly, we won't think or talk about money - just for those few hours will we?

Fortunately the final agreement on the house occurred just before my father returned, so my mother gives the details in a letter of 7th April.

The house business is settled at last, we have had to give £3.550 without the garage, he wouldn't take a penny less and we felt we couldn't wait about waiting to see if anyone else would offer as much and possibly lose it after all. The surveyor only valued it at £3,000 so we know we are paying too much, but we want it so badly we daren't risk someone else snapping it up. The council are paying £2,700 and M and D are filling the gap by means of an enormous overdraft, which we will pay back as soon as we can to them - perhaps £400 when our half commission arrives and the other £400 when the rest comes? They will then pay the instalments on the house till the end of the year, which will now only be £10 a month. All very complicated, but I can't think of any other way we could have bought a house can you, and its really Jolly d. of the Council to be so helpful I think. Hope you aren't too overwhelmed by all this darling. I'm afraid we'll have to have a quiet leave, but it should be fun all the same.

On this same day my grandfather ended his parallel account of the purchase with a detailed summary in his diary as follows. 'Letter from RDC Ulverston saying house valued at £3000 and they will give me £2700 advance. Phoned Handley who told me how to write to Owen when sending 10 per cent deposit. Wrote to Owen saying we will buy house for £3500. Phoned Mrs Owen and asked her to ask Owen to have house ready for us. Wrote to Bank thanking for allowing £400 overdraft.' The following day, Good Friday, he noted 'Owen rang up acknowledging my letter and cheque and says I cannot go into house till contract signed. He will however write to his solicitor to expedite.' Appropriately my grandfather was soaking himself in the atmosphere, reading "Wordsworthshire" by Eric Robertson and "Companion into Lakeland" by Maxwell Fraser.

There is finally a sheet in my grandfather's hand headed 'Field Head' which summarizes all the expenses incurred in buying the new house. This is as follows:
Furniture etc. Carpet £38 10s ; Furniture £127 2s; From Broadstone £30; Furniture Transport £3 12s 6d; Total £199 4s 6d
Bank charges on 1st overdraft: £16.
Paid by Mac: £250 on 31st
Field Head: Surveyor £10 10s; Ten percent [down payment] £355; Insurance £3 18s 9d; Frank Jackson (percent from May-July?) £38 12 0; Frank Jackson £495; Hart Jackson £97 5s; Total £1000 5s 9d.

Lawyer (paid by Mac) £60 3s

R.D.C [Rural District Council] Aug 19th-31st £4 1s 9d; September £16 16s 4d

Thus the expenses of furniture was about £200 and costs associated with the house purchase, including a ten percent payment, about £1000.

The place and the people

The place

The house and its surroundings are best captured again in a number of vignettes, but before doing that perhaps I can introduce it with a map and overview.

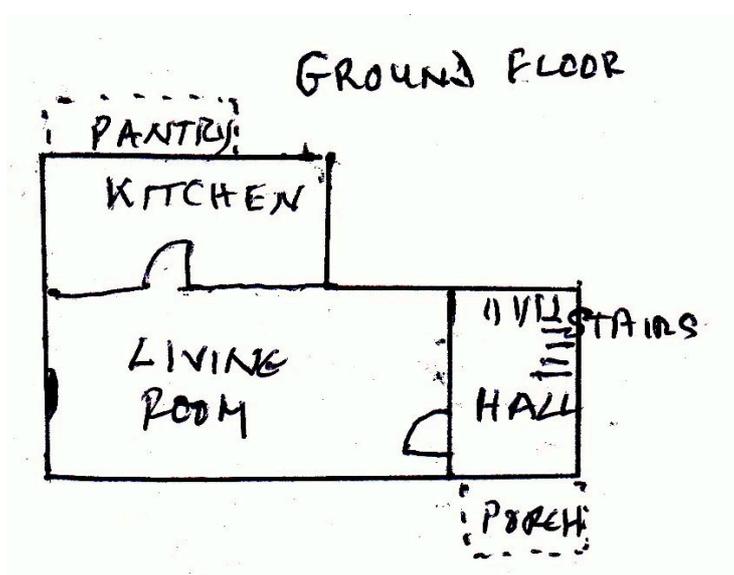
My mother described the house and surroundings to my father briefly in a letter of 18 February 1955, as follows:

The house may disappoint you, in itself it isn't very wonderful, it is part of a long building which has been divided into two, [small picture of house and garden] some people called Wright have the other half, and the barn on the left made into a bungalow for the owner. But apart from the farm behind there are no other houses near and the view in front, behind and all round is wonderful. There is about half an acre of garden behind, lawn, veg and rockery, and then fields. It has all been done up recently and has electricity, Aga Cooker, Stainless steel sink, nice modern bathroom, water from mains - very handy and clean. There are 3 bedrooms, two big ones and a small oak bedroom with uneven floors - there are oak beams in the drawing room and window-seats in the low windows and its really very nice. Not the cosy, cottagey sort of house I'd imagined, a plain, thick-walled stone house which would stand up to anything. The "Drunken Duck" has its own tarn full of rainbow trout close by and there is free fishing in the becks and lakes and I should think shooting though I haven't looked into that.

Let me flesh that out a little with the help of some memory maps and photographs. The house was a later seventeenth century farm house, which looked from the front and the back like this. As can be seen it was made of stone and slate. The long house had additions at the back on each end, and was divided by our time into two dwellings.

PHOTOS

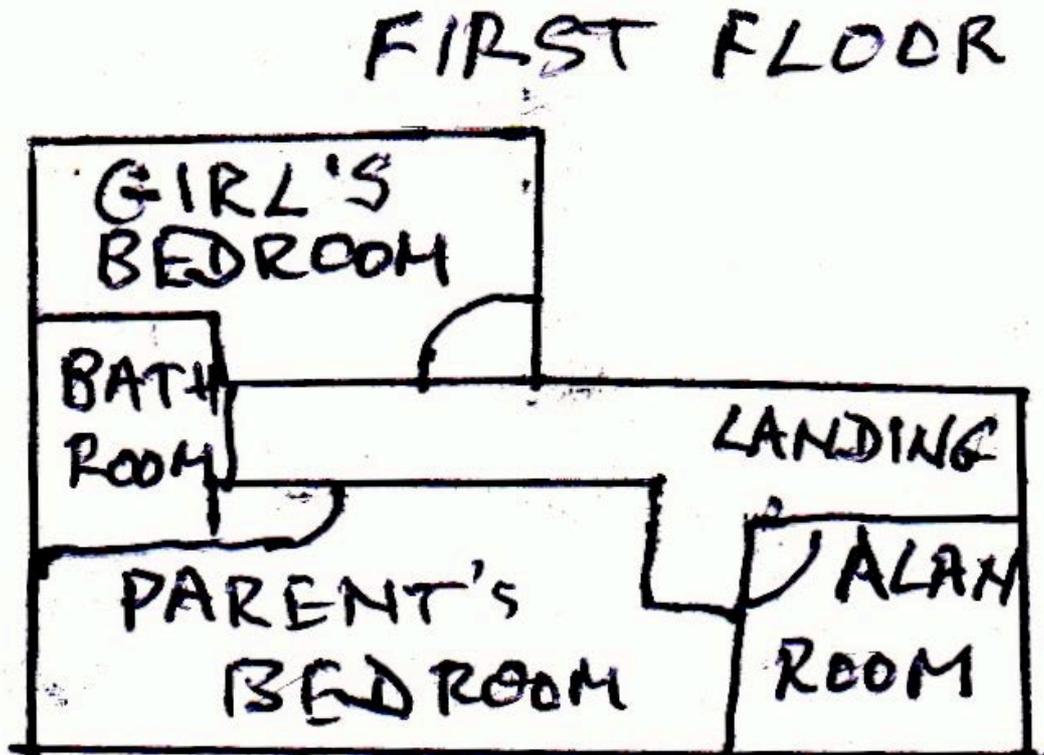
As I recall it, the downstairs plan was as follows.



You entered by a stone and slate porch, where boots and in the summer fishing rods were kept. The hall was very dark and thin, with a narrow table running down it. Later a downstairs water closet was built, perhaps under the stairs at the far end. The long thin living room opened off on the left, with window seats and a fire at the far end. The only interior photograph I have at present is of my mother by the fire-place.

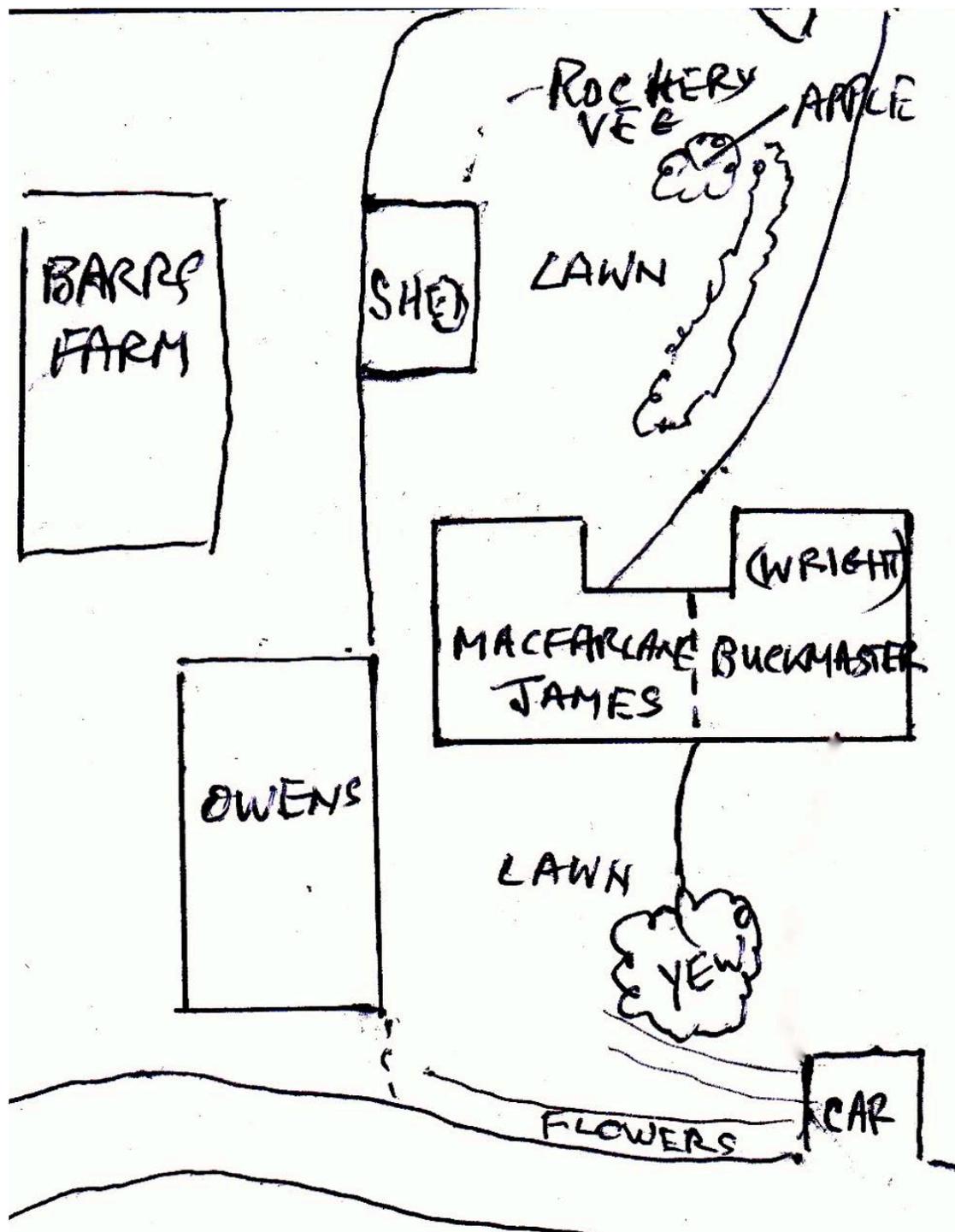
PHOTO

A big, stone-floored, kitchen opened off the living room with a large table in the centre where we eat meals, and a large coke-fired Aga against the back wall. It was the warmest room in the house. Off it opened a small pantry filled with bottles of jam and other fruit. I think the TV was to the left of the fireplace as one was looking at it.



Climbing up the turning wooden stairs one reached quite a large landing with a cupboard against the wall and space for a narrow bed. Off this opened my room - with an oak floor and oak wall between this room and my parent's or grandparent's bedroom. My sisters' bedroom and the bathroom were at the end.

The next layer of our world was the garden.



Coming up from the space for parking the car underneath the very old yew tree and past the flower bed, there was a lawn which was really too small for games. On one side were the Owen neighbours and a way through to the back garden led past the coal store. The garden shed, which was through the years to become a special place where I stored things and later worked, was against the wall dividing us from the farming family, the Barrs. A hedge went along shielding a path - perhaps there because there was in fact a right of way through the garden to the back fields, though fortunately hardly anyone used it. The ground rose at the back with a rockery and some vegetable beds.

The apple tree was large and prolific, but I am not certain I have located it absolutely right.

The next layer of our world was the country within about five miles, in other words the distance we could walk to explore or fish. (Elterwater at the top right was about five miles from Field Head, to give the scale.)



This is an old, nineteenth century map, and does not show some of the features of the landscape as I knew it. For example, the Drunken Duck Inn and tarn is not shown, where we used to go for fishing and following the hounds, nor is High Grassings, the home of the Knappetts and where our first party was held. The daily walk tended to be to Juniper Hill, about half a mile behind the house, and we roamed easily as far as the bottom of Esthwaite Water and to Tarn Hows.

ADD IN SOME PHOTOS

Ambleside was about five miles by bus and just within walking distance. Further away, beyond Elterwater was the Duddon Valley where we swam and fished, and beyond that the Cumbrian sea coast. Beyond Ambleside was the later home of William Wordsworth near Rydal and across Lake Windermere, more or less on a level with our house, was the town of Windermere. From that town to my school at Sedbergh was about twenty miles.

Family

To a large extent the central core of my family continued as before, but there were also differences. My uncle Robert became much less important after he married, which was in my first year at Sedbergh. His enthusiasm and inspiration as he pursued his very successful career, first as a writer and clerk in the House of Commons, and later in

international affairs and as a Member of Parliament, were a background factor. But we no longer played together which had been such a central part of the effervescence of Dorset holidays.

In the holidays, it was my uncle Richard who now spent more time with me, often coming on holiday for a week or two from his school-mastering job at Haileybury. On one occasion he took me for a holiday to Wastwater, and we often went for long walks together. He was also an officer at the religious camp at Iwerne Minster where I went four times during the Lake District years. He was also an aspiring writer, like my mother, and we would discuss the writer's craft and he was always encouraging. Like Robert he had studied history at Oxford, and this probably imperceptibly shaped both my move into history and later to Oxford.

My relationship to my parents obviously changed. It was the period when I was closest to my father through a shared interest in sport and fishing and I remember him as strong and supportive, but also showing signs of bewilderment at my academic development which was moving beyond his experience, having left school quite early.

My mother, even at a distance, continued to be the strongest influence on me, through her visits and through her letters. Around my sixteenth year, the time of our visit to Assam, she suddenly noticed that I was no longer the little boy of whom she had mildly despaired, with few friends, small and not very academic. Instead she began to communicate with me in a new way. This coincided with her own finding a sort of role in India as a teacher, learning Assamese, doing some archaeology, and starting to write seriously. So from about 1958 to the time I went to London to study in October 1967, when this narrative will end, about ten years, we became as it were pen friends, discussing philosophy, poetry, literature, and history. We started in a fairly lopsided fashion, with my mother well ahead of me in experience and knowledge, but gradually became more equal and quite intense. I look forward to the Oxford letters to see this developing up to the end of my period of research. The end coincided with her return from India, my marriage and the start of a new training in anthropology.

In some ways my two sisters became more important during this period. They were no longer away for periods in India (except on our joint holiday) and their school holidays coincided with mine. We formed, or at least Fiona did, part of 'the gang' in the Lakes and went to events together and shared an interest in pop music, walking, friends and even some aspects of books and films. Fiona's letters show that she was prepared to be critical of me and stand up for herself and also that I was part of her world, but not too central or dominant. We mostly remained friends and her energy and intelligence gave me stimulus. The easy friendship with a slightly younger girl no doubt helped me to form easy friendships with girls later in my life. Anne was younger and I only remember that her interests were already diverging from those of Fiona and myself.

More distant relatives, Billy and Julia, Aunts of various kinds, mainly lived either in southern England or Scotland, so I saw less of them. We certainly spent some time with Pat and Alan and Alan and Jean in Scotland, but I think less than when I was at the Dragon. Other family links, for example to the Mermagens, began to fade.

*

The Lake District and Sedbergh years are when my grandparents come into focus in my memory. I remember them better now, just as I remember most things more clearly from about the age of twelve. My grandmother remains in my mind as very tolerant and supportive, full of zest and a love of life which continued until her death. She was highly intelligent, manipulative, energetic and full of plans. I think she was harder with my sisters, especially Fiona, whose tough character matched her own. But in my case, she liked boy and after a succession of three sons, one of whom had only recently really left home, I must have been almost like a youngest son – perhaps the Monty who had died young to her great grief. She lent me money, allowed my friends to invade the house, sorted out my school things, and arranged my holidays, always with great efficiency and flexibility.

As my mother frequently reported in her letters to my grandparent – and I don't think she was just being flattering – we seemed very happy at home. I do indeed remember the holidays in the Lake District as mostly delightful. My grandmother was an excellent cook and never stinted us on food. Meals were large social occasions and the smell of marmalade making or roasting chickens are still in the back of my mind. My grandfather was still gardening, though at less of a pace, so we had masses of fruit – raspberries, strawberries, apples and plums, and a large variety of vegetables. With a farm next door, I am sure we were never short of eggs, milk and meat. Occasionally I even caught a fish that was large enough to eat.

The house was solid and snug and we all had our private spaces. My grandmother let me turn my little oak-timbered room into whatever I liked. She did not complain when I put planks on bricks along the walls and piled tomato boxes on them. In these I accumulated papers, the start of my filing system which is the basis of this account. I suspect that she rather approved – she was a great hoarder of paper and oddments, and I probably partly learnt this from her.

My grandmother encouraged all my interests, fishing, walking, skiffle and other things. She was probably the person who found me my first motorbike and never put up any objections to this potentially dangerous activity. She even encouraged my love life. She had been a notable magnet for handsome men in her youth – beautiful, vivacious and something of a flirt – and she loved parties and company. So when I was starting to search for girl friends she did not stand in my way. Indeed she extolled the beauty of the 'sweetly pretty' Annette Gribbon, the daughter of a friend near Blackpool. Annette and I had a brief and chaste but pleasant flirtation which is documented in my diaries and letters. It was with Annette that I first danced cheek to cheek – at a party where my grandmother was keeping a beady eye on us and no doubt also enjoying the fun in a vicarious way.

My grandparents were aging and there are signs of this in the letters. Although they must have been in their sixties, this seemed old to us at the time and my grandmother had a serious operation. My mother worried that Juno our boxer was dragging my grandfather out each day on long walks, though it is clear that this actually gave a purpose to his life.

I remember my grandfather with great affection. I have his watch from this period – which he lost on a walk and we found much later. He was still gardening keenly, doing the pools, wearing old clothes. He was always gentle, considerate, helpful, interested in

poetry, wrote to me often. A solid, dependable and kindly figure who was also very fond of my sisters. Even when dressed up for the annual British Legion parades, with his Military Cross, O.B.E. and other medals from his career ending up as a Lt Colonel in the 89th Punjabis he did not seem a daunting figure. Occasionally my grandmother would bully him and he could lose his temper. But mostly their relationship was mellow and loving and a good pattern for us. The relationship to my parents was also very good and there was deep trust and inter-dependence.

My grandparents' love of company meant that the house always seemed to be buzzing, expanding and contracting as uncles, especially Richard who spent part of a number of holidays with us - or Robert and Angela came to stay. Many neighbours came to visit us. Special occasions like birthdays and Christmas were usually celebrated with great gusto and I shall give some accounts of Christmas at Field Head later.

The enormous support and continuity of my grandparents, who had looked after me intermittently since I was an infant, and particularly in Dorset when my parents were away, did much to offset the absence of my parents. My mother was clearly deeply grateful to them for all they did and repaid a little of their kindness in my grandmother's last years.

Neighbours

The neighbours at that time stand out in my mind more clearly than at the Dragon and many of them were important to my parents and grandparents. For example the Manzi-Fe's, wealthy in a big house half a mile away, with a son of my age at Stow school, feature quite large and somewhat dominated us. Mrs Knappet and her author daughter Rachel were very frequent visitors and I particularly remember holding my first party - which I shall analyze in detail - at their house.

Other important neighbours were those who lived in the other half of our semi-detached farmhouse. I don't remember the Wrights much, but the Buckmasters, who arrived when I was about sixteen, were more memorable. The father was, to us, an old buffer, though with a certain glamour as he was rumoured to be the legendary Second World War hero or spy of the same name. The mother, as I recall, was scatty - I now recall her name as Beryl. Their son Martin was a large, amiable boy who brought me my first semi-serious girlfriend. He was part of the gang and with his drums, a car from early on, and other assets such as a coffee bar (The Walnut Coffee Bar in Ambleside) at the end of my time in Field Head was important.

There seem to have been few frictions with our neighbours sharing the house, or with the Owens who had sold us the house and moved to a long bungalow next door. On the farm there was a local farming family called Barr, whom we saw a good deal of - their sons, Stanley, Billy, Pip and perhaps another - were companions and we went out rabbiting together, they helped in our garden and came to watch our television. At my wedding, it was the Barr's horse and cart which drove us down to the church.

Opposite the drive was a small house. Perhaps this is where the Bells lived in the early part of our time at Field Head - they are frequently mentioned as having a television before we got one, he was a retired postman. Later I think that a Mr Haslam

lived there, a sort of recluse who is described with mild horror by my mother, but who also taught my sister a little Latin.

In the big house on the bend before our house a retired churchman, Canon Bradley lived with his wife. Elsewhere I tell the tale of his beautiful granddaughter. Further away in Elterwater was my friend Stephen Grieve, who had been at the Dragon with me. Freddie Holdsworth who ran the bookshop in Ambleside, though about seven years older than us, was a fringe member of the group as he was regarded as an 'intellectual'. Anne Johnson, a somewhat flirtatious but, as I remember, friendly blond had a holiday cottage in Outgate and was a serious member of our gang and she would often bring up a nice, dark-haired friend (Anne Hogg), who became a close friend.

There was also a fellow-Luptonian, though a couple of years older, Mike Doogan, whose father took me back to school and ran the Outward Bound centre at Brathay. Mike's dinner jacket remained a feature of my life and my first real adolescent party, which I shall describe, was at his house. I also remember Steve Darbishire, already a successful musician with his 'Yum Yum' band, and our envy with his own studio apartment. He was reputed to have cut a figure in Paris and played Fats Waller to my delight - and particularly sang and played 'Blue Moon'. Once when we played together with Martin on the drums I had a sense of what real pop music bands might be like and had dreams of forming one. But it never came to anything. [Have just re-met Steve in the Lakes, where he is a successful painter]. There was also Simon Manby, a heartthrob of my sister, and Edward Acland, another friend of Fiona's (his father a local MP?).

Others I remember were the grocer John Wright, who delivered groceries every week and held my grandfather in high esteem for his military career. [His shop is still there in Hawkshead, though now it mainly sells vegetables, jams etc.] There were various shopkeepers, bank managers, doctors and dentists, but none of them figure greatly in my patterns of friendship.

Others may emerge from the shadows as I investigate my records further. Yet it seems to be rather a small inner circle of family and friends, perhaps a dozen or so at the most, and a similar number at the most at school. A dozen neighbours at most were also important. There were also a few schoolmasters, officers at Iwerne and others. [see my grandfather's address book - scan?]

The precise range of my inner circle is rather nicely revealed by a list of those I decided I should pray for at the end of my time at Sedbergh. I was on a religious retreat in York and we were being instructed in the art of prayer. So I drew up a list of those to pray for on 31 August 1960. This is the list, moving to a certain extent from the closest to further outwards.

Organization of Prayer over the week - including Supplication for:

Friends. School: Ian, Geoffrey, David, Fred, Charles, Stewart, Nicky A, Alan B. Weedy Savory, Watto. Heber - Clive Bodd, those at Iwerne.

Home: David, Martin, Anne J and H. Michael, Gill, Jacky, Jo, Mike Doo[gan]. Jill, Steve, Simon their parents.

Family: Granny, Grandpa, Mummy, Daddy, Fiona, Anne, Aunt Pat, Uncles Alan, Jean. Richard, Robert, Billy cousins etc.

It is interesting that I placed my grandparents before my parents in the list, and there were more friends at school than in the other categories. Nicky A[damson] was the one friend from the Dragon school, apart from Stephen Grieve who lived at Elterwater, with whom I was still in contact by this time.

So I moved through five years surrounded by perhaps about fifty people who counted seriously in my life and left a strong trace on me. This seems small to me, but was perhaps not unusual. Much of one's life was lived alone - in the mind and work, reading, fishing and listening to music. Friendships were strong and deep, but quite selective.

MONEY WORRIES

One constant source of financial anxiety was housing. As a retired Lieutenant Colonel in the Indian Army, it might have been thought that my grandparents would not have found it too difficult to buy a house. This might especially be the case since they could share the costs with my parents whose children they were looking after. Renting a house was expensive and non-cumulative. The rent for 'By the Way' at Broadstone, for example, was £16 a month, and this was clearly very cheap, presumably because it was owned by 'Aunt Nell'. In comparison, for the much smaller house in Broadstone the rent had been £30 a month and the house in the lakes was £20 a month.

So quite early on my grandparents made efforts to find a house to purchase, a few details of their search being recorded in my grandfather's diary. They were not above trying to find a Council House and the Diary in February and March notes this. On February 17 'Lambert ... told us about how he got his council house' and the next day 'Looked at Council Houses in Broadstone'. On 10th March 'Went to Poole Borough Offices about getting a house' and on the next day 'Sent application for Council House'. There is no further reference to this attempt, so it clearly failed. The Council may well have thought that with the pressure on these highly subsidised houses for the poor a retired Colonel did not have the strongest case. My life might have been very different if they had succeeded - what I would have said at the Dragon if I had been going home to a Council House I do not know.

In the following year, 1953, there are various clues to the fact that they were searching elsewhere. On 22nd August my grandfather noted 'Meet Richard at Blandford and see houses at Haselbury Bryan'. This was the village where their son Billy's recently married wife's parents lived. Nothing seems to have available and on September 8 he notes 'Went to see cottage near Somerton'. Then on 17 September he notes 'Went in Richard's car to Haythorn cottage Haythorn Common Nr Holton Mrs Goldsmith and liked it Phoned to Fox Agents'. On 21st 'Went with Surveyor of Tweedale and Riley to see Haythorn Cottage' and two days later 'Macaulays take V and Robert to Haythorn Cottage'. It looks as if some sort of purchase almost occurred as on 26th he noted 'V[iolet] and D'Angibus [neighbours] sold Haythorn Cottage' but two days later on 28th 'Cry off Haythorn' and the following day they are hunting again, visiting their in-laws at Haselbury again and being met by their daughter-in-law Julia: 'Julia meets us at Yeovil and takes us to houses for sale'.

There is then a strange episode which looks as if they made an attempt to buy a plot of land, perhaps to try to build a house on. The enigmatic diary entries for October are as follows.

7: Burt sees Dr Walkers site

Told Macaulays

8: Sent application for Building advance to Dorset Council

9: Dr Walters offers site to Macaulays for 500/-

13: Wrote to Harker Curtis offering £350 for land

17: Rang up Harker Curtis about plot

19: We have secured Dr Walters plot

21: Went round land with Dr Walters

23: Macaulay sees us about plot

24: Dr Walters rang up re plot

I speak to her and give her Macs letter

26: Saw Whittle re plot

30: Sale of Quillet plot is off

Where this was, who or what Quillet is, what the wider plans were have not yet been revealed.

When my mother returned in the summer of 1954 the search for a permanent place to live became more serious. My grandparents were getting older, Aunt Nell was wanting to sell 'By the Way' and my parents do not seem to have been able to afford the asking price. So there a number of accounts in my mother's letters of abortive efforts to find a house. They illustrate well the strain it put on family relations and the difference in philosophy between my cautious grand-father and over-optimistic and ambitious grandmother. They also show how much of a whim it was to move from Dorset to the Lake District and how the final shared purchase was fairly accidental as well. They possibly also suggest a very gradual improvement in the general financial situation as the miseries of the early fifties gave way to slowly rising salaries.

On 27th July 1954 my mother wrote *We are vaguely on the look-out for a house and Mummy is always answering advertizements but nothing develops.* Then on 23rd August she wrote *I'm beginning to look around vaguely for houses, not with any definite purpose yet, but I think its time we were thinking of moving on.*

On 30th August my mother wrote in more detail.

Mummy and Daddy went off on a wild goose chase this week-end to look at a house in Herefordshire going for £800, it looked lovely from the from the picture, on the banks of the river Wye with its own fishing and boating, glorious country etc. we had worked out where we would all sleep and the name of the boat we would have but of course they came back without having bought it! Apparently it was terribly trippery with motor boats roaring past your front door and hotels all round, and then in the winter you are left in isolation as all the hotels close down. Of course there was bound to be a snag at that price and one never knows with M and D as they aren't really keen to buy a house when it comes to the point, I was sorry as we could then have stayed on here for your leave. Still I am a firm believer in something turning up.

The tension between my grandparents is reflected in the next account on 6th September.

Mummy nearly rushed off to Farnham to-day after another house but Daddy was so gloomy about it and the financial ruin they were on the brink of that she gave up the idea. It sounded rather nice but cost the same as this and is a very expensive place stiff with aristocracy and Major Generals. I don't know if we could afford to help towards buying a house, could we if it came to the point, I don't know how much if anything we are going to have of our commission after the Kyahs [merchants] have been at it.

My mother then left for a trip to Scotland, leaving the house in Dorset in confusion and anger. She wrote from Scotland on the 11th.

I was glad to get away from "By the Way" really as Mummy was in such a rage that Daddy wouldn't let her look at a house somewhere that she put all her chickens up for sale, cancelled all her papers, stopped her racing and made Daddy stop his pools and generally made us all feel uncomfortable and the atmosphere tense. It is really hopeless as Daddy won't look at anything but the cheapest houses and of course there are snags. Mummy goes for expensive places which Daddy won't hear of. I think myself it would be best for them to stay put until Robert is "finished" and their expenses less, but Mummy must have her own way or everyone knows about it. So I think I shall be staying at Ambleside unless its awful. How I hate being homeless and dependent on other people.

My mother then returned by way of the Lake District. I had already been accepted for Sedbergh School in Yorkshire from September 1955, so it began to make sense that the family moved north, a feeling encouraged by my mother's obvious delight in the beauty of the Lakes.

Yet it did not work out. My grandfather noted in his diary on 8th - giving the location of the house, which was not very far from the one we would soon buy - 'Owner refused to let house at High Wray'. My mother commented in a letter three days later. *Last week was very cold and a bit depressing, chiefly I think because the new house fell through - she decided she only wanted to let it for a few months after all. I had built so many dreams round it, it was a horrid blow - but I suppose things always turn out for the best.*

Although property in the Lake District was still a good deal cheaper than in the south, and although the purchase was made jointly with her father, a retired Lt. Colonel, it required a very large loan and was only just possible. The difficulty of buying a first home is familiar to many, but that it should have occurred when my grandparents were around sixty, and my father in his forties is interesting.

First details of the possible purchase come in a letter dated 22nd January 1955.

Everything is in a state of flux here, as Mummy and Daddy are looking for somewhere to go and a few days ago we went to look at a house for sale near the house I stayed in when I first came here. It is only half a house, in the most perfect situation, overlooking fields and hills and lakes and next door to a farm and riding stables - isolated but not far from the bus stop... Don't know what will become of these negotiations but of course I would like to get the first house, and buy it off my people, it would be wonderful to have somewhere of our own but I'm not really hoping too much. Let me know what you think.

My mother then reverted to the more humdrum but anxiety-making details of daily expenditure, writing that the

bank wrote and said I had £173 and surely this would do for school bills, it will just but leaves nothing over. I know you must feel I'm simply absorbing money, but

Christmas and school bills coming so soon on top of the house and move, coming on top of the new uniforms has given me no time to catch up. I do think Grindlays are a rotten lot, I think we should change to Lloyds. I haven't yet paid any school bills, just isn't there as I've had such large local bills this month - of course I'm not out of money but will be when I do pay the bills. This finance business worries me sick, because I just don't know how to economise any more, it isn't paying me to have my people, they drink pints and pints of milk and have lots of hot baths etc., but I can't really grudge it them. This worry over money is the only fly in my ointment, I have a drawer full of bills for electricity, coal, drink, Calor Gas etc., and spend my time wondering which I can leave over - what a depressing letter! Now I'm wondering how to buy a house! Have we got any commission left, and how are you going to get anything home for our leave if I spend it all. There won't be any more school bills till you come which is something. I have written a story this week, but as I haven't got a typewriter that doesn't help much. Oh darling I do hate wasting all my letters in this dreary way but it is my main preoccupation.

The next letter, dated on 26th January, returns to the question of buying the house.

This is really a business letter because we are getting involved with this house business and I want your permission to go ahead. The house we want to get is half of a big house, in the most divine position - quite near Borwick Fold where I stayed when I first came to Ambleside. It is part of a farm, a riding stables, and has been done up from top to bottom - quite perfect for the children as its surrounded by fields and hills and theres a small lake about a mile away and of course Windermere about 3 miles away.

The owner wants £3,700 for it but might take a bit less - the point is that a building society aren't keen to lend Daddy the money because of his age, but wouldn't hesitate with us - we went to see a lawyer to-day and he was fairly certain we'd get a loan (presuming the society thought the house a sound proposition). We could get a 20-year loan, or a 10-year one, the latter would mean about £360 a year he thought. I know thats a lot of money darling - but you must offset it against what we would have to pay for holiday homes and travelling expenses for the children - and places to rent for our leaves - and this way we would at least have a house at the end of it. And I am sure that I can make something out of my writing once I get started. I would sit up burning any amount of midnight oil if I felt it would get me this house.

It is such a wonderful place for the children to grow up in, I would have no qualms about leaving them there - as it is I worry constantly about what we shall do with them and where they will leave their bicycles and airguns and electric trains. I know it's a gamble and that we can't afford it - but we've always gambled - from getting married onwards - and a few good commissions would see the whole thing paid off. I spoke to the lawyer about Income tax and he called his expert in who said as long as you were domiciled abroad you wouldn't have to pay double tax. He is looking into that carefully anyway, and of course the house will have to surveyed to see that it's really sound, otherwise the Building society won't play. There is no question of paying anything till November when we give up this place, my people will do the instalments till then - they'll also furnish it as they have practically enough stuff already.

Of course there are snags about the house - being semi-detached is one - but a big tall hedge will probably solve that. Anyway if you feel it doesn't give you enough

scope when you retire we could sell it – but meanwhile it would solve all our difficulties. What do you think darling? I do hope you will agree. I've put you in a bit of a fix I know but I swear I'll make some money and help pay for it. This letter coming after my last one moaning about no money will send you demented I expect, but cheer up pet, it won't cost us anything till our next commission comes in and you said it would be a bumper one. Of course if the Building Society doesn't agree to help us well thats that!

The parallel account in my grandfather's diaries mirror these first decisions. He wrote in January:

Saturday 22: Went to see Field Head House at Outgate
Monday 24: Iris goes to see house – Field Head
Wednesday 26: Saw Handley the solicitor re house
Friday 28: Rang up RDC [Rural district Council] Ulverston
Saturday 29: Wrote to Owen and sent him application form to complete for advance to purchase house.

Throughout the following negotiations my grandfather kept quite detailed entries in his diary which suddenly leaps to life from March 1955 as if he was rejuvenated by the prospective purchase. The story could be told through these, but I shall follow it in the words of my mother's letters to my father which are more personal.

At this crucial juncture, the postal service between the Lakes and Assam becomes fragile and my mother is not certain about what is getting through to my father. She therefore writes on 1st February

I was so glad to hear that mine were arriving, but you obviously missed one or two, as I'd explained in detail the house we nearly got at High Wray – rented. Hope you have got my letter about the one we want to buy and that you will be as keen on the idea as we are – nothing more has happened about it yet, the Rural District Council who we hope will give us a loan, and will do something soon we hope. They are better than a building society as they don't demand any security except the house itself. It will be a godsend for my people to have this house as they've used all their capital and are in a very uncertain state and we can pay for it out of our Overseas Allowance alone, until such time as we can put down any lump sum.

Then she turns to the problem of recurrent costs.

While we're on the subject, I'd be grateful for some money this month please darling - I haven't been able to pay Alan's school bill yet. If you could send me £100 this month for that, and £100 next month to clear up bills, I can carry on till you come on that. As you noticed, we didn't seem to get any Overseas Allowance in December, haven't had January's statement yet. Don't get into a panic about leave, darling, we can always go and help in one of the local pubs if we're too utterly broke! I hope our financial straits aren't going to prejudice you against the house, because we don't have to start paying for that till after our leave. If you were here I would be wagging my little finger like mad. I want this so very much darling.

My father clearly received one or more of these letters and to my mother's great relief replied positively – using the expensive but safe message of a telegram. So my mother wrote on 6th February.

Got your wire yesterday, and was very relieved – it is very sweet of you darling, but I promise I will do my bit and I'm sure we shall manage alright. The form has been sent off to the rural district council and now we have to contain ourselves in as much patience as we can muster and wait for their verdict. We shall probably not get their support and will be back where we started from. The trouble now is to stop Mummy from ordering Dunlopillo mattresses and drawing-room suites ad. Lib – she has ideas far beyond any of our stations – but in fact there is very little needed and I hope I'll be able to curb her enthusiasm. Until we hear definitely from the Council we can do nothing anyway. I do hope you will like the house darling its not a bit the sort of place I ever visualized having, but what peace! Just fields in front and hills behind – but a nice pub called "The Drunken Duck" nice and handy for you! The children should be very happy there in an unsophisticated way which is after all the best. But I mustn't dream too hard, I expect they'll crash round my ears again.

The same letter also contained further disturbing recurrent accounts (which show that my sister's school fees had risen from £40 a term to £50 each, just over half mine at the Dragon), which my mother tried to explain to my father thus.

I enclose the account. The large bills are due to Christmas and the cheques I cashed were socks, hankies, gloves, tuck and pocket-money for school, and rail fares of course. I have since paid the girls school fees (£100) and so things are a bit tricky – having horrid threats that my electricity will be cut off! Still no Overseas Allowance, it would be handy to pay the rent. Won't start bleating as I expect you have sent some money but most of it will go on Alan's school fees I expect I still have quite a few bills outstanding. Once I've got straight I really shan't need any more! Anne had some story that you had bought a horse(s). Can this be true?! Can't believe it, just before your leave – though I'm sure you deserve a decent horse darling. Oh bother this money business, it is the one big fly in my ointment – but one thing is that we shall never have a more expensive time than this, so if we can keep our heads above water now we shall reach the shore, I hope! Oh darling what miserable letters but I am rather worried as the bank is so unhelpful! But only one more whole month without you, and after that nothing will really matter and we can starve quite happily as long as we're together!

One minor anxiety at this time was the enthusiasm with which my grand-mother took the hunting for furniture for a house which was far from purchased. My mother wrote on 12th February

No more news of the house, but Mummy went to a sale on Thursday to "have a look" and came back with everything in the sale including a bicycle! Not literally, but they are to follow. I can't imagine what happens if the house falls through. It is with great difficulty we've dissuaded her from rushing off to other sales this last few days, have awful visions of humping kitchen dressers and rocking chairs round for ever and ever! Actually the things she bought were terribly cheap, the chairs 2/- each! Even as firewood they'd be a bargain!

Six days later on 18th February days the house purchase is still on the top of my mother's mind and she tries to reassure my father as to the quality of the property.

The house business doesn't progress, in fact the Rural dist. Council doesn't discuss it until March 17th so we're all feeling a bit on edge, wondering what they'll decide and what we shall do if they say no. Mr Owen says he'll wait till then before putting it into the market, but it doesn't leave us much time to make other decisions - Building Societies take even longer to get cracking. The house may disappoint you, in itself it isn't very wonderful, it is part of a long building which has been divided into two, [small picture of house and garden] some people called Wright have the other half, and the barn on the left made into a bungalow for the owner. But apart from the farm behind there are no other houses near and the view in front, behind and all round is wonderful. There is about half an acre of garden behind, lawn, veg and rockery, and then fields. It has all been done up recently and has electricity, Aga Cooker, Stainless steel sink, nice modern bathroom, water from mains - very handy and clean. There are 3 bedrooms, two big ones and a small oak bedroom with uneven floors - there are oak beams in the drawing room and window-seats in the low windows and its really very nice. Not the cosy, cottagey sort of house I'd imagined, a plain, thick-walled stone house which would stand up to anything. The "Drunken Duck" has its own tarn full of rainbow trout close by and there is free fishing in the becks and lakes and I should think shooting though I haven't looked into that. Anyway we'll have to see what happens.

A particularly expensive piece of furniture is mentioned in my grandfather's diary. On 16th May 'Went to Pauls in Kendal and bought carpet for £38-16-0' and the following day 'Carpets look v nice in drawing room'. These carpets, which I remember as Persian, lasted for many years and followed my grandmother round to several more houses.

The only other note here suggests that my father had arranged for a further overdraft, or sent more money, for she writes *Thank you for arranging about the money darling. Sorry to have got so hysterical about it.*

On about 3rd of March things started to move on. My mother wrote that

We've just heard that the committee which sat yesterday has recommended our petition to the Council, so that's one hurdle over. I think we shall have to beat the old man down a bit though, he is asking far too much - but it is the sort of place that somebody might come along and see and be prepared to slap down the money for, just on the situation and the fact that it is National Trust Property and can't be spoiled - there is really no way to value a place like that. Still we shall have to be a little reluctant and not show him how frantic we are. If we get the Building Society loan, it will be bought in Daddy's name so there'll be no question of Income Tax or anything for us. The Bank Rate would have to go up just now.

The following week on 11th there is one of several allusions to an 'Overseas Allowance' which had been earlier mentioned as not being paid in January. How much this was, and whether it was a new arrangement (I can find no references to it in previous years) I do not know. My mother wrote *You don't mention why there has been no Overseas Allowance lately, I was reckoning to pay the rent out of that. Anyway*

I've written to the bank and said you will clear up the overdraft when you return, as I say we can always get a job to tide us over sticky patches. That commission will certainly come in handy!

The following week on 19th my grandmother was still whizzing around buying furniture, and my mother also bewailed the cost of fishing tackle.

Mummy has gone quite mad over buying furniture and has about three times too much, she prances off to every sale and sees a much nicer bed or sofa than she got last time and the result is that to day we have 3 sofas and about 30 chairs - at the last sale she met some people she knew in Pindi [Rawalpindi, India] and brought them back to tea, wasn't it strange... . As for buying us new rods and reels - a multiplying reel alone is £3. I thought of getting Alan one for Xmas and was shattered.

A week later, in a letter of 27th, the matter of the house is still in the air.

The house business isn't quite settled, the surveyor has to look at it and value it, and then we shall make a definite and final offer, - should be sometime this week I think, it is hard to get the wheels of local government moving, but the Dist. Council have been very good and helpful so far. Do hope you are going to be pleased with the house, my worry is that you will be disappointed but I think time and the growing of hedges will improve it a lot, its in rather a raw state at present.

Two weeks later my mother is panicking about the whole decision and the huge sums involved.

The whole thing is becoming a bit of a nightmare, as with all this delay and time to think it over we are getting cold feet over the house. I wake up in the night sweating at the thought of all the money involved when none of us have a bean - but somehow I think we shall pull it off. We can't ever get as close as this again I feel, and the owner has been most patient while we make up our minds. The surveyor has been out to see it, and we should definitely get a decision this week as to exactly how much the council will give us. I think the present idea is that we go straight into it, more or less picnicking, and M and D stay on here. Anyway I should be able to let you know definitely by next week...

In the same letter, shortly before the arrival of my father, my mother admitted that she could not make ends meet and again expressed her aversion to arguing about money. She wrote

Next week we have a couple of tea parties and a visit to the dentist which is a bore, shall also have to get a few summer clothes for the girls. Won't discuss finance, but I'm afraid I'm running up an overdraft again, just can't seem to help it but we'll have to thrash it out when you arrive. Not the first evening though, we'll keep that separate and unworldly, we won't think or talk about money - just for those few hours will we?

Fortunately the final agreement on the house occurred just before my father returned, so my mother gives the details in a letter of 7th April.

The house business is settled at last, we have had to give £3.550 without the garage, he wouldn't take a penny less and we felt we couldn't wait about waiting to see if anyone else would offer as much and possibly lose it after all. The surveyor only valued it at £3,000 so we know we are paying too much, but we want it so badly we daren't risk someone else snapping it up. The council are paying £2,700 and M and D are filling the gap by means of an enormous overdraft, which we will pay back as soon as we can to them - perhaps £400 when our half commission arrives and the other £400 when the rest comes? They will then pay the instalments on the house till the end of the year, which will now only be £10 a month. All very complicated, but I can't think of any other way we could have bought a house can you, and its really Jolly d. of the Council to be so helpful I think. Hope you aren't too overwhelmed by all this darling. I'm afraid we'll have to have a quiet leave, but it should be fun all the same.

On this same day my grandfather ended his parallel account of the purchase with a detailed summary in his diary as follows. 'Letter from RDC Ulverston saying house valued at £3000 and they will give me £2700 advance. Phoned Handley who told me how to write to Owen when sending 10 per cent deposit. Wrote to Owen saying we will buy house for £3500. Phoned Mrs Owen and asked her to ask Owen to have house ready for us. Wrote to Bank thanking for allowing £400 overdraft.' The following day, Good Friday, he noted 'Owen rang up acknowledging my letter and cheque and says I cannot go into house till contract signed. He will however write to his solicitor to expedite.' Appropriately my grandfather was soaking himself in the atmosphere, reading "Wordsworthshire" by Eric Robertson and "Companion into Lakeland" by Maxwell Fraser.

There is finally a sheet in my grandfather's hand headed 'Field Head' which summarizes all the expenses incurred in buying the new house. This is as follows:
Furniture etc. Carpet £38 10s ; Furniture £127 2s; From Broadstone £30; Furniture Transport £3 12s 6d; Total £199 4s 6d
Bank charges on 1st overdraft: £16.
Paid by Mac: £250 on 31st
Field Head: Surveyor £10 10s; Ten percent [down payment] £355; Insurance £3 18s 9d; Frank Jackson (percent from May-July?) £38 12 0; Frank Jackson £495; Hart Jackson £97 5s; Total £1000 5s 9d.
Lawyer (paid by Mac) £60 3s
R.D.C [Rural District Council] Aug 19th-31st £4 1s 9d; September £16 16s 4d

Thus the expenses of furniture was about £200 and costs associated with the house purchase, including a ten percent payment, about £1000.

*

I have not as yet worked out what my father's pay was. As a prelude to trying to establish that, it is worth looking at some occasional mentions of his movements up the hierarchy of the tea business.

On 18th March 1948 my mother wrote Why do you think you are leaving Cherideo? Is there any chance of an Acting or what? Why my father was at Cherideo at all I am not certain; it was a good garden to which he returned as Manager in 1954 and stayed at

until he retired. An 'Acting' was presumably a lucrative position acting for an absentee manager on a bigger garden.

Less than a month later in a letter dated 13th April my mother wrote

By this time I suppose you will have moved again. Why do you dread going to Gelakey so much? [My father listed in a Directory of 1949 as at Gelakey]. You did not mind going there before did you? Is Roger getting an acting? It would help them out. Who is taking your place? I expect you will have answered all these questions before you get this even. It's a bore for you having to pack up all your stuff again, it'll be nice when we settle wont it?'

Ten days later she had heard that he was going to another garden, writing on 23rd

Deopani sounds nice but I hope you can you use your frig. The new bungalow should be just ready for us.

My father, however, was still working elsewhere as my mother wrote on 29th May

I got a letter from you yesterday, still from Atkhel. Are you going to get any extra pay for all this sweet? I'm glad about it anyway, because it'll keep you busy through the hot weather.'

My father was clearly building a bungalow somewhere, but otherwise between jobs, for my mother wrote on 15th June

Two letters from you together, after a long gap! I shall expect lots from now until you get another baby to hold for another manager. Yes, I hope we get a little time in that nice house you're building, but you seem to be in a very unsettled sort of stage just now.

By the time my mother returned to Assam in October 1948 my father had become Manager of a relatively small tea garden [about which I hope to get details SH] called Tingalibam. This was the estate I visited around my 11th birthday in 1952. Here he seems to have been a success, at least from the one letter commenting on his work by my mother and written three months after she had come home for the next leave

In a letter dated 19th February she wrote

I got your letter with the news of your record sale a few days ago, I was just as thrilled as you but of course I expect you to be much better than anyone else - I'm sorry if I don't boost you up more pet, but you know I think you're the most wonderful thing that ever walked, even if I don't tell you so. The reason I don't is probably jealousy, because you do everything so much better than me and I resent it - but you know what I really feel by now surely? I bet Geach is pleased, and perhaps a little piqued? I'm sure you'll make Tingalibam the best garden in the Company, in fact I know you will, Your wonderful darling (you'd better file this letter and use it for reference when we fight and I run you down!)

*

Although my mother had three small children, and spent considerable energy in teaching Anne, and then Fiona as well while in Assam, she felt that she should try to earn some money. There were two possibilities as she saw it. One was through her writing. From her late teens she had been convinced that one day she would be a published author and this dream finally did come true - but not until the 1960's. Before that she made various attempts to find enough time and energy to write, and alluded to this possibility on a number of occasions. These attempts and hopes are mentioned in her letters through this period.

The first occasion is a dispiriting reference in a letter dated 18th March 1948 when she wrote *I'm feeling a little depressed as I sent some verses up to a paper called "Good Housekeeping" and they returned them to-day saying they didn't want them. And if they won't publish my rubbish, who will? I'm afraid I'm going to be a wash-out in every direction darling, but please don't stop loving me.'*

She does not seem to have pursued this during the year when she was coping alone in Pinocot, but as the extra expenses of moving house and later to trying to buy a house occurred towards the end of 1954 she reverted to the theme. On 26th September she wrote

When I'm on my own I shall definitely take a job and also try to do a bit of writing and I'm sure will be able to make some money.

She remained hopeful as the new year arrived and on 26th January wrote *I am sure that I can make something out of my writing once I get started. I would sit up burning any amount of midnight oil if I felt it would get me this house.* Then on 11th March 1955 she wrote further that *I've hired a typewriter for a week to type my masterpieces, so hope you don't mind this, I always have to pay double on your letters these days anyway!*

From these scraps, and her surviving papers, it is clear that she was writing bits and pieces, but felt that without the typewriter to convert them into something she could send to publishers she was thwarted. It was really only when she was on her own in Assam after leaving the children at school at the end of 1955 that her writing took off. Before then much of her energy and her art went into her letters to my father and to us.

My mother did make at least one effort to try to get a paid job. Her account of the venture captures much of what made her almost unemployable, yet very endearing. It is described in a letter dated 5th November 1954 and describes the attempt of a thirty-two year old middle class lady with a limp to find employment in the Lake District at that time.

This afternoon I had an amusing time, I went out to apply for a job! A woman on a bus was telling me about a job she'd got at an Orphanage near Ambleside, so I went along to see if they'd got anything part-time for me - was intending to talk very fast about "teaching experience" and "knowledge of dressmaking". When I got out of the bus a middle-aged man came up to me and said did I know the way to the orphanage. I pointed to a large house and said I thought that was it and I was going there myself to look for a job. He said "So am I. What are you going to do?" I said

“I’ve no idea, what are you?” and he said anything at all, last time he was a butler, but he had 3 children to educate and had to do something to which I said “Me too” and we went up the drive hand-in-hand. A very smooth man ushered us in and took me into a private room and asked me what sort of job I had in mind, at which I came out with my patter about being fond of children and teaching experience. He looked surprised and said “Yes, quite” and I said “This is an Orphanage you’re starting isn’t it” and he said “No it’s a factory for making woollen garments”! Well, I was a bit taken aback, but couldn’t drop through a hole in the floor unfortunately, so started telling him I could type at which he looked relieved but of course when I told him I could only work 3 mornings and break off for the holidays etc. he wasn’t very hopeful but very kindly wrote my name on a piece of paper and said he’d let me know if anything cropped up. He ushered me out very politely saying “thank you for coming Mrs Macfarlane” and I answered “Oh that’s alright!” very condescendingly as if I’d done him an enormous favour! I laughed all the way back in the bus, I never waited to hear how my friend who’d been a butler got on. Can’t see myself being employed darling, but I shall try and find out what sort of job I’m applying for next time!

My mother’s accounts of my grand-father, then aged around sixty, a retired army officer with numerous medals for bravery, and his attempt to get a job is shorter but also amusing. My mother writes on 26th November 1954 *Daddy applied for a job as “Driver, handyman” to some elderly lady, and had just about landed the job when Mummy arrived and firmly squashed the whole plan, declaring that he was neither - quite rightly but poor Daddy was heartbroken. He is sadly in need of something to do, as he has not hobby, except football pools and can’t seem to even read a book.*

My grandfather’s diary shows that he did not give up the effort straight away. On 7th March 1955 he records ‘Went to National Trust Office Ambleside to ask for job ... No luck’. Then on 2nd April he tried once more. ‘Went to WH Smith and asked for Librarians job advertised in Westmorland Gazette. He wants female.’

In fact, it was only my grandmother who briefly found a job as waitress and cleaner at a neighbouring hotel for a few months. Her tenacity is shown by the account in my grand-father’s diaries. She applied for the job at the Ravenscroft hotel (just by our house) on 6th June 1955 and started work on 13th. The diary shows that she worked seven days a week, from 7.30-2.30 each day, with an occasional extra session from 6.15 in the evening. She worked without a break until 11th September, just before she and my grandfather moved to Hawkshead to look after the house they had jointly bought with my parents. I still remember her delight when an unexpectedly large tip was left for her.

HOME LIFE; YEAR BY YEAR

1955: April to December

Here are just some rough notes to fill in this hitherto blank period.

The previous account of life at Beck House ended on 27 April when I went back to the Dragon School for my final term.

As my father was now back in England until he and my mother went back to Assam in October, there are no letters between them, or between me and them in India until late October. I do not seem to have kept letters from my mother in my last term at the Dragon, though there are several letters from me, filled with Dragon affairs.

So the two real sources are my grandfather's and mother's diaries for 1955. The diary covers the whole year and is the fullest of his diaries, and that of my mother is the only one kept by her (in brief pocket diary form) in these years. From May 20th, when my parents went to live in Field Head and my grandparents remained in Beck House, until the end of September, the family was split, so most of my grandfather's diary deals with matters not directly related to the Field Head household, and the period from November to December my mother was on the voyage out to India and in Assam, so that material will be used elsewhere.

Just to give a connecting account, I shall include reasonably full extracts from these diaries with all that might be relevant. But this can be thinned. I shall just add one or two memories and comments [in square brackets], but thicken this out later.

IRIS DIARY 1955

[January to April put into 'Beck House' material]

May

- 3 To Kendal got skirt & jacket!
- 4 To Keswick for kilt. Dinner Fothergills
- 5 To film "High & the Mighty"
- 6 To Lyth Valley. Picked cowslips
- 7 Picnic Climbed 'Cartmel Fell'
- 8 Son to Billy & Julia. Wet day. Took kids to Grange
- 9 To see Gatey. Fishing at Rydal. Mortons
- 11 Tea Mrs Grieve. *
- 12 to Ballet 6.45. Winter Gardens
- 14 Sheila arrives. Didn't. took kids to Ballet. Wet
- 16 Permission to enter. Cleaned
- 17 Furniture arrived
- 18 Cleaned in morning. Kendal afternoon.
- 19 Cleaned all day. Lit Aga.
- 20 Sports 2 p.m. Cold. Play 8.15 p.m. Slept at Field Head.
- 21 Half term. 11 Dancing display. Kids home.
- 22 Sheila arrives. Midnight. Mac to meet her 4 a.m.
- 24 To "Living Desert"

25 Dinner Chapmans
26 Election. M & D to supper here. Showed film.
28 Fete. Fiona German Measles. Gils played. To Races.
29 Took picnic to Tilberthwaite. Lovely day.
30 Very hot. Cartmel Races. Very crowded.
31 Hot.

June

1 Hot. Tea Ambleside. To see "Gilbert & Sullivan"
2 Hot. Took Sheila to Wishaw. Returned for supper.
3 Wet. Shopped in Ambleside. Cleared hall.
4 Anne for lunch. Alison Morton tea. Anne cold *5 Lovely day. Picnic to Wrynose Pass, on to Eskdale & Duddon Valleys. Return Anne
6 Hot day. Collected machine. Painted picture. Gardened.
10 To Oxford. Took Mrs Grieve. To Woodstock for night.
11 Alans fathers match 12 p.m. He made 6.
12 On river with Robert. Cold & wet. To film "Laughter in Paradise"
13 Arrived 4 a.m. to Ambleside to see kids. Rang Jean
14 Rained all day. Made curtains. Shed flooded.
15 To Windermere. To Scotland after lunch, with Sheila's cloths. Cold.
16 Returned after lunch. Very coldy & depressed.
17 Stayed in bed
18 Picnic to rydal. Lovely day, kids bathed.
19 Collected Juno. Drive.
20 Wet day. To Kendal p.m.
21 Lovely day. Gardened.
22 To Tarns for walk
25 Ballet
30 Robert to say

July

1 Alan passed Common E. Wet.
2 Wet *
3 M & D to lunch. Drive to Wrynose. Heather Jackman.
4 Girls return
5 Lovely day. Picnic to Kentmere. Ghastly Hay Fever
8 Hot
9 Hound trail here.
10 Hot. To Drigg with Alison
11 Hot
12 Hot. Fiona & Carol arrive.
13 Hot. Disastrous picnic to Silecroft
14 Hot. Boat on Esthwaite. Broke oar.
15 Hot. Mower arrives. Ghastly hay-fever. Picnic Grasmere
16 Carol returns. Drinks Reeds.
17 Hot. Early church. M & D tea & supper. See T.V. at postmans. Kids ride.
18 Anne to Penrith. Stopped at Ullswater. No luck. Rain.
19 Hot. Gardened and went for walk to Langdales.

[Alan back at end of dragon]

- 21 Hot. Ambleside fete. Alan returns & Anne
- 22 Hot. Tea, Mummy. Dinner "Drunken Duck"
- 23 Hot. Jean & Alan arrive. Show at Ulverston.
- 24 Kids swam at Esthwaite. Picnic Satterthwaite.
- 25 Picnic at Drigg. Lunch by Duddon.
- 26 Picnic Grasmere. Hot. Girls rode, Fiona fell.
- 27 Fiona in bed. Hot
- 28 Fiona in bed. Glandular fever
- 30 Appleby races. Show Cockermouth *
- 31 - Hot

August

- 1 Hot
- 2 Hot
- 3 Cartmel Show
- 4 Hoty. Sheep dog trials 9 a.m. Windermere.
- 5 Hot. Fionas haircut. Gardened & lit bonfires.
- 6 To Duddon with Stephen. Found Sea Trout [I remember well the scene - the fish dead at the bottom of the Duddon, my father swimming down and getting it, the non-convinced river warden who suddenly turned up]
- 7 Cooler. Rescued trout from Beck
- 8 To Windermere a.m.
- 9 Boat on Esthwaite. Rained all day. Robert, Angela, Richard. [The immortal episode with Robert in goggles etc.] To film "This is Paris"
- 10 Lovely day. Long walk to Tarns. Met couple & looked at house.
- 11 Picnic Rydal. Sheep-dog trials Rydal
- 13 Walk on fells. Nicola & Felicity
- 14 Cowans to lunch
- 15 Boat on Esthwaite. Cooler. M & D & Reeds to inner. Stephen to stay.
- 17 Wet. Morrisises to drinks. Hendersons & Mrs Grieve.
- 18 Wet. 12 pm Grasmere Sports
- 20 Supper Beck House
- 21 Drinks Hendersons 12. Wet Church 6
- 22 Wet
- 23 Hot. Gardened. Girls rode in field
- 24 Hot. To Cartmel Gymkhana. Tea Boltons. *
- 25 Hot. On Windermere with boat.
- 26 On Windermere all day. Hot. Caught 5 perch.
- 27 Hot. Shopped Ambleside. Planted wallflowers.
- 30 To Edinburgh. Wet
- 31 Edinburgh Tattoo [I remember this well, the swirling and skirling - I was deeply impressed and felt very Scottish]

September

- 1 To See Gauguin and Holyrood Palace
- 2 Alan & I to Danish Ballet [my first live ballet - which I enjoyed]
- 3 Cowans return
- 4 Return. Picnic lunch

5 Collected Katherine Shepherd
6 HOT. Hawkshead Show
7 Alison to tea. Robert & Co to see house
8 Kendal Show. Alan fished. Cowan
9 Wet. Girls rode. Walked to H'head. Fished with Alan at High House
10 SA?? At Carlile
12 To see Dr Juno's distemper 2-3
13 Alan dentist 5
15 Mac dentist 12.30

Alan goes to Sedbergh

19 Alan to Sedbergh *
22 Girls to school.

October

1 Collected Anne & Fiona. Anne rode & I biked. Lovely afternoon.
2 Summertime ended. To Sedbergh. Picnic lunch, wet day, turned up A's kilt.
[Thereby hangs a tale - the race for the kilt etc.]
3 Returned Anne. Day at Beck House doing inventory.
4 Mrs Grieve to tea.
5 To Kendal shopping. Wet
6 To Beck House Finished inventory. Gales.
10 T.A.B. injections. Mac seedy
11 Beautiful day. Mac in bed.
12 Day at Beck House
13 Dentist
14 Dentist
15 Start south. Didn't, cleared house, vaccination.
16 Night at Haselbury. Started 5 a.m. *
17 Arrived Langworthys 1.15
19 Collect Mummy. Arrived back 8.30
20 To dressmaker Lorry at Beck House
22 Anne party. Fiona and a friend.
23 Billy & Julia arrive
24 To Sedbergh for match. Tea with Morrisses. [I do not remember this visit. Dr. Morris was a distant relative and the school doctor]
25 Anne dentist 4.30 Cleaned Beck House all day.
26 Hand over Beck House. Heavenly afternoon
27 Packed and sorted. Anne dentist 3 p.m
29 Children out for night. Film at Bowness
30 Return children. Hand over car
31 Packed. Caught 8.30 train. [off to India]

GRANDPA DIARIES (MAY TO DECEMBER)

MAY

Sunday 1
Mac takes his family in Crook direction

Monday 2

Iris goes to Young Wives meeting

Tuesday 3

Mac drove me to Dr Hall who gave me some medicine for low blood pressure as feeling groggy this morning

Mac and Iris go out to Field Head

Wednesday 4

Mac and Iris go to Keswick to get Fiona's kilt

Mac and Iris go to dinner with the Fothergills

Letter from Bank saying my surrender policies are worth about £1600

Friday 6

- drive with Mac round Lakes

Robert rang up saying he has received unofficial intimation that he has been successful in his interview for Clerkship of Commons. Graded A

Saturday 7

Bal at Bank £795-18-6

Mac and Iris go for dive - details

Fiona and Anne for lunch - their parents take them out for a picnic. Fiona in her Scotch Kilt

Sunday 8

Iris and Anne to church

- quotes Laurie Lee etc.

Monday 9

V went to Ambleside to see Martins and her bookie

Mac and Iris went fishing at Rydal Water

[details re Arnold who is coming over from Merano]

Thursday 12

Violet taken by Mac and Iris to see Ballet at Morecambe

Saturday 14

Mac and Iris take girls to Ballet at Morecambe

Monday 16

Went to Pauls in Kendal and bought carpet for £38-16-0

Went out to Field Head with Mac Iris V and cleaned floors

Tuesday 17

Carpets look v nice in drawing room

Wednesday 18

Mac and Iris go out to Field Head to sort china and glass and take in coals

Mac and Iris to go Kendal to look at Auction things (fishing rods)

Monday 23

Letter from Robert to say that he has got the clerkship officially provided he gets a second at Oxford

JUNE

Sunday 5

Mac and Iris motored over Hardknott Pass into Duddon Valley
V asks for job at Ravenscroft Hotel

Monday 6

V goes to Bowness to enquire at hotel about job

Wednesday 8

Robert rang up - His exam is over.

Thursday 9

Mac and Iris come to lunch and drive us out to Field Head and showed us how Aga works

Monday 13

Violet goes to work at hotel at 7.30 am and returns 2-30
Letters from Alan and Fiona

Tuesday 14

V goes to work at 7-30

Went to doctor who tested my blood pressure which was not too good and gave me some more medicine

Thursday 16

Paid Rates and water rate till 30-9-55 for Field Head £7-19-0

Friday 17

- quotes poetry (?Wordsworth)

Saturday 18

Electricity Bill for Beck House 1st quarter £9-15-2

Letter from Martins Bank asking for payment of premium of £4-7-6 to royal Insurance Co for Field Head

Tried to do water colour sketch of view

[Granny to work each day at 7.30 - last entry... She also worked Saturdays. On Saturday 2nd July V. wrote to Hotel giving one weeks notice]

Saturday 25

Iris Mac and girls fetch V to go to Morecambe to see Saddlers Wells Ballet leaving puppy with me

Thursday 30

Iris and Mac to fetch Robert to Field Head

[various costs of bread, chops, matches, tea etc. in margin around here]

- various news from Canada

JULY

Friday 1

Went with V to see Television of Wimbledon at Ravenscroft Hotel.

Monday 4

Iris has done nice sketch in oils

[lots more prices]

Robert did oil sketch of Beck House

Sunday 10

Wedding day anniversary - 37 years

Sent in Telegraph Crossword

Monday 11 Alan has passed his School Cert exam

Friday 15

Mac looks in - They broke an oar on Esthwaite Water

Sunday 17

Fine

Went out to Field Head with V in Macs car. Planted Wallflower seedlings. Saw Television at Postman's house. V lovely evening. Mac and Iris drove us back after giving us supper.

Tuesday 19

V to work at 7-30 Her 36th day at work

Letter from Sheelagh Cowgill

Wednesday 20

Iris and family seeing show jumping on T.V. tonight.

Monday 25

Robert returns and announces that he is engaged to Angela Robertson of Priory close Cartmel

Tuesday 26

Mac Iris and children come over with Jean Macs sister in law and her 3 children

Alan goes fishing - Robert and Angela go down to Lake

Friday 29

Telegram received from Oxford to say that Robert has got 2nd Cl Hons Degree - Great news.

Sunday 31

Record month for fine weather. No rain for 29 days

AUGUST

(stay of Arnold)

Wednesday 3

Roberts tutor has told him that he just missed a First

Friday 5

Went to Kendal with Arnold and left my teeth to be repaired.

Tuesday 9th Rainy

Richard and Robert and Angela go to Field Head to bathe in Esthwaite water with Mac and family

Saturday 13

[Robert gets official appointment as Clerk of H of C, subject to health check in 2 years, from 1st October 1955.

Monday 15

Richard drove us out to drinks at Field Head. Met Richard Cowan

[My grandmother still going to work at 7.30 each morning, including Saturdays and Sundays!]

Wednesday 24

Mac Iris and family came and took Robert and Angela to Cartmel Priory Show

Tuesday 30

V goes to bridge with Mrs Read

Mac Iris and family motor to Edinburgh for Festival.

They are staying in Pattys house. They are taking poor blind Richard back

Tried some water colour painting.

Wednesday 31

Letter from Arnold and Joan Swinhoe

Thursday 1 Sep

Dull rain

Violet to work at 7.30

Letter from Income Tax asking if Robert will earn more than £85 this Financial Year.

Richard returns. He mentioned a Mr Coates who is a master at Sedbergh (Evans

House) who knows Alan. Coates was headboy at Marlborough. Richard gave me

"Country Life" mag for my birthday.

Friday 2 Sep Beck House, Windermere

Rain

Violet to work at 7-30

Laburnum tree in garden blew down this morning.

Robert and Johnathan turned up and went away.

Violet writes to Joan Trench Chadwick and Ledbetter

Went for walk to Adelaide Hill with Violet
Robert rings up to say that Francis Bloomer and he are thinking about toms flat in London
Richard cut Laburnum tree to bits and removed

[My grandmother was working at a local hotel]

Saturday 3 Sep Beck House

Cloudy Fine

Violet to Work at 7.30

Card from Winifred to say she can give Violet a bed but she has decided to leave London and follow the family.

Richard drove Violet and self to in afternoon.

Met Miss Owen. Weeded garden - Violet and Richard talks to the Wrights.

Violet going to work for last time tomorrow.

Violet writes to Billy and Julia.

Bill of Gateys costs £60-3-0 received.

Sunday 4 Sep Beck House

Rain Fine in afternoon

Violet to work at 7.30 and at 6-15

Monday 5 Sep Beck House

Violet to work 7-30 and 6-15

Card from Julia from Amsterdam

Wrote to Mac about Gateys bill

Wrote to Gatey saying I have written to Mac

Sent in Crossword solution to Country Life

Richard busy Wainwrights book The Eastern Fells

[A separate sheet shows that my father paid Gatey's bill]

Tuesday 6 Sep Beck House

Fine

Violet to work at 7.30

Hawkshead Show - went to Hawkshead in Richard's car and went to Mac and Iris for tea afterwards

Letter from Hilda Dangibau to Violet

[The Dangibau's were friends from Dorset]

Wednesday 7 Sep Beck House

Fine

Violet to work at 7-30

2 Photos of children (Caroline and Robin) from Julia for birthday present.

Letter from Mrs Vann "Lee?". John in Germany.

Replied to Income Tax that Robert income for this financial year will exceed £85.

Richard and snaps of good.

Went to spot near Brotherswater with Richard. He climbed St Sunday Crag. I mislaid my painting block and borrowed a piece of paper from nearby farm.

Francis Bloomer, Robert and Angela and Sue looked in for tea and went to. Du Toit looked in but I was out.

Thursday 8 Sep Beck House

Fine Rain

Violet to work all day

Letter from Trench

Went to Grasmere with Richard. He curtailed his climb as his new boots were hurting.
Saw Lake artists Exhib again and also Heaton Cooper's studio and went up hill.

Friday 9 Sep Beck House

Rainy

Violet to work 7-30

Letter from Margery - wants to do a Theatre with Violet in London

Mrs Read rang up Violet for Bridge on Wednesday

Saturday 10 Sep Beck House

Fine at first. Violet to work at 7-30

£1-16 refund of Income Tax

Richard drove us over Wrynose and Hardknott passes to Broughton and back via
Coniston. Looked at Roman Castle remains near Hardnott.

Miss Mann came to lunch.

Iris looked in while we were out and left garments.

Read Richard Church's Autobiography.

Lost at Pools - Owe Hills 9/- and Cook 8/-

Sunday 11 Sep Beck House

Fine Violet went to work at 7-30 for last time.

Went out to after lunch and did some cleaning in garden - cricket with children.

Wrote to Birch Harris

Violet writes to Arnold

Monday 12 Sep Beck House

Rainy

Mac Iris and children come to tea after inoculating their puppy [Juno].

Richard goes to Kentmere. He buys a one inch Ordnance map.

Robert arrives from Cartmel.

Fetched glass frame but it does not fit

Finished Life of Ruskin

Tuesday 13 Sep Beck House

Fine

Letter from Nina Birch Harris who recommends Violet Branson's flat in Putney for
Robert - a large corner house and very nice - not expen. 40 Lytton Grove, Putney
SW15.

Mac and Iris looked in for Stair carpet but could not find it. It was in back of Richard's
car. Violet went to Bridge at the Reads.

Wednesday 14 Sep Beck House

Violet goes to bridge with Mrs Read

Thursday 15 Sep Beck House

Fine
Neville Moray came to tea and supper
Got pane of glass cut to size at Bowness and fitted it.

Friday 16 Sep Beck House

Fine
Violet and Richard depart for London
Robert leaves for Cartmel
Letters from Mrs Branson sent on to Violet
Richard gives me sketching block as parting present

Saturday 17 Sep Beck House

Fine
Went to Miss Helme about bed
Arthur Morton looked in
Went for stroll
Lost at Pools
Completed X word Country Life
Read "The Night Runners of Bengal" by John Masters.

Sunday 18 Sep Beck House

Fine
Got up late
Went up Orrest Head
Went to tea with Miss Helme Miss Grainger and Mr Kirk

Monday 19 Sep Beck House

Fine
Mac and family come to fetch Robert to take Alan to Sedbergh
Letter from Violet saying she has fixed a room for Robert at Mrs Haarer - 1 Beaufort Gardens SW3 Tel Ken 2984 from Monday 26th @ 3 gns a week bed and breakfast (and dinners optional at 4/-). She is French and a good cook. There are 2 other men there, one just from Oxford - Fraser by name and has room next to Robert - The square is a cul de Sac off Knightbirdge - He is on 4th floor.
Letter from Nicholson - Curwen wants us to consult laundry about carpet.
Posted letter to Violet and got out library book, "Police at the Funeral" Margery Allingham

Tuesday 20 Sep Beck House

Fine
Mac told me yesterday that Marriott's child has got polio and the Marriotts will be away from the school for some time
Letters from Violet for Suzanne and Sheila Fotheringham

Wednesday 21 Sep Beck House

Drizzly
Letter from Violet who has had an interview with Sir Peter Crisp who is willing to raise £50 for us. Violet will consult Roy. She sold her jade necklace for £5.
Violet is doing down to Exmouth by train.
Robert goes to Neville's house at Cartmel

Mac and Iris look in at lunch time
Finish Margery Allingham "Police at the Funeral"

Thursday 22 Sep Beck House

Rain

Wrote to Arnold and Nina Birch Harris
Went for walk to Adelaide Hill and Windermere
Robert rang up saying he is coming tomorrow with Neville

Friday 23 Sep Beck House

Fine

Robert and Neville arrived and I gave them lunch and tea.
Iris and Mac turned up to ask about Alan's Kilt and to take mower
Neville's car named 'Togzarz' - an Austen 7.
They went to Kendal to pick up Angela and take her home.
Letter from Violet from Exmouth - Barclays will give Robert credit for his first month.
Roy is trying to raise £100. There is £17?? to be divided between Babs Madora and Violet.

[Madora is one of Annie's Swinhoe's nieces. 'Babs' was Irene Helen Jones, the daughter of Juxon Henry - the brother of Annie Swinhoe]

Saturday 24 Sep Beck House

Fine

Alan's kilt arrives. Ring up Iris about it.
Took Country Life to Miss Helme.
Iris and Mac came in the afternoon for Alan's kilt and took it to Sedbergh.
Iris has asked me to go over to next Wednesday

Sunday 25 Sep Beck House

Fine

Went to Church (harvest thanksgiving)
Robert returned from Cartmel in evening
Went for walk to Adelaide Hill
Wrote to Violet. Spoke to Miss Helm

Monday 26 Sep Beck House

Showery

Card from Fiona
Made my and Robert's Nat: Insurance Cards up to date
Saw Mrs du Toit on road
Fare to London is £2-0-8 3rd Class
Wrote to Fiona

Tuesday 27 Sep Tuesday Beck House

Fine

Letter from Violet
Saw Robert off - Returned bed to Miss Helme
Posted Robert's mac and hat and Violet's Hill correspondence.
Took 25/- of her winnings.

Laundry says carpet too large to be washed.
Sending to cleaner's will cost 2/- per sq yard
Took book back to library
Letter from Income Tax saying I will have to pay more Tax now that Robert is earning.

Wednesday 28 Sep Beck House

Fine
Letter from Violet
Mac and Iris motored me from Beck House to Field Head
Weeded ground in front of house

Thursday 29 Sep Beck House

Beck House
Drove with Mac and Iris to Elterwater and Grassmere
Started digging trench for peas
Wrote to Violet

Friday 30 Sep Beck House

Fine
Got paper from Hawkshead on cycle. Bought pump.
Finished digging trench for peas
Saw Billy Barr about getting his boys to bring manure.

October

Saturday 1 Oct

Fine
Got paper from Hawkshead.
Break blocks of cycle renewed
Stanley Barr brings 3 barrow loads of manure which is put into 30' x 2' deep trench I
have dug for peas
Walk to Tarn Hows
Wrote to Ulverston Income Tax Dept (2nd Oct)

Sunday 2 Oct

Showry
Drove to Sedbergh and picked up Alan and had lunch out of doors - drove Alan back
to Field Head - Mac drives him back to be in school by 6-15

Monday 3 Oct

Fine
Mac and Iris went over to Beck House morning and afternoon to check inventory
Went to Hawkhead on bike

Tuesday 4 Oct

Showers
Letter from Robert to say he is in charge of Divisions ("Aye" lobby) and his income will
be £729 a year as he gets £255 for this. The hat I sent him has not arrived but the
waterproof did. Letter from Violet. Billy and Julia are coming up here. Julia is flying out
to Malaya with Billy - Aunt Flo's will is lost.

Mrs Grieves came to tea
Posted Hills letter to Violet and wrote to her

Wednesday 5 Oct

Rain

Letter from DC asking for £4-1-9 more rent for
Wrote to Insp. of Taxes Public Depts, Tyglas Rd, Llanishen, Cardiff, telling them of
purchase of
Posted Nat Insurance Card to Robert
Paid Billy Barr 5/- for 4 loads of manure
Mac paid Gatey.

Wednesday 6 Oct

Stormy

Letter from Arnold
Letter from Violet. Billy wants to come here before his car is sold. Margery wants to see
Mac and Iris copy of sale Deed received from Gatey
Mac and Iris go for whole day to Beck House and finish inventory
I take Juno to Weavers at Outgate.
Digging in afternoon
Meter reader came - consumption for Quarter is 1422 units. Laundry clothes delivered

Friday 7 Oct

Rainy

Had giddy fit in early morning but 2 of Arnold's pills put me right
Pay direct to shop for Daily Telegraph from and including yesterday
Mac and Iris drive to Tarn Hows
Mr Bell gives me some cabbage plants
Iris rings up Julia and tells her that Beck House is to be handed over

Saturday 8 Oct

Rainy

Mac fetched Anne from school for week end
Violet sent me some sweet pea seeds from Robert Bolton and Son Essex

Sunday 9 Oct

Fine

Went to Hawkshead church service with the others.
A planter, Ransone, came in afternoon - his home is at Seasscale

Monday 10 Oct

Fine

Took Anne back to school.
Mac and Irtis inoculated for TAB and I got some strychnine medicine.
Went to Beck House in afternoon and collected some things.
Digging Sweet Pea Trench

Tuesday 11 Oct

Fine

Cheque book received from Bank

Mac seedy last night with temp of 102
Digging trench during morning
Iris walks to Hawkshead
Wrote to Violet to Warrens where she goes today
Wrote to Ulverston RDC enclosing cheque for £4-19 for period 19-31 Aug
Violet goes to Warrens

Wednesday 12 Oct

Foggy
Engaged all day in digging trench for peas and filling with new soil
Iris and Mac away at Beck House
Letter from Violet
Iris gets letter from Julia

Thursday 13 Oct

Foggy
Went for day with Iris and Mac to Beck House
Iris got new lower teeth adjusted at Kendal
Tidied up garden at Beck House and dug some Mich Daisy plants to bring here

Saturday 15 Oct

Snow
Iris and Mac leave for Haselbury
Took Juno for walk through fields towards Outgate

Sunday 16 Oct

Rainy
Took Juno for walk towards Hawkshead

Monday 17 Oct

Found Aga out when I came down
Went to Hawkshead and fixed lead for kettle and got some charcoal
Took Juno to Hawkshead in afternoon and bought some provisions
Letters from Violet and Richard
Wrote to Richard

Tuesday 18 Oct

Fine
Letter from Richard
Took Juno for walk
Wrote to Richard

Wednesday 19 Oct

Rain
Took Juno for walk
Mac Iris and Violet arrived back from S. England at 9.30 p.m

Thursday 20 Oct

Cut hedge

Went with Violet Iris and Mac to Beck House to get our things packed into Pooleys lorry.

Found cards from Robert one asking for details of his Insurance Policy

Friday 21 Oct

Lorry with our remaining things from Beck House arrived at

Unpacking and arranging these things.

Saturday 22 Oct

Mac brought Anne Fiona and girl friend - Fiona and friend taken back to Ambleside

Sunday 23 Oct

Fine

Billy and Julia arrived from Haselbury and put up at Red Lion Hawkshead

Anne rather tearful when going to bed

Monday 24 Oct

Wet

Anne returns to school

Drove with Mac and Billy to see rugger match at Sedbergh (v Dowards XV)

Had tea with the Morrisises

Billy had tea with Marriott

Tuesday 25 Oct

Billy and Julia drove us to Ambleside, Rydal, and Coniston. Had coffee at Sun Hotel.

Came back by ferry to Windermere and had lunch at Beck House with Iris and Mac who are busy cleaning up house

Wednesday 26 Oct

Fine

Iris and Mac hand over Beck House to Agents Miss Nicholson

I go with Billy and Julia to Ambleside - Meet Mrs Ritchie

Billy and Julia drive to Casterton and take Angela out to tea.

Went for walk with Violet to Borwick Fold Hawkshead Hill, Hawkshead and back by fields.

Thursday 27 Oct

Billy and Julia leave for Haselbury

Friday 28 Oct

Rain?

Dug trenches in garden

Mac makes cement concrete floor for coal and coke

Saturday 29 Oct

Fine

Mac fetched Alan from Sedbergh

Girls came by bus

Violet to Bridge at Armithwaite [Hotel]

Went to meet of hounds at Hawkshead but were late. Tried to follow hounds

Sort out Pools
Sent off parcel to Billy
Mac and family go to see film at Bowness

Sunday 30 Oct

Fine Lovely day
Mac took us all to Tarn Hows
Mortons looked in
Planted bulbs in front garden
[My parents left for India two days later]

Monday 31 Oct

Fine
Mac hands over car yesterday
Mortons look in yesterday

Tuesday 1 Nov

Fine
Mac and Iris left for India yesterday
Mac given us cheque for £250 yesterday
Violet goes for long walk with Juno
Dig trench in garden
Sent cheque to bank with letter

Wednesday 2 Nov

Rain in afternoon
Sent passbook to RDC and cheque to bank
Ordered 10 cwt coke from Pooley
Violet walks to Hawkshead
Letters from Billy and Julia
Spent evening in kitchen

Thursday 3 Nov

Coffee with Wrights and Atherley?
Violet plays Bridge with Lady Gowan
Letter from Lloyds Bank manager
Wrote to Billy and Julia
Spent evening in kitchen

Friday 4 Nov

Anne and Fiona arrived
Played mahjong

Saturday 5 Nov

Got 10 Cwts coke (£4)
Anne sick last night
Aga fire went out Bell fixed grate
Bonfire for Guy Fawkes made by Barrs
Doctor Milchrist comes to see Anne
Sedbergh beat Rossall 27-0

Sunday 6 Nov

Wet

Went with Fiona to Remembrance Day service at Hawkshead church

Played Canasta

Monday 7 Nov

Wet

Fiona and Anne return to school - Violet returns by 7-30 pm bus

Biked to Hawkshead in rain and posted childrens letters to Bombay - 2 pkts tobacco

Got medicine for Violet

Tuesday 8 Nov

Fine

Wrights and Mortons came to tea

Wrights sister is coming to stay with them

Wednesday 9 Nov

Drizzly

Wrote to Peter James and Nina and Ethel

Violet and I took Juno for a walk

Posted letter to Hills

Wolves beat Dynamos

Scotland beat Wales

Thursday 10 Nov

Rain

Letter from Richard. He is to be in charge of a House from next May

Violet and I worked in garden in afternoon

Friday 11 Nov

Rain

Letter from Arnold - wrote to him

Violet went to Bridge at Armathwaite

Saturday 12 Nov

Fine Lovely day

Dug away Rose of Sharon in front bed

Anne for weekend

Canasta

Lost at pools

Sunday 13 Nov

Fine

Anne goes riding

Monday 14 Nov

Letter from Iris

Asked Bratton about gooseberries

Took Juno past Tarn Hows

Violet has Mortons and Mrs Read to Bridge

Tuesday 15 Nov

Fine

Wrote to Alan

Letters from Robert and Fiona

Letter from Miss Livingston re Fiona

Violet writes to Billy and Julia

Wednesday 16 Nov

Fine

Worked on front bed - bonfire

Violet went to Kendal

Aga went out - up till 1-15 am lighting it

2 barrow loads manure

Thursday 17 Nov

Fine

Moving logs from front garden

Violet to Hawkshead

Letters from Babs

Friday 18 Nov

Fine

Violet to Bridge at Hotel

Took parcel for Alan and posted at Hawkshead

Letter from Alan

Bill from RDC

Rate and W. rate £9-2-9, £1-9-9 Total: £10-12-6 Payable 1 Oct and 1 April in advance.

Saturday 19 Nov

Fine

Manure from Barr and put into trench

Anne came at 2-30

Lost at Pools - Last day of Cup Matches

Removed logs from front to back with Violet's help

Canasta and Vingt et un

Asked Bell about gooseberries

Sunday 20 Nov

Fine

Walk with Violet and Anne towards Tarn Hows

Canasta

Paid rates bill to RDC

Monday 21 Nov

Fine

Took Anne to Ambleside and went to Windermere to get saw, hoe and paint

Got another saw from Martin of Ambleside

Painted gate

Violet goes to Bridge with Mortons

Tuesday 22 Nov

Fine

Letter from Iris

Work on front garden

Walk with Violet and Juno

Wednesday 23 Nov

Fine

Dug in front bed

Planted Narcissus bulbs in back garden

Got 2 pictures from Arnold

Thursday 24 Nov

Fine

Stanley Barr came and reported smoke from outhouse. Found sofa and humpty burnt out. Told Stanley children must not come into our garden without permission

Letter from Arnold

Worked in front bed

Violet wrote to Iris

Wrote to Alan

Bell gave me plant of Gentian Verni

Friday 25 Nov

Fine Rain at 7 pm

Letter from Alan

Worked on front bed

Violet goes to Bridge at Armathwaite

Saturday 26 Nov

Dull Some rain

Violet to Bridge with Mrs Greenwood at Applegarth Hotel

Anne comes for week-end

Lost at Pools

With with dog to Hawkshead

Anne wrote to her mother

Sunday 27 Nov

Fine Dull

Went for walk with Anne and Juno to High Hall

Fiona went riding for 2 hours with Mrs Barr

Canasta

Monday 28 Nov

Wet

Went with Anne to Ambleside and on to Windermere to return saw and buy rake and trowel

Letter from Richard

Daily Tel came by post

Tues 29 Nov

Fine

Planted Narcissus bulbs

Wrote about lagging water tank

Cleaned out shed in which fire was

Wednesday 30 Nov

Fine

Biked down to Hawkshead Cashed £3 and got pills for Violet

Violet to Bridge with Brewster at Skelwith

Took Juno for walk to Tarn Hows

Lady gave me address of dehydrated meat for dog

Fishmongers day about 5-pm

Thursday 1 Dec

Fine

Violet to Bridge at Miss Evans Stirling Crag Bowness

Took Juno to Drunken Duck via woods

Grocers day

Friday 2 Dec

Fine Rain

Recd Bill for Str A Income Tax £6-16-0 payable 1 Jan

Bill WH Smith 8-10

Worked on front bed

Violet to Bridge at Armathwaite Hotel

Butchers day

Saturday 3 Dec

Fine

Chopped wood and cleaned outside wall

Anne arrives with Alison Morton

Canasta

Lost at Pools

Sunday 4 Dec

Fine

Billy and Julia fly to Malaya

No ride for Anne

Played Ma Jong

Went for Walk with Violet and Anne and Juno

Monday 5 Dec

Rain

Saw Anne off in bus 8-15

Hair cut at Ambleside

Violet goes to Hawkshead with Mr Owen

Showed Owen insulation

Sent Chess set and letter to Alan

Tuesday 6 Dec

Rain

Took dog for walks

Wrote to Insulation

Wednesday 7 Dec

Bridge here Brewsters and Mrs Read

Violet goes to Ambleside in morning

I took dog to Hawkshead Hill

Posted letter to Iris

Letter from Iris

Thursday 8 Dec

Snow in evening

Chopped wood

Walk with Violet and Juno Outgate Drunken Duck

Cut some pea sticks

Friday 9 Dec

Rain

Walked with Juno to Hawkshead and got eggs and Nat Ins Stamps

Violet goes to Bridge at Armathwaite

Was to have gone to see Read but too wet

Wrote to Arnold

Roy sends me Easy Seat for gardening

Letter from Alan

Sheila Lawn has her son on 8th

Saturday 10 Dec

Rain

Wrote to Roy and Uncle Arnold

Took Juno for walk

Posted Air letter cards and stamped envelopes to Alan

Letter from Heather

Heard that Stanley Barr is in trouble for stealing a gun, so he obviously stole Alan's air gun.

Farrer in farms near Pillow Box

Sunday 11 Dec

Fine

Long walk with Violet and dog round Tarn Hows from 11-30 to 2.45

Monday 12 Dec

Fine

Violet goes shopping - Brings Key Hole saw
sawed logs

Addressed Xmas cards

Tuesday 13 Dec

Rain very bad weather
Letters from Fiona and Anne
Stayed indoors all day

Wednesday 14 Dec

Rain Very bad weather
Went to Ambleside and got sweets for Fiona for her midnight party
Letter from Iris and cheque for £150
Got 7 books from Library Van County Library

Thursday 15 Dec

Rainy
Girls holdiays begin
Violet goes to Ambleside 8-10 to have hair done
I take do for walks and buy eggs

Friday 16 Dec

Children and Violet went to Kendal

Saturday 17 Dec

Fiona and Anne went to Ambleside for walk

Sunday 18 Dec

Fine
Church with Fiona and Anne
Walk with Violet and children to Drunken Duck to find Holly

Monday 19 Dec

Fine
Went to Ambleside by 9-30 bus to get presents

Tuesday 20 Dec

Snow
Alans birthday 14 years
Alan's holiday begins. He is driven here by the Duggans
Children went tobogganing
Played Ma Jong

Wednesday 21 Dec

Fine
Ram caught in thicket
Children went tobogganing
Alan complained of acidosis last night
Xmas Tree arrived and fixed

Thursday 22 Dec

Went to Hawkshead through snow
Canasta
Wrote to Iris and Mac

Friday 23 Dec

Rain

Snow disappeared

Caravan arrives from Coward and is installed

Walked to Hawkshead

Violet and children went to film Hans Anderson

Saturday 24 Dec

Richard and Robert arrive

Fiona goes alone to Ambleside and buys photos

Alan and Anne walk to Hawkshead

Hamper from Arnold

Robert rings up to say he is at Cartmel

Richard and Alan sleep in caravan

Sunday 25 Dec

Fine

Violet and Richard to early service

Richard Robert self and children to church

Richard Violet and children to Carol singing

[There is a list of the people to whom my grandfather sent Christmas cards besides this date (about 50 names) .]

Presents to Cee, Margery, Iris, Billy

Monday 26 Dec

Rain

Richard and children to meet of hounds at Ambleside

Drinks with Wrights. Met Elliotts and Miss Crabtree

Violet, Richard and children walked to Tarn Hows

Fixed Insulation

Canasta

Tuesday 27 Dec

Gale

Stayed in all day. V bad weather

Fiona took Juno out for a bit

Wednesday 28 Dec

Gale

Robert goes to Cartmel

Walked towards Tarn Hows with Juno

Went with Violet to Beck House and saw Curwens

Fiona got book "The Popular Boxer"

Thursday 29 Dec

Gale

Richard took children to meet at Coniston

Hounds at Red Screens

Friday 30 Dec

Richard and children went to Latter Barrow

[possible photos]

Saturday 31 Dec

Richard went to Chapel Stile for meet
Steven Greave arrives to stay weekend

Lakeland Life: 1956

The following account of our life in the Lakes over these years is taken from two sources, namely my grandfather's diaries (with a couple of short additions from my grandmother's diaries) and letters between Iris, Fiona and Alan. I shall just include for the moment references in my grandfather's diary which relate to the doings of members of the family. References to the weather, to wider family and to miscellaneous walks and events are omitted.

Sunday 1 Jan 1956: Richard took children to church

Monday 2 Jan: Lovely day, Whole family spent most of day with Coniston Hunt which met at Drunken Duck

Tuesday 3 Jan: Went to Elterwater and Blea Tarn with Richard and Alan; Took Steven Grieve back

LETTER ALAN TO PARENTS: 3 Jan Field Head

Dear Mummy and Daddy,

I hope you had a nice christmas. We certainly did, as the girls probably told you, we had an enormous turkey and a lovely ham and christmas hamper. Thank you very much indeed for the money for my birthday and the lovely ping pong set and ping pong table which we have played with a lot, it is also useful for my electric trains and Subuteo. (By the way [not Corfe Lodge Road] could you ask Daddy to draw an electric motor (how it works) because I am fiddling about making things for the electric train and I have forgotten how one works. We have been to two hunts this holidays once on boxing day to Loughrigg but after a time we lost the hunt (the last we saw of it was a dejected group of people including a siekh who was wearing an elegant jacket and suit fit for the Savoy Hotel but not the top of Luffrig, dissapearing over the crest of a hill in the pouring rain) and we made our way back in the drenching rain. This was on Boxing day a few days later we went to a hunt near the Kirkstone pass and we all climbed up red screes but of course everyone went off in different directions and poor Uncle Richard spent most of his time collecting all of us and tramping over the fells (looking for me, while I was sitting in the car.) By the way I have taken up fly tying and as Steven Grieve came over to stay and he had practiced trying once or twice we were soon hard at work; actually it is not very hard to do provided you have the right materials. Those jungle moorgi and blue jay feathers are super but I am not using them yet as it would be a waste to use them while I am learning, but any more would be extremely useful. Also do you think you could look out for peacocks feathers like this and could you cut off this as the little bits make lovely fuzzy bodies. [Diagram of a peacock feather]. If by any chance you see any feathers (except off chickens) lying about could you send them, as they might be very good ones. Yesterday the whole family went to the drunken duck for the hunt and Steven and I went up to the top from the back. After a time we decided to leave the hunt and as we were making our way back up jumped a little roe deer with a white fluffy tail and it bounded away up the hillside... Lots of love, Alan

Thurs 5 Jan: Violet and children went to see film "Seven Brides for Seven Brothers"

Sat 7 Jan: Richard and Alan go to Tarn Hows with Juno

Sun 8 Jan: Cold, All went to church - Richard and Alan to Tarns; Played "Scrabble"

Tues 10 Jan: Richard took Violet and children to Ambleside in afternoon.

Thurs 12 Oct : Richard's birthday. Gave him a pair of gloves and the children a tie; Richard and Alan go for a walk.

Mon 16 Jan: Alan spent afternoon with Steven Grieve at Elterwater;

Tues 17 Jan: Richard leaves. Alan leaves. Is taken to Sedbergh by Doogan.

27 Mar: Alan comes home for holidays

30 Mar: Family walked to church took Juno home
Alan fetched me some Leaf mould and I planted rest of Azaleas

31 Mar: Went to Point at Whittington - Met Robert and Angela, Liz and Francis

1 Apr: Fiona's birthday; Lovely day; Took children to church

MEMORNDUM BY IRIS: Easter Sunday 1 Apr 1956 Cherideo

Fiona's birthday - 12. Easter Day. I remember this day last year, the fields full of spring lambs, the children and I going for a picnic, climbing stone walls, squabbling, becoming footsore in my woolie boots, but happy and invigorated. I remember daffodils glinting with Easter eggs, daffodils round the Altar - but Christ is Risen here as there, the message of Easter is the same, a message of reconciliation - "turn but a stone and stir a wing" - here or there. "This is Resurrection time" says the voice of prophesy; but for some people it is not. There is a butterfly on my orchid and a bowl of roses beside me, I am lucky, I wonder how God can bear to look at all the suffering on the earth, we are his children but I could not allow my children to suffer so and my love is meagre compared to His - even if it was their fault I could not allow it. But I am judging Him by human standards. Fiona will just be waking now, counting her money, wishing she could feel the authentic birthday thrill. She will look out of the window at that wonderful view and be sad and holy and happy - but I'm so sorry for her, having to face the years between 12 and 16 - perhaps it won't be as bad for her as it was for me. I can almost understand Jesus' pleasure in taking upon himself the sins and pains of the world. I would be so happy to suffer for my children...

2 Apr: Lovely day; Children took lunch to Tarn Hows

FIONA TO PARENTS. About April 2, Field Head, [Date mark in India is 10 April, and Fiona's birthday on 1st, so this is the approximate date.]

Dearest Mummy and Daddy,

Thank you both so much for your lovely letter, which was only a day late, and anyway you couldn't have got it to me on my birthday as it was Sunday. But we had lovely time. Granny went to early morning church, so she could make a lovely lunch. Granpa Alan,

Annie and I went to Matins we walked down by the fields and there were some small new-born lambs, two twins went to the wrong mother and she gave them a lecture! Thank you so much for the lovely suitcase... Granny and Granpa gave me a drawing block. And I have drawn the view from Alan's bedroom window and I am going to paint it (one day!)

For my birthday treat we went to the Whittington Point-to-Point. Daddy would of hated it, eating a picnic lunch among hundreds of others. Julia (my best friend) and I had planned to meet and we did! It was good fun. The horses were lovely...

Granny and Granpa and Anne and I went to the Wrights to watch the boat race on T.V. It was very excited and at one time I thought Oxford would win.

Wasn't it a shame about the Queen's horse Devon Loch.... Of course afterwards Anne, Juno and I played lots of horsey games about ESB (winner), Devon Loch....

I am glad you had a good time up the river...

Here I enclosed a daffodilly and a primrose, I hope the will arrive safely...

I am sorry this is not a very long letter...

There are lots of birds, and I have fond a buzzard's nest up by Tarn Howes.

Yesterday Alan, Anne and I went for a long walk and took our lunch with us we went up to behind the Tarn Howes over the other end, there were hundreds of cars, as it was bank holiday, and it was fine.

Well God bless you darlings.

All my love as always Fiona (Fish) xxxxxxxx

3 Apr: Alan gets seeds and Squeak poison

4 Apr: Robert and Angela come to stay

5 Apr: Neville comes; They go on lake in afternoon

7 Apr: Girls and Alan go rabbiting with Juno

8 Apr: Violet and girls to church in Bells and Wrights cars.

ALAN TO PARENTS: 8 Apr 1956

Field Head

Dear Mummy and Daddy,

Thank you very much for your lovely letter and also the stamps and photographs. Just lately we have had lovely weather especially over the Easter week end. On the Monday [2nd April] after Fiona's birthday the girls and I took a sandwich lunch up to the tarns but as there were so many people we took it up on top of the hill on the other side of the tarns and there we ate our lunch with a beautiful view of the Tarns on one side and Coniston old Man on the other, it was really wonderful. ... A few days ago while I was grubbing about for caddis larvae I found some little pink eggs and they have hatched out as baby trout, and I am going to stock black beck with them. Robert and Angela and Neville Moray came to stay and the main event was a race up Esthwaite. I was Neville's cox and we won by about 30 lengths but the second race we were only about 2 lengths behind about half way along (I was Robert's cox) when Robert's oars shot out of the rowlocks and he did a somersault and as you can imagine it was rather funny but in the third race we only just lost and we would have won in another 20 yards.

Lots of love, Alan

9 Apr: Violet takes girls to Kendal and sees Alan off to Manchester [where I was met and escorted down to Iwerne Minster VPS camp]

FIONA TO PARENTS: 10 Apr 1956 Field Head

My darling Mummy and Daddy

Hallo!

Now I have a nice chance to write a nice long letter - I will try and do so.

Alan has written out a long list of what he is going to write and I am not allowed to copy him, so I will have to think of lots of new news!

Well one thing is that Alan found some pink eggs and he brought a few back and they have hatched out baby trouts (or maybe trout!) and he gave me the few which he thought had gone bad and they hatched and that squished him. In the shed there are hundreds of Jars and blocks of wood. You see you put the shallow dish with the young trout in, on one brick, and a big jar on two bricks just above it. Then you put a piece of special cloth in the big jar down to the small one and it drips down and the same thing down to another jar below. So it gives running water. I hope you can understand all that! Anyway there are lots of empty jars and lots of dirty water.

I have been out bird-watching, and love it...

Robert and Angela have been staying here for a couple of days and Neville Moray, Robert's friend.

Cannon Bradly has allowed us to go down to his house and pick daffodillies because we don't want to pick ours as we have not many although at the front there are quite a few. In the photoes you can see them, please send as many as you can. I am going to write smaller writing now so I wont take so much paper.

I am sorry but I forgot to put those flow...

It has been wonderful until Robert came to stay and the weather changed and it has been pretty miserable.

Just now Alan and Anne are making a race course for our dinky race cars we have two each mine are the H.W.M. and the ferrari.

The Lambs are lovely the only nice stage in the sheep...

It is awfull as I have got to get a Tennis Raqat, so I suppose I shall have to ask Granny but I hate asking her for things,

God bless you darlings.

Your everloving daughter Fiona (Fish) P.S. Send my love to Candy and Dinah

xxxxxxxxxxxx

16 Apr: Telephones put in about this date

17 Apr: Richard arrives with Alan [from Iwerne Minster]

18 Apr: Richard and Alan climb High Crag; Richard climbs Arnsfell

Sunday 22 Apr: Richard takes Alan to church at Ambleside and brings back Fiona

23 Apr: Richard and Alan out for lunch

28 Apr: Alan and I went to Hawkshead

29 Apr: Went to church with Anne and Alan

30 Apr: Alan goes fishing with Greaves [Grieves] on Windermere Richard's photo snaps of children arrive - V. good; Alan comes back with broken fishing rod

1 May: Alan goes back to school

FIONA TO PARENTS 15 Jul 1956 Field Head [Postmark in India 25 July, so this date is approximate]

My dearest Mummy and Daddy,

I hope you are both well and I also hope you had a nice birthday mummy.

I am writing this to thank-you VERY VERY VERY much for sending me that lovely camel, I like it best out of all my belongings, that and my pearl brooch.

At the moment I am alone in the house, as Granny has taken Anne to hospital to be re-tested or looked at or something, and Grandpa has taken Juno out.

Yesterday we went riding for the first time this hols, we went down to Outgate and round to the Drunken Duck along that Rd that has notices pointing to Barngate Inn. We went along there, past the D. Duck and back by the other road past the Deserted Farm and Napit's house. Along that last Road there are lots of wild Strawberries and Junsi (Juno) and I went back after (on foot) and picked lots.

Granny and Grandpa went for coffee with Mr and Mrs Nappett (spelt wrong last time). They came back at about 10.30 Anne and I stayed up waiting for them, but Granny said she really meant us to go bed.

The hay is being out all round and am suffering from hay-fever so can't help. I don't get it all that badly if I stay in but out in the fields it is murder.

The Barrs and us have got a pashen for cricket and when they come back from school we play it. I am Cyril Washbrooke, Anne is Peter May, Alan is Keith Miller. Billy Laker Pip Lock and Phyliss, Beno. We have lost two balls and found 3. We also play "Stuck in Mud" but that's a bit dangerous for Granpa's garden. Although you are MEANT not to be allowed over it.

The Black-current and Raseberries are both doing well and the plums and apples are both coming on well. The sweet peas are wonderful so are the roses. The peas bean cabbages and lettuces are all nice.

One of my walks I came across a lovely Dapple mare and by it a tiny dapple foal the split image. The stallion has lots of mares which have come to breed with it. My favourite is now a gorgeous white mare.

How are the dogs and all the animals....

It will be the wedding soon and Lordy I am sure to do something awful please cross your fingers for luck for me (on the day).

The weather has cheered up although it was thundering and lightning last night. Well I am longing to go out.

So I must close. I will write again soon.

Tons and tons of Love, your everloving daughter Fiona.

[lots of xxx to various members of the family and animals]

31 Jul: Alan arrives, Spider [a cousin] meets him at Ambleside

FIONA TO PARENTS: 1 Aug 1956 Field Head [Date stamped 7 August - and Alan returned on 31st July]

My dearest Mummy and Daddy,

Thank you very much for your letter...

The weather here is really awful and everything is flooding...

Shiela and Noel Lawn are here staying with us, and the dear sweet 7 months old baby also called Noel. So Noel (grown up one I mean) is called Spider coz he's so tall. Shiela sends her love to you...

Isn't it smashing about the test match....

To-day Anne Granny and all went to Cartmore [Cartmell] to have Anne's and my bridesmaid dresses. They are awfully nice. Liz (Angela's sister) is making them all herself..

How is Dinah and of course Candy... The picture of you and Toad and Mole is absolutely wizard, I think you look jolly nice.

Alan arrived back yesterday. Noel took us to Ambleside to meet him of course he managed to lose the bus from Kendal. So we had to wait quite a long time before he turned up. With fishing rods. The toothbrush in his pocket and a bag of what seemed to be full of rubbish over his solder...

Please excuse my unreadable scrawl and I am awfully sorry this is such an uninteresting letter.

Lots and lots and lots of love you everloving daughter Fiona
masses of xxxx and to the animals etc.

I am jolly glad the eggs have hatched.

3 Aug: Alan goes fishing all day

5 Aug: Went to church with 3 children

6 Aug: Children go out for lunch to Grisedale; Children go out for day to Grisedale Tarn and come back soaking wet

ALAN TO PARENTS: 7 Aug 1956

Field Head

Dear Mummy and Daddy,

How re you? I hope you are very well. I have been back home for exactly a week now. The weather has been on the whole very good except for the first few days when the river was up in flood and it rained nearly every day. On Saturday the girls and I decided to walk out to Grizedale Tarn (which is about a mile beyond the other end of Esthwaite) but Fiona forgot the Map and we took the wrong road and searched for hours in the woods for it and altogether walked about 10 miles and Juno (who is very fit) was tired out. So on Monday we tried again and found it. It was a round pond-like tarn with water lillies round most of it. I didn't see any trout in it but I decided to try fly fishing from the other side and Fiona got an old stick and put a worm on to a hook tied on to a piece of string and dropped it into a few inches of water and left it. And I went round to the other side but before I could cast (I had got into a tangle) Anne shouted that there was a fish on the end and she pulled out a 5 ins perch! And that was the only fish we caught. Robert arrived Yesterday and the whole of Today we have been playing

"Tip and Run" and having great battles with my soldiers. I hope you find the Gold!!
Keep trying!!
Lots of love, Alan

[Interesting that I was still playing with toy soldiers with Robert,
The gold was presumably in the Ahom ruins my mother was excavating.]

9 Aug: Robert and Alan go on Lake

18 Aug: Robert's wedding day

FIONA TO PARENTS: 19 Aug 1956 Field Head [Date stamped in India 27 August,
the wedding was on 18 Aug]

My dearest Mummy and Daddy,

Thank you very much for your wizard smashing LONG letter. I wish we could borrow
a bit of your nice weather as at the moment it is pouring with rain...

I will now tell you in detail all about the wedding. Well to start with we went on Friday
evening and had a practise. At first Anne and I went behind Angela and Robbert
keeping clear of the train. Then as Liz had to hold Angela's bookey for her She and
Sue went in front OF COURSE when we were walking up to wards the vestery (in
the Practise) Anne manage to trip over one of those thinks you kneel on. (Luckily she
didn't do it on the day) After the practise we went back to P.Close and looked at Bills
trains and mucked about in the Attic.

We got back quite late coz we were waiting for Francis Bloomer to arrive (he was Best
Man) adventually he did and Anne and Alan and I went in Richards car. And Robbert
and F.Bloomer went in F.B's car. We sang all the way back to stop us feeling sick. I
went over to the Bells coz there wasn't enough room her coz of F.B and R.James and
Co. Alan was in the shed (and still is) and Anne on the Landing and Uncle Richard in
Alans room and F.B and Co in our room. So I went to the Bells. When we arrived
(Granny took me over) Anne Bell who I was sleeping with was asleep. Next morning
the Day, I woke up with A. Bells Alarm clock as she has to go to work. I lay in bed till
Mrs Bell brought me a cup of tea... As Anne and I had to get dressed at P.Close
(Cartmel) we went with robert and F.B. and Gran and Alan and Granpa came after in
Uncle Richard's car.

Robert and F.B. dumped us in P. Close and went to the Kings Arms ...We mucked
about until 12 and SOE the other B-maids were dressed then they came and dressed
us. We had pink dresses Bally length with Blue sashes with large bows. We had square
net but Liz and Sue had another kind we had little pink shoes with roses on them
(artificial) and we had a band of rose (real ones) on our heads (oh I forgot to tell you
robert gave Anne a silver charm brazelet with all London things on and me a silver
cross for being b-maids). We wore our cross and charm bracelet. Angela looked lovely
she wore a lovely white dress with a sort of lace top and a white viel. She had a bookey
of yellow roses with some other nice flower (white ones).

She had her photo taken and then we went to the church. It wasn't actually raining but it
had been before so Liz and Sue held her train. We went in the middle and then stood
while they promised and Robert gave the ring Ect. My feet got awfully sore the shoes
being so thin. When we got into the vestery we could talk and Liz and Sue said their
feet were sore too...

The photoes were taken and we went back to P. Close we had a kind of lunch which you jus grab all savories. Bill Alan Morton Carbery? Patrisher (Mortons sister) Anne and I ate about fifty sausages on sticks and I collected the sticks but Alan took away coz he said people would think I had eaten them all. We had more photoes taken and Pat Anne and I sat on the back stairs and she told us (Pat) about "Reach for the Sky" as a film. I have read it, have you?? After our in which we ate and drank. Some old man made a speech and the Robert did and then F.B. as best man then the cake was cut and then Robert and Angela went to the station to go for his honey-moon. The people threw confety at them and one man tied an old tin the back of their car.

We mucked about and then at 8 we went to Grange Hotel to have a dinner. First Bill Alan Morton and us three watched T.V and then we had dinner (which was lovely Turkey Ect) then we watched T.V some more and saw an abstract out of "The Cruel Sea' then we went back to P. Close and watched the older ones dancing then we came home Anne was sick. Juno is very well glad the dogs are send my love Its actually stopped raining must close now. All my love hugs and xs Fiona

ALAN TO PARENTS: 20 Aug 1956

Field Head

Dear Mummy and Daddy,

Thank you very much for your letter, the wheather has been pretty frightful lately but luckily it did not rain all day on the day of the wedding and they were able to take some nice photographs afterwards. The night before we had a rehersal (spelt right?) so that on the day everything went off well and it was quite good fun; after the service a proffessional photographer took thousands of photographs and then we went in and ate titbits and talked and drank (I only drank 1 glass!! Champagne, sherry, [cider, orange juice]) So for two hours I wandered round and round the house and then the bride and groom went on the tea in (Plus tin can and confetti) in Richards car. After they had gone we fooled about a bit more and then we had tea and at about half past seven we went off to Grange, in about six cars and we watched television for a bit at Grange Hotel before we went into dinner there, we had a very uproarious time The "Menu" was

Iced ... Melon

Asparagus Soup

Poach Hallibut + (Bit of french)

Roast Turkey and Veg

Any kind of ice or fruit salad

coffee

Drink: Cider

It was a very good supper and after this we went back to Cartmell to watch the dancing and after that we drove back (Anne was a bit tired so that she was sick on the way). This evening Richard drove us in to Bowness to see "The Damn Busters" which was very good. ... As the girls have probably told you the Barr's have got a sheepdog puppy which they have very originally called Lassie!! The garden is in very good shape although the lawn is a bit of a mess because it is sopping wet and the Barrs go clumping about on it in great big boots!

Keep looking for the Gold!!!

Lots of love, Alan

21 Aug: Children go to Tarn Hows with Perkins

22 Aug: Richard and Alan leave for Iwerne

31 Aug: Violet returns with Richard and Alan from South

2 Sep: Went to Church with Violet Richard and Alan

4 Sep: Hawkshead Show, Juno unplaced

8 Sep: Violet and children go to Film at Windermere

9 Sep: Children went to church

FIONA TO PARENTS: Sunday 9 Sep 1956 Field Head, Outgate, drawing room

Dearest Mummy and Daddy,

Thank you very much for your letter.

To-day its Sunday morning and only Anne and I are up. I got up early to go musherooming, but I didn't get any not a good year for musherooms this year. Anyway I expect the Barrs have got them all. As you know the D. Farm is now not deserted so we can't get musherooms from them.

The Barrs have gone back to school they went on Monday. We shall be going soon now...

The weather is jolly fine now and we have made a tree house. With a ladder (rope one) up to it in the You Tree. We each have a perch Alan has an awful high one so he can see out of the top.

We have also divided the shed (second down) 1 in to 3 parts one for Alan and one each for Anne and I. for Alan's got all his fishing, airgun Ect! on his side Anne's got couldn't tell you nothing if you asking me. And I've got painting Ect!!!!

The plums are ready and I have eaten tons much to Alan's disgust. ...

The Barrs have a new tractor and as it was fine yesterday they cut the hay...

Just now I'm listening to Housewife's choice it's the Rock and Roll watts?. We always love listning to H.W. Choice.

Granny and I are going to Kendal to-day to get school ect!! Alan and Anne are coming coz they don't need anything - except Alan needs a new mac. I couldn't tell you where my mac belt is but I expect! Shall find it.

Yesterday we tried to teach Pip Barr to ride a bike and as he was getting on OK. we sat outside the hedge by the house and let him go down by himself he went into the write's [Wright's] fence and fell into a patch of nettles and refused to do any more so that's that.

Hope the dogs are well... Well I must close, Lots of love your everloving daughter
Fiona (fish!!)

[Lots of xxx and pictures of an Alsatian dog's head and M. Monroe]

14 Sep: Alan goes fishing

15 Sep: Violet and children and Barrs go to Kendal to Cinema

16 Sep: Went to Church with children in Richard's car

17 Sep: Alan goes to Elterwater to spend day with Grieve

18 Sep: Alan out of sorts

19 Sep: Pension increased from £620-15-0 to £708--17

20 Sep: Alan goes back to school with Doogan.

20 Dec: Alan's birthday; Alan comes home

23 Dec: Richard arrives 6.41 Windermere

24 Dec:

Mr Barr brings turkey and Xmas tree lights

FIONA TO PARENTS: 24 December, Christmas Eve.

Dearest Mummy and Daddy,

... Juno is very well indeed and is absolutely sweet... Alan has got her a 3d bar of Aaro (spelling!!) which I know she'll enjoy. At the moment she is lying in front of the fire (electrical) in our room keeping Annie company coz she's in bed with a kind of flu only she ok now so she is going to get up tomorrow so is Alan who also had it Granny and I didn't get it!! ... lots of cards and mysterious parcels. And lots of coloured paper and that nice sticky celotape and those christmas stickers. Of course the usual people have sent me cards who I haven't sent them to...

Its Christmas Eve! I had an interruption so I will continue now will that be ok?

Hundreds more cards have arrived and lots more parcel.

To-day Robert and Angela came over for lunch. They are at Priors Close for Christmas... They arrived at 11 o'clock. The thing was we all overslept until about 9. Then it was just a mad rush... But all turned out well. They arrived and then I went down to Hawkshead on my Bike it was snowing and awfully cold but I wanted to get some balloons. We had a smashing lunch. We had a ham (weighing almost 125 pounds which Uncle Arnold sent) and the remains of yesterday lamb and sprouts and roast potatoes... and we all had crackers.

The lights (which we found) kept breaking so Granny has got some new ones. They are nice but I don't like them as much as the old ones. They are in shapes of Father Christmas and things.

I am just dying for to-morrow, I can't wait.

Alan loved your birthday presents and is just dying to use the reel. I read your letter Daddy (I hope you don't mind!) and I think you are VERY rood. I AM NOT FAT! SEE! (nor is Annie).

Well I must close, I will write soon. Hope you had a Happy Xmas....Fiona

25 Dec: Went to 11 am service. Very cold walk

26 Dec: Snow, Richard and 3 children walk to Tarn Hows

ALAN TO PARENTS: 28 December

I came back from school by the 7.30 bus to Kendal and at about 8.20 (after only 5 mins waiting!) We (Doogan and I) reached Windermere in about 15 mins and then walked

across the road and immediately caught a bus to Ambleside, so far it had been very efficient but at Ambleside I had to wait over an hour for the bus to Hawkshead, however it was not too bad sitting in the bus reading a magazine. Not much happened before Christmas except Robert and Angela came over the day before as they couldn't come over on the actual day as they had been invited to a dinner. We had a lovely time on Christmas day especially with a 15 lb Turkey and a 15 lb ham! On Christmas evening it started snowing so we had a partly white Christmas and on Boxing day we awoke to a white world. The snow was only about 3" deep but it looked lovely on the hills with the dark pines standing out against it. Uncle Richard and the Girls and I went for a walk up the tarns path and round the other side and back. The tarns was mostly covered with what I supposed was meant to be ice but was really only slush, a pity as I would love some skating with the new skates Granny gave me at Christmas (mine have passed to Fiona and Fiona's to Anne so that we have now all got them). The next day we went up Latterbarrow which was quite good fun, but now the snow is just slush and is horrible to walk in so that Fiona and I only went to Hawkshead. I don't know whether I have told you already but we have got 3 schoolboys playing in the England v Scotland Public schools rugger match including the captain of England Miller (our 1st XV capt) and the Scottish cpt Forrest. Lots of love, Alan

29 Dec: Fine, Alan and Fiona go to Ambleside

30 Dec: Fine, Richard took 3 children to church

31 Dec: Alan goes fishing

1957

Iris letters to Alan Macfarlane

Friday 27 Sep 1957 Field Head

My dear Alan,

So its caught up with you - pretty fast too, but I don't think you can have taken it back with you as we've not succumbed yet. I do hope you aren't feeling too lousy and will make a quick recovery, I imagine it'll rush through the School and cause chaos for a bit but perhaps its just as well to get it over now before the rugger really gets cracking. We were going to come over next Saturday (to-morrow week) to see the match, but if flu is epidemic perhaps they won't be able to produce a team? Let us know when you feel strong enough.

Got the girls off yesterday, split second timing so that we could see "Champion" first! Daddy has arranged to have his cholera injection just when they were due back which complicated things, however we managed am now gathering up all the things they've forgotten and searching for Fiona's hockey stick which we've seen but can't pin down. Our last 'shop' at Kendal produced both her skirt and "Last Train to San Fernando" but the latter was discovered to be scratched or else its her ruddy gramophone - anyway its her ruddy gramophone - anyway it wont play properly! We had the whole of the opera "Salome" on T.V. last night, well sung but very gruesome. We're getting professional tennis every evening which is nice and the polish athletics were good except that they cut us off two vital events before the end!

We're now just about to embark on the painting of the kitchen, Daddy is making every possible excuse but I hope I can drive him on, and not too scatty.

I'll send along your socks, herewith licences - do hope you're just about up by now and not feeling too washed-out. I expect to have the girls back any day now! Granny and Grandpa come back on Tuesday so It'll probably be the usual muddle.

Much love, will write again in a day or two - Mummy

[Obviously I was ill with flu - after being on holiday. I returned to school on Friday 20th September. My grandmother soon got 'flu.

My parents, according to my grandfather's diary, did come over on Saturday 5th October to see us playing rugger.

"Champion the wonder horse" on television was one of my sisters (esp. Anne's) favourites.

The sudden expansion of the world through television (our own at last) is evident. Clearly the arrangement by which my grandparents were living separately - in a cottage in Outgate - was almost over. My father would be leaving for India on October 9th.]

Iris Memoranda

5 Jun 1957 Lakes

Half term is over and the girls come and gone. They spent the weekend falling off their bikes and making Russian toffee and left me with a pile of sticky tins and a bathful of clothes covered with blood and bicycle oil. Fiona brought a friend, Janie North, who we found trying and meant that she and F. dashed off together and left Anne out. The weather was heavenly and there were some good moments - the picnic we went on Saturday, the cooking of sausages under the dappled trees and afterwards, when they had gone, lying under a golden green fan of leaves with a small beck glinting beside me, warm and sleepy and emptied of irritations. And on Sunday Anne and I walked through hot fields of buttercups, clover and cow parsley to Black Beck where we dabbled our toes and looked for water wagtails nests. Anne is still at the sweetly unsophisticated stage and clings to me in a gratifying way which, alas, will pass.. I always feel tired and empty when they've gone, and vaguely dissatisfied as if an opportunity had passed which won't return and has been in any case, missed. Now there are chores and irritations and lots of work until Mac comes and then I shall be happy I swear it, we shan't fight, we shall be content and complete at last.

16 Jun 1957 Lakes

Flaming June for once, the hay hot and glistening, the tar on the roads like black treacle, birds muted, cows drooping under trees and sheep like dabs of paint against walls. It is almost too hot to go out and my hay fever has started so I can't seem the comfort of Black Beck as the front fields are murder - sad to think I shan't enjoy the buttercups and clover again and the ox-eye daisies. Wild roses and foxgloves are out and its light till 10 or later, wish Mac was here and we could swim and go for supper picnics.

I went to Alan's speech day yesterday - set off at ten to 8 and got there at 11.15. My memories of it - burning, sore feet, hay-fever, hot humanity and hot rubber, our picnic lunch under the oak tree with the first strawberries of the season and the anguish of seeing Alan bowled for a duck - my prayer unanswered. He seems well and happy though I always get the feeling that he's a bit out of things - and rather depressed for that reason. The speeches were prosaic, the parents madly smart but on closer inspection not very attractive and I didn't see a soul I knew all day except Mr Marriot who obviously didn't know me! Staggered back on my ragged feet and ate 2 ice creams in Kendal snack bar which was full of pasty long haired youths listening to the gramophone and tired mothers in unsuitable cottons. To-day is almost hotter and I've hardly been out, flies and bees and flame-red poppies are the only things enjoying it.

Monday 20 May 1957 Field Head

Dear Alan,

Herewith the 30/- hope it arrives safely, should really have sent a P.O. I've found the list of prices you got from that man when you bought some of his Hornby stuff, so now I can go ahead with the advertisements and hope the cash comes pouring in!

We went into Kendal on Thursday to hear Anne and the Hilltoppers competing in the Kendal Musical festival, they came 2nd in their class, in fact were only beaten by 1 mark. Unfortunately the competition part was in the morning which was difficult for us with buses, Juno, laundry etc etc etc - so we didn't hear Anne's lot sing alone but the combined choirs sang together which was very effective as there were about 400 children taking part. Fairfield seniors also came 2nd so they did very well considering Kendal High school is so much bigger.

The day before I went in to Ambleside to meet Anne at the dentist, foolishly took Juno and arrived home feeling as if a steam-roller had been over me. I tried to leave her in the waiting room while the dentist saw us but she made such a thundering noise that I

had to let her in, she sprang at Anne in the chair, knocking the dentist and his assistant off balance - obviously thought Anne needed rescuing from some dreadful fate and had to be lifted off bodily! then I went on to Fairfield and she obviously got Fiona's scent as she refused to leave, when the Fish appeared there was chaos with Piggys and Jane Ents. being knocked screaming in all directions! Poor Juno, I finally had to drag her away on her stomach.

Frightful weather until about 7 p.m. when we all rush out and garden, I'm cutting the hay by the front steps which is a slow business with scissors but its going to kill me when my hay-fever starts. The grass on the back lawn is doing well and should be ready to be played on soon, we're pulling down that odd shed and making a small lean-to instead, or rather Mr Usher is. Also persuaded Grandpa to move his compost heap to behind the beech hedge so when we've thrown out a few iron grates and old carpets it should look quite tidy.

I'll let you know about Speech day but shall have to find out about buses. We'll definitely come over on the Saturday, but don't know if we can make the speeches - hope you'll be playing in a cricket match perhaps?

I've booked you and Daddy for that place in the Shetlands which describes itself as the best Centre for brown trout fishing in north Scotland - so you might catch something.

I'll send your spinning reel as soon as it comes. I hope you're not missing too much by not having one.

May see you Thursday week at the dentist?

With much love from us all. Mummy

Top Twenty

(1) Heart (2) Butterfly (3) Young love (4) Singin' the Blues (5) True Love (6) Banana Boat (7) Look homeward Angel (8) Mangos, papyrs (9) Don't forbid me (1) Mary Anne (11) Rock-a-billy (12) Knee deep in the blues (13) 99 ways (14) I'll find you (15) Chapel of the Roses (16) Adoration Waltz (17) Cumberland Gap (18) The Wisdom of a fool (19) All (20) Good Companions

[Clearly I had instructed my mother to sell off my Hornby trains. I am not sure she was successful - but my grandmother later sold them I think, out of which I bought my first motor-bike. I must have had a reasonable collection to make it worth selling them like this.

According to my grandfather's diary, the visit to hear Anne sing was actually on a Friday. Juno was a very powerful boxer - who pulled on her lead. Hence my mother's exhaustion.

The Fish was my sister Fiona's nickname.

The front steps led up from the car-parking space. Why we had no shears, I am not sure.

The back lawn grass was being prepared for playing 'Padder'.

The small shed was not the large one which I later used, I believe.

This confirms that it was this summer that my father and I went on a fishing expedition to the Shetlands. I wrote a poem or essay based on this very vividly remembered shared experience which I shall look at.]

18 Apr 1957 Lakes

Home nearly 3 weeks - the most disappointing I can remember, I don't know why the children are sweet and cheerful, the house is nice, countryside lovely - so why do I crave with a longing that is almost physical sickness for the Naga hills, mimosa, my temple, heat, dust and brown faces? Perhaps it will pass I hope so. Alan is taller than I am and no longer good-looking, pimply and scruffy but vastly improved in every way; contented and gay and witty and quite lost his discontented frown. Fiona is full of character as always, bustling about, chewing her locket, combing her hair, cuddling her white mouse and writing to her friends. Anne I'm not sure about. She seems to have no interests or want to do anything particularly except handstands on the persian carpet; my life has been complicated by an attack of the flu which has made me feel incredibly ill and cold; and my life of space and ease has made me spinsterish and bothered by the congestion of sleeping in "cabins" in the hall, and having to keep all my clothes, passports and unfinished novels in one drawer. My hands are like sandpaper from washing up and my leg tastefully spattered with chilblains but there are good moments. If only Mac was here, that is the real trouble, I feel an alien and a stranger.

Overheard. I said to her she's your mother. I said, she's the only one you'll ever have, I said, and when she's gone she's gone. I told her straight.

3 May 1957 Lakes

The holidays are over, the children gone, the house quiet and I have a room to myself - but I wish they were back, noise and confusion and Radio Luxemburg and all. What do I remember about the holidays? The good moments - the bluebell woods and the picnic with the primus stove and the 2 tiny trout and Fiona saying "You're pretty, you're awfully pretty". Cocoa round the electric fire with Alan tapping the top of a biscuit tin and Anne writing hit tunes on the back of an envelope. Juno being jumped over the padder net, the girls in their jodhpurs. Anne sleeping on her back in the sun on the front lawn, the smell of wallflowers, birds nests. Slowly the spell of an English spring is beginning to work on me, and such a lovely spring, but still I long for Cherideo. The oaks are turning a lovely pinky gold, chestnuts in flower, bluebells in the hedgerows and the cuckoo calling. I take Juno for a walk after lunch and lie in the soft grass and stare down at the fat white houses in the fat green fields and the cobalt blue hills behind and the lakes and cows and the trembling shiny larches and feel it is almost too good, too picturesque and studied. I was with the girls, but Alan - I don't know what goes on in his head, nor is it my business to. The thing is to leave him not to pry or interfere, to hope for the best.

6 May 1957 Lakes

Took the girls to the dentist, both looking rosy and well, but Anne a bit weepy at the thought of going back to school - I wish I could keep her with me, she is a home lover and would do better as a day-girl. Why does one inflict these separations on oneself and one's family - for whose good - surely its unnatural and artificial? One can almost envy the underdeveloped and backward races who are deprived of the blessings of education, a high standard of living, and the arid, fruitless privations they entail. I'm writing up my Ahom history in the faint hope that History To-day may publish it - I must tackle my Assamese again, am in one of my drifting moods, when nothing seems to lead anywhere.

Want to write an article about the children - my visions of them and the facts - the fights at meals, the Racing Papers, the handstands, the white mice and David Whitfield, the fishing flies and the onion-frying at 11.30, the Pick of the Pops and the murder stories, the borrowing of clothes and hair grips and shampoo, the letter-writing - I must do it before I forget. Anne's letter to-day - "Did I tell you about the Consort at Kendal?"

Sunday 1 Jan: Richard took children to church

Monday 2 Jan: Lovely day
Whole family spent most of day with Coniston Hunt which met at Drunken Duck

Tuesday 3 Jan: Went to Elterwater and Blea Tarn with Richard and Alan
Took Steven Grieve back

Wed 4 Jan: Sawed logs Wright lent us 2 handed saw
Letter from Sheila nee Turbett
Sent off seed order to Ryder

Thurs 5 Jan: Got 5 gooseberry bushes from Palfreyman and planted them N. to S. Golden Drop, Careless, Whinham's Industry, Whitesmith (2).
Fixed remaining lagging strip to hot water cylinder
Violet and children went to see film "Seven Brides for Seven Brothers"
Gave Martin axe for fitting handle
Ordered rhubarb, peat, bone meal from Palfreyman - also required Growmore and Slugit

Fri 6 Jan: Sawing with Richard with Wrights saw
Wrote to Hilda
Violet goes to Bridge at Windermere

Sat 7 Jan: Richard and Alan go to Tarn Hows with Juno
Dug in 5 barrow loads of manure into front garden bed
Canasta
Lost 5/- at Pools

Sun 8 Jan: Cold
All went to church - Richard and Alan to Tarns.
Played "Scrabble"
Hilda's birthday

Mon 9 Jan: Went to coffee with Canon Bradley at
Got parcel of seeds etc from Ryder - Robert rang up and asked us over to Cartmel tomorrow

Tues & Wed: 10 Jan- 11 Jan
Sawed wood with Richard. Letter from Iris yesterday. She says they are to get 3 months leave after 21 months, after having completed 20 years. So Mac has put in for leave next year, Iris will come 3 months before him and stay 3 months after. She now reckons to be home one year in two.
Richard took Violet and children to Ambleside in afternoon.
I took Juno for walk doing the Eggbridge Farm round.
Iris sent £150 with her letter. Wrote to her

Thurs 12 Oct : Richard's birthday. Gave him a pair of gloves and the children a tie. Sent Listeners to Iris. Richard and Alan go for a walk. Letter from Bank Manager L.H.Horton who has taken over from Piper. Got compost from Ryder.

Fri 13 Jan: Children Fiona and Anne go back to School
Richard leaves caravan and comes to sleep in house

Mr Lamb taxi for children

Sat 14 Jan:

Went with Richard to Ambleside for Alan's clothes and fertilizers from Palfreyman

Sun 15 Jan: Went to Cartmel and fetched Robert - met Jonathan Clegg - Got some Antirtea? seedling from Lance

Mon 16 Jan: Planted Antirtea seedling. alan spent afternoon with Steven Grieve at Elterwater. Walked to Hawkshead in morning.

Tues 17 Jan: Richard leaves. Alan leaves. Is taken to Sedbergh by
Walk with Violet Eggbridge Farm round

Spring Holidays 1956

27 Mar

Alan comes home for holidays

28 Mar

Wrote to Heather

Letter from Iris

Walked to Hawkshead

Violet went to Ambleside

29 Mar

Went to Ambleside and got 4 Azaleas from Palfreyman (Pres Carnot Red, Pontieum, Sang de Ghent, Bruges, Moltituli, Prof Lorence)

30 Mar

Lovely day

Family walked to church too Juno home

Alan fetched me some Leaf mould and I planted rest of Azaleas

Took book to Elliott yesterday

31 Mar

Went to Point at Whittington - Met Robert and Angela, Liz and Francis

1 Apr

Fiona's birthday

Lovely day

Took children to church

2 Apr

Lovely day

Children took lunch to Tarn Hows

Sowed Cornflower Scabius Calendula

Pansy under polythene Cloche

3 Apr

Rain

Alan gets seeds and Squeak poison

4 Apr

Robert and Angela come to stay

5 Apr

Neville comes

They go on lake in afternoon

6 Apr

Robert Angela and Neville depart

7 Apr

Girls and Alan go rabbiting with Juno

8 Apr

Rain

Violet and girls to church in Bells and Wrights cars.

Violet and I write to Iris

9 Apr

Rain

Violet takes girls to Kendal and sees Alan off to Manchester

Juno nearly catches rabbit

Write to Arnold to thank him for ham

Why was I going to Manchester? Perhaps on my way to Iwerne Minster - where I was being taken by Mr Coates?

10 Apr

Wrote to Peter James and got 4 photos of our ancestors from him

11 Apr

Cleaned up compost heap area

12 Apr

Letter from Heather

Wright gives me some plants

Sowed line of green peas

13 Apr

Fiona and Anne go back to school

Occulist sees Anne at Kendal and says nothing wrong with her eyes

14 Apr

Went to Ambleside to take things for Fiona

16 Apr

Fine

Wrote to Iris

Telephones put in about this date

- I would have thought there was a telephone in the house before - but remember there was a call box just on the corner below our house I think

17 Apr

Fine

Richard arrives with Alan *from Iwerne Minster*

Letter from Iris

Boltons and Angela come for tea

Tuesday

I was away at the religious camp at Iwerne for just about a week

18 Apr

Fine

Transplanted sweet peas from pots to bed

Put 2 Mich Daisy in front bed

Started cleaning bank

Hammond Innes recommended by Richard as good writer

Richard and Alan climb High Craggs

Richard climbs Arnsfell

19 Apr

Fine

Cleaning bank

Salvage men came

20 Apr

Fine

Cleaning bank

Sowed some flower seeds in front bed

21 Apr

Anne arrives

22 Apr

Fine

Richard takes Alan to church at Ambleside and brings back Fiona

23 Apr

Fine

Transplanted Brussel Sprouts

Richard and Alan out for lunch

Planted Arbretia in front bed

Sowed Arbretia and Arabis in boxes

24 Apr

Went to Ambleside to give Fiona gloves and get money - Richard went up Scafell Pike.

Alan to Hawkshead

Violet has cold and headache

Worked on garden bank

25 Apr

Richard goes climbing Scafell Pike with another master

25 Apr

Richard climbs Fairfield

26 Apr

Richard leaves

28 Apr

Cleaned garden entrance near apple tree
Alan and I went to Hawkshead

29 Apr

Went to church with Anne and Alan

30 Apr

Alan goes fishing with Greaves [Grieves] on Windermere - I take racquet to Fiona
Richard's photo snaps of children arrive - V. good
Alan comes back with broken fishing rod

1 May

Rain at last

Alan goes back to school

Drinks with Sykeses

Met McCanns

Summer Holidays 1956

31 Jul

Alan arrives

Spider meets him at Ambleside

Laker takes 10 wickets plus 9 in first innings

Took Sheila for walk to Tarn Hows

Spider goes there in car.

1 Aug

Spider takes Violet and girls to Cartmel to have latters dresses measured for wedding

2 Aug

Walk with Spider and Sheila

3 Aug

Paid rent, electricity and telephone bills

Alan goes fishing all day

Violet and Sheila for walk to Drunken Duck

4 Aug

Spider and Sheila leave

5 Aug

Want to church with 3 children

6 Aug

Robert arrives

Children go out for lunch to Grisedale

Children go out for day to Grisedale Tarn and come back soaking wet

There is a detailed description of this in a letter I wrote the next day to my parents.

7 Aug

Violet goes to Kendal for new glasses

8 Aug

My wedding kit arrives from Moss Bros

Anne sends off watch to be mended

Violet prepares garden shed for Richard to sleep in

9 Aug

Violet and girls go to Cartmel for fitting dresses

Robert and Alan go on Lake

10 Aug

Richard arrives

The next 10 days are blank - up to the wedding

18 Aug

Robert's wedding day

20 Aug

Francis Bloomer leaves

21 Aug

Richard climbs Weatherham

Children go to Tarn Hows with Perkins

22 Aug

Richard and Alan leave for Iwerne

23 Aug

Fiona and Anne leave for Scotland by 12.34 bus from Kendal 11 bus from Ambleside

Violet rung up from Dorset

24 Aug

Rainy

Wrote to Iris and Mac and posted Alan's report at Hawkshead

Butcher Comes

Took Juno out 3 times

25 Aug

Rainy

Went to Hawkshead with Juno

Entered Juno for Show on 4th

Arnold sends me 1 lb tobacco for my birthday

Took Juno to Tarn Hows

26 Aug

Took Juno for two and a half mile walk via Hawkshead Hill

Wrote to Violet enclosing letter from Margaret

27 Aug

Rain

Wrote to Arnold and Heather

Letter from Arnold

Gave Mrs Owen some Sweet Peas

28 Aug

Took Anne's watch to Outgate P.O.

Letters from Billy, Evelyn, Fiona

Juno for walk

Bell looked in and gave me pot of jam and showed me his war records

29 Aug

Saw chiropodist

Veg cart came

Juno for walk

Letter from Iris Alan Robert Hilda

Wrote to Evelyn and Robert

Looked in at Bells after dinner

Letter from Iris

30 Aug

Letter from alan

Richard sends me book "all about gardening"

31 Aug

Violet returns with Richard and Alan from South

2 Sep

Went to Church with Violet Richard and Alan

3 Sep

Wedding photos come

Richard leaves for Ireland

Fiona and Anne return from Scotland

Wrote to Iris

4 Sep
Hawkshead Show
Juno unplaced

5 Sep
Posted wedding photos to Robert at Outgate
Library came
Wrote to Noel and Sheila
Juno on heat

6 Sep
Read "Time is so short" by Parr Cooper

8 Sep
Staked 7/6 on Pools
Violet and children go to Film at Windermere
Letter from Robert. He won't have to go to town on Wed for Parliament sitting.

9 Sep
Children went to church
Canasta

10 Sep
Letter from Iris with £100

11 Sep
Violet takes Fiona to Kendal for shopping
Went for walk with Anne

12 Sep
Went to Chiropodist (Paterson) at Ambleside
Children got some leaf mould from wood
Letter from Richard
Eden states Canal policy in H of C

14 Sep
Alan goes fishing

15 Sep
Violet and children and Barrs go to Kendal to Cinema
Digging hole for Plum Tree

16 Sep
Went to Church with children in Richard's car

17 Sep
Alan goes to Elterwater to spend day with Grieve
Richard walks round Esthwaite water

18 Sep

Letter from Hilda - Desmond married
Alan out of sorts
Richard leaves for Haileybury
Violet goes with him as far as Kendal

19 Sep
Pension increased from £620-15-0 to £708-17
Mashiters visit us

20 Sep
Alan goes back to school with Doogan.
Wrote to Iris

Winter Holidays 1956-7

20 Dec
Alan's birthday
Alan comes home
Wrote to Eric Read

21 Dec
Xmas tree bought from Milligan in Outgate

23 Dec
Richard arrives 6.41 Windermere
Coward takes wireless away

24 Dec
Cold
Coward brings wireless back
Mr Barr brings turkey and Xmas tree lights

25 Dec
Went to 11 am service. Very cold walk
Presents from Evelyn (hanks) Sheila (sox) and Cee (tobacco)
Richard gives us "Illustrated London News"

26 Dec
Snow
Richard and 3 children walk to Tarn Hows
Billy's sons names are Robin William Eric

27 Dec
Snow and slush
Present from Iris - a lovely jacket!

28 Dec
The Bradleys came in for drinks

29 Dec

Fine
Alan and Fiona go to Ambleside
Letter from Hilda
Wrote to Arnold

30 Dec
Fine
Richard took 3 children to church
Wrote to Iris

31 Dec
Fine
Alan goes fishing
Fiona to Outgate with Juno

Sunday 26 Oct 1957 Iris Macfarlane Field Head

My dear Alan,

Just struck me that I haven't written to you this week, awful lapse, I'm so sorry, I'll make Sat. my writing day in future so you'll get it on Monday. I was sorry to hear about your said game of Rugger, but hope you've got back your strength now and get some good games. I can't manage next Saturday (2nd) as the girls are out for half term, but could come over any other day. They are out from 1st-4th, plus a friend of Anne's and the Barrs are putting forward their bonfire so I shall have to run out and get some rockets if they're not sold out. Robert was supposed to be coming over to-day [at top of sheet 'Here is Robert!'] but hasn't turned up, the 8.30 bus he had to catch must have been too much for him!

A quiet week here, with 2 daring outings to Ambleside as the highlights. My painting has kept me busy, but has made remarkably little difference to the house except for splodges of white in noticeably wrong places! Granpa lay on the stairs all one wet day and scraped at the woodwork in an effort to get off the revolting brown stain but without much effect. I must say I miss Daddy when there are jobs to be done around the house, panic reigns when the smallest screw has to be fixed into a wall!

I'm going to advertize your electric trains again. What about the Air Gun or will you want it for rabbits? Celia Edye sent some grey jungle-cock feathers for flies and I've told Stanley to keep any pheasant's neck feathers they have, he's always telling me of the number they shoot - without a licence I feel sure! The hunt is meeting at Hawkhead to-day, a lovely day and I'd like to have followed a few yards - but the joint has to be coped with! Juno is in good form and back to all her bad habits, though I am trying very hard to make her obedient.

I'm beginning to think vaguely about Christmas, shall try to make some of my cards if I can think of anything except camels and Christmas Trees to paint. I'm hoping we might do down to London for a few days at the beginning of Jan. but it rather depends on finance, and if Robert will let us have his flat! Couldn't possibly afford a hotel. I must make up my mind soon as there'll be things to book. We shall probably end up at the Morecambe Panto so don't get too excited! I had thought of getting a job to try to raise funds but there doesn't seem to be much scope round here, particularly for such a short time.

Yorkshire pudding to be made, so must dash. I haven't heard the hit parade for ages, but I gather "Tammy" is at the top, we had the Tommy Steele story on T.V. the other day, didn't realise he was quite so ghastly with a great mop of greasy curls and a smile like a crocodile. I seem to miss all the best programmes getting supper, I had to leave "Il Travatore" half way the other night, which broke my heart. Shall we have high tea in the holidays? Hows the tuck, do you want anything? Much love, Mummy

Saturday 2 Nov 1957 Field Head

My dear Alan,

I'm writing this in bed, after an exhausting day tramping Kendal in search of Fiona's wardrobe - a party frock this time. We started off in a light shower of hail which was a bit putting off, and staggered in at 6 p.m. in a fairly heavy downpour. In between had pulled clothes on and off Fiona, waited for buses, tried not to buy presents for Sally, bought presents for Sally and seen a fairly good western called "Stampeded". We took Anne and her friend Lorraine with us and they trailed wearily but gamely behind. Anyway that is the last of Fiona's wardrobe for a long time. We got back in time for "6.5 Special", "Wells Fargo" etc etc. Now I have a raging headache which isn't surprising but enjoyed the wrestling we saw on I.T.V. everybody else loathes it! The girls came back from school at crack of dawn yesterday and the weather has been loathsome since they arrived, hail, gales and generally foul, you've probably had the same. We spent yesterday afternoon making toffee, with varying success, to-morrow we're supposed to be having the Barr's bonfire but it looks pretty hopeless in this sodden sort of weather. I shan't really be too sorry as I shall have to be O.C. Fireworks and shall probably get muddles with the ones that say "hold in the hand" and ones that tell you to "Light Blue Paper and Retire" - with gruesome results! I don't think they've made a Guy, shall probably have to do it as usual. They're selling Flicka and Gypsy the cart horse, I would quite like to buy Flicka but can't at the moment.

I've spent the usual sort of week, mucking about with paint, tacking bits of rubber to the bottom of doors, wrestling with the Aga and reaching the end of every day in a state of exhaustion, though with nothing done. The man arrived to look at the Aga on Thursday and scraped vast quantities of dust and ashes out of unlikely holes and it's now going like a bomb, which is a relief. Before I forget, about the mouth organ, I'd planned to give you a decent one for your birthday! Would you like me to get it now in advance, or can you get one cheaper at school? In which case I'll send you your £1 as asked. Sorry to have to spill the beans, but you put me in a spot!

Daddy seems to be finding lots to do, have you heard from him?! Unfortunately the Naga trouble hasn't ended after all, so we can't build our road up into the hills and to the fishing river - as yet

I shall come over for the match on Nov 23rd definitely (if you're playing) let me know times a bit nearer the day. I'll ask Daddy to get your godfather's address, but don't know how to contact Pat Travers Smith, or even what her married name is - Alas!

Forgive a scrawl. I'm very tired, must get an aspirin and retire to scratch my chilblains for an hour before I can sleep!

Fiona sends her love?!

Much love - Mummy

6 Nov 1957 Field Head

My dearest one - Nearly a week since I wrote, time is certainly whizzing past and it's only 2 months till I see you again, still far too long but it'll soon pass. The girls came out for their half term on Friday, they were brought out by car, arrived at crack of dawn plus Anne's friend, a pretty child and quite pleasant but I get rather peeved having to supply tuck, presents for pashes etc. to extra offspring! The girls were looking shaggy and rather tired, specially Fiona, I'd written to Miss Wharton saying she (F) wasn't sleeping well in a dormitory by herself and could she be moved back, and got a note to say Fiona was being so naughty they couldn't think of any other punishment, they did move her back and there was pandemonium and pillow fights on the spot! Fiona's version of it is that whenever there is anything wrong she is picked on as ringleader, a situation I know well, so I really don't know what line to take! They're being worked much harder under Miss Wharton and she seemed quite worn out, but after a couple of days lying in was much revived. They spent most of the time making toffee and peppermint creams with varying success and a lot of mess, it rained almost solidly which made things difficult but on Saturday we made an expedition to Kendal for F's party frock. We trailed in and out of shops and finally she chose a very sophisticated blue-green taffeta with artificial orchids at the waist, I preferred a yellow frilly affair but she discarded it as far too babyish! Then had to get shoes, suspender belt and nylons, shoes for Anne and presents for various people who were having birthdays, one a miniature bottle of Creme de Menthe which seemed a peculiar choice and will confirm Miss W's worst suspicions if discovered! We had snacks at a cafe and went to a western called "Stampeded" which was a bit grisly but only cost us 9d each. We left the house in a heavy shower of hail, and staggered in at 6 p.m in pouring rain, tired and bedraggled but in time for "Wells Fargo"! Sunday was an awful day, it rained and blew and nothing I suggested seemed to go right. I got so irritated I slapped Anne's thumb out of her mouth and she howled and I felt miserably disappointed, you know how I get. Anyway after lunch sweet-making started again and things gradually settled down. In the evening we were meant to be having the bonfire but it was so wet we just let off a few fireworks instead, the Barrs came over and frightened me to death by holding deadly looking things which said "Light blue paper and retire" in their hands, fortunately it started to rain heavily and we had to give up.

Next morning and I'm writing this in the kitchen with my cup of Nescafe beside me and thick frost outside. The view from the front is lovely, the white hills bathed in sunshine and Hawkshead a silver bowl of mist. Pretty nippy too, thank heavens for the Aga. Fred came and scraped lots of ash out of various holes last Thursday and its going perfectly now, I watched him like a hawk and think I could cope in another crisis, theres a ledge just above the fire which is the cause of trouble. I'm very relieved. The plumbers have been in and put in Mummy's washbasin and we spent yesterday afternoon heaving those grisly "bits" of wardrobe about, she wanted to put her bit into the girls room but having worked for the last 3 weeks to make the room look nice and achieve a little space, I stuck. In the end I emptied the one on the landing and we tottered along with the glass-fronted one and put it there, accompanied by a Greek chorus from Daddy "It'll never go in, we can't do it"! Anyway they seem pleased with the basin though Daddy's first effort to shave in it resulted in a pool of water on the floor and a sodden pillow on M's bed! They're about to start on the downstairs lav. Thank you for sending another lot of money darling, the girls bills cleared out Grindlays and left me with £22 in Martins, but I shall be all right now. Still no job. Come to the conclusion I'm unemployable. I was so sorry to hear about poor Doreen Brown (P. White didn't surprise me!) Really the way women carry on with the husbands of their best friends is rather revolting isn't it? Delighted to hear about Cherideo, is that due to plucking fine?

Or just your general cleverness darling? I'm very proud of you anyway, don't I tell you that enough, you know its true. Another 2 lots of tea arrived and we're now stacked to the ceiling so don't send any more. One of the tins had the lid off and was leaking badly.

I daren't write any more because of the weight. Hope you've heard from the Edyes about the box

Be good and keep loving me and don't write severely to Fiona, she has enough grilling at School poor pet - little wretch. All my love xxx Totty.

Sunday 17 Nov Field Head

Any news of the box?

Darling one -

Real November weather, you hardly know whether its morning or evening, just misty and grey until it gets a bit darker still and the day's over. Actually I like it, very restful, and I like the rather desolate look of the countryside. Its dark by half past four so we can settle down by the fire for hours on end. Actually the fire is a minor irritation as Mummy pulls her large chair well forward and watching T.V. we freeze! I've been tacking strips of rubber to the bottom of doors but draughts still seem to whistle in. I'm sure insulating the attic would help but don't feel capable of coping unless driven to it. We're waiting for the plumber to do the downstairs lav, but he and all the builders are working flat out on converting that barn down the road. We went over it the other day, it has heavenly views from every window but most of the ground floor is garage, all living upstairs so you have to cart up coal etc. which is tiresome. We had the Knappets into "Telly" on Sunday evening, and the Mortons rang up and asked if they could come too, it was the last of a cycle of plays on India and a Zoo Quest film from New Guinea. We gave them coffee first, and I made meringues that looked like lime plaster but tasted quite nice. It was difficult getting seven of us round the set but they enjoyed the programme I think, the interference on the Telly has gone and its working very well. The Indian play was on partition and very biased in favour of the Muslims but interesting. We had a fearfully sad documentary on Refugee camps last night, old men lying in coffins for beds, quite terrible that they can't do anything about them. We had an unexpected visit from Fiona on Saturday, she and Jane Ent. were drifting round the countryside on some guide job, which involved going into the Drunken Duck and finding the proprietors name. It all sounded very peculiar! I was out for a walk with Juno when they arrived but they rushed in afterwards and ate some bread and butter, Fiona very cheerful. I'm going over to Sedbergh on Sat to watch Alan play Rugged (I hope!). Sedbergh aren't having a very good season. I don't know whether its due to flu. I met Mr Doogan in Ambleside the other day and he said Michael had lost his place on the 1st XV because of it which was bad luck. Pat Cowan is coming down for Alan's confirmation but I still haven't quite worked out how we're going to get there! Thank you very much for the money darling, all bills (eyes, teeth and butchers bill from August included) came to £28 and I paid Mummy £30 towards the £46 we owe her, so I've got sixty odd pounds of it left. I'm trying to be economical but every time I go out buy a couple of presents towards Christmas. Anyway the £60 will cover next months regular bills and most presents and I'll try and put by your December offering towards school bills, or some of it. Its sweet of you to say we must go to London. I'll write to Robert and see if we can stay in his flat, if not the whole thing's out of the question. Uncle Arnold died last week of throat cancer. I think M and D are having expectations but I expect a parcel of grisly oil paintings will be all we'll get! I've finally soda-ed and

scraped the hall, and am about to start re-staining it a light colour and then will paint the bathroom walls and call it a day. The Aga's working a dream now.

Doesn't seem to be much to say darling. I live from day to day, clean and cook in the morning, walk and tidy in the garden after lunch, then write letters, knit and watch Telly. Mummy has embarked on a huge, enormously expensive rug for the girls for Christmas, 6 ponies on a black and white background, unfortunately the holes in the diagram don't correspond to the holes in the canvas which involves sums in proportion which none of us can do. I'm helping her with it and I can foresee a burning of midnight oil to get it finished.

I'm glad the compound's coming on, does the Assamese tiler in front look nice? I'm beginning to go through my Assamese books again with a view to taking up my studies on arrival. Will you lay on a teacher for me? Have you been up to the temple? Will you also get Rosemary's address for me. I'll send her a card. Are they getting a new accountant or will Sawlen cope? What a lot of questions - please answer them darling. I'll send your Christmas card in my next letter, usual home-made effort! I ordered the Turkey to-day and am going to make the pudding to-morrow, Daddy keeps saying gloomily how he hates Christmas, but as he doesn't have to do a thing towards it we're rather brusque! I wonder what you'll do, go up the river? Do you remember last year, sitting by the camp fire with John Darby eating all our curry puffs and saying "Well I must say this is very pleasant"! And do you remember how cold I got in that horrid little camp bed in the night?! We must have a week-end in the basha after I arrive, book it darling. Before it gets too warm so I have an excuse to get into your bed.

If its fine I'll take the camera to Sedbergh, we haven't seen the sun for weeks it seems. I'm going to tea with Mrs Grieve to-morrow. Stephen passed 9 subjects in "0" level which took the wind out of my sails!

Keep loving me, as I do you, always my dearest - Totty

[Pat Cowan came down on 29th November - so presumably my confirmation was on Sunday 1st December. Pat was my godmother. Rosemary Gifillan features a lot in our lives. My parents arranged for her to come back to England and she stayed with us - she was about Fiona's age.]

Christmas 1957

The following Christmas, Tuesday 31 1957, my mother was home and wrote a long description to my father as follows.

My darling, Forgive this long lapse, but this has been the most hectic week I can remember, and even now life is not exactly tranquil, but I must try to get some sort of letter off. First of all thank you very much for your wire darling, it cheered me a lot. There were occasions when I felt on the verge of a nervous breakdown, and never stopped wishing for a moment that you were there to give me both physical and moral support! Christmas eve was a hectic day, as Anne collapsed with a temperature at mid day and I worked pretty continuously to get things organised so that I could enjoy the day itself. Robert, Angela, Liz and fiance were supposed to be coming in for a drink at 6, but arrived at 8 and at 9.30 Mummy suggested I give all 12 of us supper! I was speechless with tiredness, Anne ill, stockings to fill etc. and was very rude about it (to Mummy) so she called it off! We (Fiona, Alan and I) went to early communion on Christmas day, it was nice walking across the dark fields with the first streaks of dawn over Hawkshead - but the early rise and empty stomach were too much for Fiona and

she started to gasp like a fish and had to leave the church quite quickly and wait for us in the freezing porch! The rest of Christmas day was fun, the Turkey and pudding both delicious and Fiona and Anne very helpful with the table decorations (Fiona was a rock all through, made masses of sweets and even filled a stocking for me bless her!). They all seemed pleased with their presents though the girls recorders didn't arrive (they are musical instruments like flutes!) and I think they were a little disappointed with Mummy's rug, I was afraid they might be and she would have done better to give them the money! I got a waste paper basket (Fiona, home made), string of pearls (Anne), box of chocs (Alan) thing to look at our coloured slides through (M & D) film for the Cine (Richard) and a scarf from Robert and Angela, so did pretty well. Richard didn't contribute as much as a tangerine to the occasion. Mummy suggested that he gave a bottle of port as his part of the celebrations, so he made it part of his present to her! Honestly how mean can you get. Anne was rather wan on Christmas morning but was well enough to come down for lunch and enjoy it, and recovered quite quickly after that. Don't know what hit her.

Boxing Day was wet and we were up too late for the meet, so spent the day tidying and feeling rather deflated. On the 27th we had to go to the dentist and Fiona had 2 fillings to her horror as she was very smug beforehand. Alan has to have one out next week, but Anne just carries on. On 28th was Liz's wedding, which was a gruesome affair. I was picking tacking threads out of my new black dress, cooking lunch and dressing for the wedding all at the same time - then we sat in a cold church and finally ended up at a very hot reception at which I didn't know a single soul. It seemed to go on for hours and I was stuck with rather a dull woman with a piercing voice, the only mildly amusing moment was when we both got our snappers stuck in a hard biscuit at the same moment. Liz looked nice, and the reception was held in an amazing house, huge and gloomy and full of tapestries and four-poster beds, rather eerie. I was never so bored in my life and glad to get away in spite of drinking every glass of Champagne that came near me. Sunday was fairly quiet, just the usual round of cooking and washing and yesterday, when I had all the preparations for our trip here to make Mummy asked Robert and Angela for the day. As usual they sat on and on and obviously expected supper, but I didn't rise, much as I like Angela I feel she might be a little more considerate and thoughtful. I kept mentioning packing and my hair to be washed and she smiled serenely and didn't budge.

So to to-day, which started by the Aga going out (its working perfectly but Daddy let it get too low) and Fiona staggering out of bed with black circles under her eyes and feeling sick, Richard drove us to Windermere and all the way down Fiona got worse, was sick several times and obviously feverish. By the time we got to Euston she was in a state of collapse, so we had to get a taxi all the way here (25/- worth). Fiona lay on my lap moaning, the taxi man lost his way, and I began to feel I was acting a real life nightmare and we should never arrive anywhere until we were all raving. Alan finally took the taxi-drivers map and got us home, and we soon had the poor Fish in bed with a bottle and an aspirin. Alan and Anne then dashed to the shops and brought some provisions and medicine, lit fires, made supper and were generally terrible efficient. Fiona went straight to sleep and at 10 p.m. as I write she has just opened her eyes and said "I feel all right Mummy". So perhaps we shall enjoy our stay here after all, really children have a perfect genius for getting ill at the wrong moment.

The same Christmas is also seen through the eyes of Fiona in a letter on 31 December from London to her father.

My dearest Daddy,

I hope you had a smashing Christmas. I am very sorry I haven't written before now but there has been so much to do. But I hadn't forgotten to you, I thought about you lots what you would be doing ect.

We had a super time, I will give you a long thing on it. Shall I? Tell you everything I did and all I got.

Well we were going to Early morning service. Anne hadn't been well, so she was going to go with Alan Grandpa & Richard later. Alan and Richard went to two services. Anyway after we had opened our stockings, I had given Mummy one as well. I got super things, a compass, and a workbag, travelling one with all the things in it, and tons of other things as well. We had to go quite quickly down to church with the result I felt faint, and had to go out I recovered immediately and after breakfast I quite O.K. Then I had to finish wrapping parcels. I had made Mummy a waste-paper basket at school when she saw, and everytime I used it. I gave granny a salt & pepper thing, which I had also made with some pots in it, and Grandpa a token for the flower & gardening shop in Kendal, and Anne gave a necklace with Alan and Alan a record.

Then I finished decorating the table. I had a centre-piece in the middle they had been showing us how to make them on T. V. Mummy bought the cake board and a big red candle and I stuck the candle in the middle with sprays of holly all round it. I silvered the holly, and put frost on, then I put nuts and sweets on it. I really looked quite nice. Then I put silver trailers and bowls of nuts fruit and sweets all round.

After a SMASHING dinner, of which I ate miles to much. It was Turkey roast potatoes & brussel sprouts, with white wine to drink then Christmas Pud, of which I could hardly eat anything. We washed up and went into the drawing room. The queen was on T.V. It was quite nice seeing her, but you could see her turning over the paper for her speech which rather spoilt the effect.

We then opened our present. I got a lovely pola neck jersey from Mummy. And I got a locket and a rug (when she had made) from Granny. I got a smashing leather belt from Uncle Alan & Aunty Jean, and a little furry white poodle (the kind in Hannah Robinson's) from Alan & Ann. I got lots of other things from school bods and lots of sweets and an annual from the Cowans. I got 10/6 book token from Mrs Werner coz Mum had sent Charles & Diana something. I got some bath salts from Scilly!!

Your present didn't come Mummy was most cross, the shop said it would, but she said she would get it here, in London. Anyway thanks absolutely tons & tons. There are all the winter sales on here dresses at 4/11 and skirts at 5/-. We saw some of the makes on T.V. You should have seen the women, they looked like Tigers just about to kill their prey, barred teeth ect, nothing would stop them!!!

1958

16 Aug 1958 Alan Macfarlane Field Head

Dear Mummy and Daddy,

Good news!! I am still alive! I think I have now nearly mastered the dreaded machine. I have been about 100 miles on it, including going via the ferry to Bowness and then on - via Ambleside and Windermere and back here. That was when I went on the Lake with Robert Angela, Bill and Julia and Anne and children. It was a lovely day and Robert managed to get us a good motor-boat, a slow one but really safe, a smaller version (slightly) of the boats that churn around the lake with holiday makers. I don't know whether I have already told you what I am about to tell you but I better write it again in case I have not written it before. Excuse me if I did. I went out last Sunday on my motor-bike, heading for the top of the Duddon (over Rhinos pass). It was a hot but thundery day and there were a considerable number of people driving up and down the pass. Of course some idiot got stuck halfway up, on one of the steep bits, so that there was a long line of cars waiting trying to pass the stalled car. This meant that I had to stop and then start on a steep gradient, as I could hardly start on the flat I was a bit worried, but a nice young man pushed me off so I was alright. Anyhow I reached the other side and parked at Cockley Bridge (you know, where the Hardknott road goes off. Then I walked about one third of the mile down the stream and started fishing. I was using a silver spoon and I was beginning to be a bit worried that there were no sea-trout when I came to a nice pool. It was about 30 ft long and about 6 ft deep and the strong current swept under some overhanging trees; at my first cast I felt a terrific tug and out leapt a fat sea-trout. It dashed off for the bank and was nearly under it before I knew what was happening, but I just managed to head it off. I landed it in the pool below after an exciting fight. It was a lovely fat, fresh-run fish which I weighed later and found to be 1 lb 4oz. Then a terrific storm began. The lightning flashed across the sky right overhead, the thunder nearly burst my ear drums! But it did not affect the fish as I went on to catch another sea-trout of 1lb 2 oz under the bridge. But what a ride back it was over Rhinos! I could hardly see any distance, the road was a river, and the wind blew the bike from side to side, but I reached home. The next day I went fishing there again, but this time I had no luck, apart from small trout. then a few days later I went fishing on Windermere with Stephen and we caught a few small perch. For the last few days I have been sleeping at the Knappet's house as Billy etc are here. No doubt you will hear enough about the children from Anne and Granny, so I won't talk about them. I went fishing again yesterday in Satterthwaite about a mile below where we usually picnic, as I had heard there were sea-trout in it, and by some fluke I got two sea-trout of 1lb 4 oz and six and a half oz so now I know another good place - the bike has its results!

Lots and lots of love Alan

Saturday

Date stamp 23 August 1958 in India - hence Sat 16th

I remember the Duddon sea trout well - but not the second lot

Alan Letters to parents 1958

Letter from Alan to parents

05 Sep 1958 Alan Macfarlane Field Head

Dear Mummy and Daddy,

Thank you very much for your last letter (about your visit to Shillong). I hope you are both very well and not minding the "High Society" too much. I am already beginning to think of what I

should bring out to India to catch that 20 lb mahseer!! I suppose the best things are spoons? Could you please tell me anything else I need to bring, apart from rod and line etc. How heavy should the line be? And what coloured spinners, and what length etc? As you probably gathered from my last letter (if it was not too crumpled) I enjoyed "Camp" very much indeed, I hope I can go there again next Easter. When are you and Daddy coming back? I am looking forward to the fishing and reminiscent holiday in Scotland already! We were at last beginning to have our summer at the end of the camp. Actually the weather of the whole camp was pretty good. But for the last four days it was simply beautiful. I went down to the sea several times, Poole Harbours (to go round the "Marines" there) and down to Studland. When we went down to Studland it was a particularly nice day. We could see the Isle of White with ease - a white gash on the skyline while the "Harry" rocks to our right were very clear cut. We had a glorious view of Poole harbour on the way, and the sea was very blue and inviting, and also warm!! I bought a bit of fishing tackle on the way there but I could not find any bait as the tide was right out. But I tried fishing with a bait of orange-peel and silver paper, in the hope of a stray sand-eel or lost lamprey, but to no avail. Just as we were leaving however I saw a lot of lug worms coming up - yes actually throwing up their casts - and I tracked one and caught it when it was doing this. But really it was a most enjoyable day. The motor-bike is going very well and I think I have got it fairly (!) well taped, but I have still got to have the speedometer mended and the battery charged. I go out fishing sometimes now, just for the chance of riding the bike I enjoy it so much! Yesterday I went up to Kentmere but I didn't catch anything about 10 small trout and a moorhen. This moorhen hid in some weeds near the bank of the stream and let me pick it up, and then I let it go and it swam off under water. Today was again a nice day. Richard and I spent the morning picking apples off the big apple tree in the back garden. It had a bumper crop, and I reckon we have picked about 220 lbs (or £25) worth of apples off it. Also we have remarked the paddler court. The guitar is going swimmingly [a few musical notes drawn in]. Lots of love, Alan

Friday - the apples were picked on this day, according to my grandfather's diary "Camp" was the religious camp at Iwerne Minsters

11 Apr 1958 Field Head

My dearest Mummy and Daddy,

Thanks you heaps for your letter - received to-day. ...

... On Easter day, in the morning we went to church. It was a changable kind of day. We didn't go anywhere particularly. Actually I can't remember what I did! My memory! But I do so much I forget which day it is.

We did watch Oxford and Cambridge Boat Race on 'Telly'. Mr and Mrs Elliot came and watched it too. You know the winner so I shan't dwell on that. Easter Night I saw Dickie Valentine on Telly. He was rather nice, but Granny kept saying how out of tune he was so I was put off. Actually I didn't watch the whole thing as I was making supper and had to keep rushing back to the kitchen... Most days I bring supper through to the drawing room, as you can't drag them away, but we do try and arrange it so as to get it between something somebody wants to watch. Mrs Knappett comes in lots to watch. I like her to come as she must get unbearably loansome up there all by herself. She likes to watch the programme, but mainly I guess its for company's sake. Sometimes I go up and see her, when Taking Juno for a walk, she is always gardening, being her only joy now. Racheal the bad(?) who wrote the book came, we went we lunch and they came here, I thought she was frighttfully nice, very friendly and killingly funny! She was super at mimicking things and we were all in fits about the Iris and her kids and all.... Our reports came. I think you'll be disapointed maybe with my maths.....

Yesterday we went into Kendal to do some shopping. You might have thought I'd have enjoyed it as we had to get heaps of clothes for school, but I couldn't. I felt so guilty having to get so much... I got a new record 'Niarobi' Tommy Steele's latest. Alan says its foul, but I like it. We

met Angela and Robert and had lunch together. It was Robert's birthday. We all gave 2/6 each for a pair of socks for him. After that we went to the dentists. He asked after you. I missed you awfully, as I had no hand to clutch but I had only two titchy fillings which hurt a bit. Anne had quite a big one, and Alan had one and has to go in tomorrow to have one out. I got the book 'Doctor in Love' sequel to Doctor at Sea etc, with my book token.

I saw Frankie Vaughan on Television. He was getting the 'Personality of the Year' award by the Varaity Club. He was smashing needless to say. Also there was Alec Guinness getting 'Film Star of the Year' and his oscar which had been flown from America specially. Have you heard. Together with the producer he and the film 'The bridge on the River Kuai' (bring back any memories? Of a windy day in London?!) have got 7 oscars which decided to go for a walk. It is quite something...

This morning I woke early - 7-30! and as everyone else was asleep I decided to go for a walk... we got to the top of Black Crag and back by 9.30 which I thought was brilliant...

Alan is still dabbling about with motor bikes. He get 10000's of catalogues everyday. he is going into Kendal to-day to have a look at two there. He is only getting a very light one not very dangerous.

Anne is trying to make Juno jump [rest of letter - page 6! - missing...]

6 Apr 1958 Alan Macfarlane Field Head

Dear Mummy and Daddy,

Happy Easter!! (I am afraid this will be about a week late but I did not have time to decorate my last letter as it had to catch the post. I am sorry about this biro (yours!) but the [drawing of a small fish - my sister Fiona's nickname] has taken a liking to my pen and so I cannot get near it. The [fish drawing] is looking very swish [crossed through] in her new coat - the "swing" line so she tells me. As you have probably gathered I am not delving down coal mines this holdaiy. That is because the Coal Board had to refuse some people. I have not been able to do hardly any fishing as it is so cold - the fish wouldn't bite any way. As you will probably told several times yesterday (Easter Saturday) was the coldest Easter this century! Round London) there was 6 ins of snow in places. It wasn't so bad here though. A bit cold - but quite nice. I went up onto Claife Heights (Latterbarrow) to look for some tarns which I would be allowed to fish. I found about 10 lovely looking fishy ones but each one had a decrpid looking but and sign by it saying 'PRIVATE!' But I saw 3 lovely deer up there - a stage and two does. I don'[t know what kind they were -0 they were about the size of small horses and the stage had lovely horns like this [small drawing of stag's head and antlers]. They stopped and watch me for a bit - about 50 yards away but then they tossed their heads and trotted off. At the moment I am looking around for a second hand motorbike. I think a 98 c.c. James (very light indeed!) would be best you can get them under £25. They can only go about 35 mph downhill with a gale behind them, so I don';t think I should want to overtake very much! The boy's companion (which is a book) says that a motor bike is the safest means of transport. And it would cost less than a half of the price of a bus to get into Ambleside. Have you still got what is left of the money from my electric trains as I may need it. We have as usual been glued to the screen. Actually I have spent most evenings in front of the first in my room, either painting. (I have managed to finish my painting of the Perch, I think it is better than the one of the pike. I am now half way through one of some trout (monsters leaping in a tarn somewhere on Black Crag). We saw "The Great Adventure" on T.V. this afternoon - the Swedish film about an otter cub. I think Mummy saw it in February, anyhow it was a good film. I am not trying to sort out my thoughts from "Take it from here". Well I hope that at last it has rained. I wish we could swop a bit of weather. The boat race was a bit disappointing wasn't it - Cambridge won - if you have not heard. The Oxford cox was at the Dragon my first year!

Lots of love, Alan

Sunday

There are filled in paintings of flowers and a bunny on the top - probably from tracings
Rather fancy signature
Interesting the continuing loyalty to the Dragon - and picture of my painting etc.

Violet's diaries

Pocket Diary 1958-9

This diary has the figures for winnings and losings each week,
thus on week of 18th Jan, plus £1-18-11, week of 25th £3-11-7 and so on

So one could work out over a few months what my grandmother's net earnings and losings were
It appears that at times my grandmother had up to three bookies on the go.

8 Jul: Girls returned
Fri 11 Jul: 2 p.m. dentist
Mon 28 Jul: Anne to go to Pony Club
Tues 29 Jul: Fiona goes to London
Wed 30 Jul: Fiona goes 3.20 Waterloo to Foxlease
Fri 1 Aug: Anne returns
Wed 6 Aug: Fiona leaves Camp goes Langworthies , Alan arrived
Mon 11 Aug: Fiona goes to V.P.S.
Mon 18 Aug: Anne to Glasgow
Fri 22 Aug: Alan goes to Iwerne
Fri 29 Aug: Fiona fetched by Roy
Mon 1 Sep: Alan finishes
Fiona returns
Tues 2 Sep: Alan and Richard due
Fri 5 Sep: Bridge Miss Evans
Tue 16 Sep: 2 p.m. dentist Alan
Thurs: 18 Sep Alan returns to Sedbergh
[After this entry there are no more entries in the diary]

Premium bonds

At end of diary, there are the numbers of a premium bond for Anne, and four for Violet

At start of the William Hill Racing Diary my grandmother has written in her Account Number (JY 4041). Her weekly credit is £10

Grandpa diaries

1958

There are no entries for the rest of the holidays, i.e. for January 1958

Spring

Thursday 27 Mar 1958

Alan arrives back from school

Got Juno from dog home Doherty

28 Mar

Wrote to Julia, Hilda and Margery (and on 29th to Evelyn, Aunt Ethel and Olive)

30 Mar

Sowed spouts in cloche
Juno chases sheep

31 Mar

Girls come home
gardening

1 Apr

Fiona's birthday.
gardening

2 Apr

Lovely day
Children go to Kendal

4 Apr 1958

Wrote to Iris and Mac
Coldest Easter for 41 years

Easter Sunday 6 Apr

To church with children

9 Apr

Robert and Angela come over
Shed fixed by Usher

10 Apr

Robert's birthday
Violet and children lunch with him at Kendal

11 Apr

Go to Kendal with Alan re motor bike - J.Walker Strickland Gate

12 Apr

Won with Littlewood simple Seven and short list
Robert and Angela come

Sunday 13 Apr

Children to church
Coffee with Mrs Knappett

14 Apr

Got creosote and water can
Billy Barr puts up posts and wire netting
Richard arrives

15 Apr

Richard with Mrs Knappett
Got £4-2 from Littlewood
Sent off Income Tax return

16 Apr 1958

Won £20 from Hill
Richard and Alan motor to Wastwater

[I remember this short stay at Wastwater with Richard - the tiny church, the pub and catching a small trout in the Lake]

19 Apr
Letter from Billy
Richard and Alan return
Won £8 with Littlewood

20 Apr
Mrs Knappett to supper

21 Apr
Ian Campbell arrives to stay with Alan
[Ian C. was my best friend in the last part of Sedbergh - I had forgotten this visit]

22 Apr
Girls leave for school

25 Apr
Alan and Campbell leave for Newcastle
[presumably after a stay there, we both went back to Sedbergh together]

Other events:

5 Jun
[Bought motor bike from Rowlandson for £50
James 200 "Captain" - Grandpa diary - put under Motorbike chapter
1 Jul 1958 Alan's motor bike arrives]

Building of the shed -
Already noted building:
Also

11 Jun 1958
Postlethwaite fixes roof in garden
18 Jun 1958
Postlethwaite comes with Window
20 Jun 1958
Painter puts first coat on windows
24 Jun 1958
Painter again
Gate fixed in garden

25 Jun
Alan German Measles

Summer holidays

6 Aug
Alan arrives from Scotland
[I had presumably spent the first week of my holiday in Scotland - with Alan and Jean?]

7 Aug

Alan gets crash helmet etc from Kendal

8 Aug

Alan's first motor cycle run to Tilberthwaite and Little Langdale

Sunday 10 Aug

Wireless instalment due

Alan's back tyre punctured

He goes off to Duddon Valley, fishes in thunderstorm and returns with 2 good sea trout

11 Aug

Alan again bikes to Duddon Valley

12 Aug

Alan goes to see Steven Grieve at Elterwater

13 Aug

Billy and Julia arrive with Caroline and Robin

17 Aug

Billy drives us to Cartmel

18 Aug

Billy drives me and Alan and Robin to Sedbergh

19 Aug

Billy and Julia leave

Anne leaves for Scotland

22 Aug

Alan leaves for Iwerne

24 Aug

Tea at Whittakers Far Sawrey

Weeded Mrs Knappetts garden

25 Aug

Violet writes to Iris

28 Aug

Birthday presents from Billy and Violet

Letter from Hilda

29 Aug

Birthday present from Richard

1 Sep

Fiona returns

2 Sep 1958

Hawkshead Show

3 Sep
Alan and Richard return [from Iwerne Minster]

4 Sep
Anne returns

5 Sep
Picked apples off big tree
Violet goes to bridge

6 Sep
Richard takes girls to Sillicroft to bathe
Alan goes on bike
Letter from Iris re F
Supper at Cartmel

Sunday 7 Sep
Wrote to Iris
Alan goes fishing in Duddon

9 Sep
Richard drives family to Duddon
Wrights return

10 Sep
Robert and Angela and the Mashiters here for day

12 Sep
Richard leaves

14 Sep
People come and buy gramophone

15 Sep
To Ambleside
Alan goes fishing with David on Duddon

18 Sep
Alan returns to school

Winter
[Only brief, as we went to Assam for the holidays]

Thursday 11 Dec
Girls and Alan come home

12 Dec
Violet and children leave for London

13 Dec
Children board plane for India

19 Dec
Violet returns

Field Head [Wednesday c. 12 January 1958]

Dear Alan,

Thank you for your letter, glad you got safely over but I'm, sorry to hear about the guitar string, it sounds as if it wasn't a very good model after all?! I do hope you can get it mended. I met Mr Doogan this morning and he said he had a very sticky journey through the fog, you got away just in time though as I should think the Sedbergh road is pretty deadly now.

Before I forget, yes, you can go down a coal mine at Easter, it sounds fun in a grim sort of way! It doesn't really matter which period you go for, but if its in Yorkshire the 2nd period might be better and you could go straight onto School? What about the camp in the summer? If you can persuade any of your friends to go, I should go this year, as we might be back the following summer. I think you have to let Mr McDougall know?

All very artic isn't it? I felt like Dr Fuchs when I crossed the field to the village yesterday falling into drifts and plodding over trackless expanses of snow. Juno simply adores it. You should get some skating very soon, I took the girls skates along to them but I don't know if Rydal will have frozen though I'm sure the Tarns must have. We watched the Wales v England Rugger on Telly a couple of days ago, I wish you could have seen the Welsh fly half Cliff Morgan. He was fantastic. I suppose Rugger is right out at the moment. The Manzi Fe's came down for a drink on Monday, they WALKED! He looked pretty fed up but Mrs seemed to enjoy the strange experience. I blethered on a lot about our tennis court, private swimming pools etc. in Assam, they'll never get a chance to check up, so what! Anyway it's true up to a point. Miss Grieve rang up to say she couldn't get over and that Alistair had failed O" level Maths for the 5th time! Stephen thoroughly enjoyed Switzerland, but will find Scotland much the same! I'll ask Granny to get you "Exchange and Mart". Is it about the scooter? David says you're not allowed one till you're 17? I haven't forgotten the fishing licences and will get the money to you in time. By the way if the coal mine is anywhere near her, perhaps Campbell would like to spend a few days with you here.

[The reference to the Manzi Fe's was due to the fact that although they only lived seven minutes walk away, they were rich with big cars etc. Their wealth and amenities led my mother to brag about her higher status in Assam.

I remember the excitement of 'Exchange and Mart' which I got regularly at one point and had the most amazing bargains which we thumbed through - the predecessor of 'E-bay'. I was obviously thinking of motorbikes etc. In the end I got a motorbike and Manzi-Fe got a scooter.

Ian Campbell was ultimately my best friend at Sedbergh - we went on the continental tour together in 1959.

Stephen Grieve was a close friend who had been at the Dragon and lived at Elterwater.]

Saturday 19 Jan 1958 Field Head

Dear Alan,

Herewith a few bits, take care of the gloves, they were quite expensive! The Skiffle book I'd ordered had most of the tunes you know - "Cumberland Gap", "Lost John", "Don't you rock me" and "It takes a Worried Man" so I got this one instead. I hope you disentangled the fishing rods from the guitars and the eggs hadn't scrambled themselves in your pyjamas. You got over just in time as the roads are glassy to-day and none of our

guests have turned up - thank goodness. You should get some skating if this goes on, but I don't envy you your cold baths and blizzard runs!

I'll write a proper letter in a day or two, have also discovered an Atlas, do you want it? I might stay up for Top Twenty to-night - we had Elvis Presley on Telly last night and I predict his new song "Be nice to me" will rocket to the top - its frightful! Much love - Mummy

1959

7 Apr 1959 Field Head

My dilling Mim and Pap,

Thanks Mollians fur the litter mim...

It is a V. wet V. windy V. cold day. It been snowing (only very slightly)...

I have been very busy since I have been back. Literally only been into the back garden....(clothes making)

I have completly grown out of my 24" Jeans (blue) so I will send a pattern for some..

To-day David Fandy May (!) [David Manzi Fe] is coming over for tea - I have made Alan ring him up and ask him to bring over some records - I hope he has Gigi. The original plan was to go out on the lake - but the weather has put to that.

There is the usual flap packing all Alan's things. Poor thing!! I have been madly washing collars - pressing grey longs and trying to clean up filthy old blue blazers - really his blue blazer has had it - Its torn and filthy but it look fairly presentable now. His new guitar is very swish and he's jolly good on it.

I am glad to hear about your idea of making those stories into a book. Am I called "Fiona" in the book? What about the temple? You said you would try and do something about it Mum and you to(o) Daddy (after several whiskies Ill admit).

I'm going to the station to see Alan and Ju off tomorrow. I have begun to save 3d bits. When I have £1 I am going to put it into saving (P.)-

I did quite a reasonable drawing of Juno yesterday. Its much easier ...

Haven't been over to the bods [Boddington's] for ages now. Not since before I went away. Mike and Simone have gone back. Poor old Tim I must go and see him. The tree house is almost completed - just needs the water tank filling and stocking with food then it will be completely livable in. Last time I went over I helped move fire wood (by trailer) Ju and Blob have fine games together. The daffodils are heavenly. They gave me a huge bunch to give to Granny - and some home-baked white bread - hot from the oven. Which of course Gran couldn't eat. Miranda sounds so sweet...

Our room looks very gay now. I have got practically all the way covered in pictures, painting, photoes, maps, fans etc. And Anne has got the small white dressing table again. It such a nice light room this one. I am sitting at my little desk with all my writing things scattered around me. I am thinking of our room in India and my desk there. It all seems like a wonderful dream now - Oh I am so longing - WANTING - WANTING - WANTING you to come home. Please God make the time go quickly.

All my very best love

Your silly loving daughter - Fish xxxxx

Tue 13 Jan: Went to Lancaster Infirmary and saw Mr Glennie. Mary fetched me and I spent the night with them, Annette and Angus tobogganed.

Wed 14 Jan: They took me to Carnforth where I caught bus and we went all round the county. V slippery

Wed 21 Jan: Trio left India

Thursd 22 Jan: Trio arrived in London and spent night with Angela and Robert

Fri 23 Jan: Went by taxi to Windermere to meet trio who were brown and cheery

Sat 24 Jan: Alan went skating and the girls and I busy washing and packing

Sun 25 Jan: Finished packing and went by taxi to Windermere and Alan caught bus to Sedbergh and left girls at Fairfield

Monday 26 Jan : Had letter from Blackpool. I am to be at hospital 11 15. Will went to Windermere for money and I washed and ironed and got things ready

Tue 27 Jan: Taxi 7-30 train 8-10 arrived Blackpool hosp: 10.35. Had to wait for hours for bed and had nothing to eat or drink. Down for 1st op: at 7.45
Another later
V sore mouth and tongue

Wed 28 Jan: A bit battered and I am to have the big op: on Friday

Thurs 29 Jan: On verandah and feeling better and allowed ordinary food - Will arrived and staying at New Central Hotel

Frid 30 Jan: Nothing to eat and all the routine hospital preparation. Injection half hour before op: and made me feel relaxed and carefree - Red haired young man anaesthetist - went out like a candle.

Sat 31 Jan: Not very conscious with oxygen and intravenous feeding and water down tubes in my nose. Will came.

Sat 14 Feb: Home by ambulance

[No further entries until 24 March]

Tues 24 Mar: Children and Juno return

Thurs 2 Apr: Alan returns
Fiona goes to Brassingtons

Thurs 9 Apr: Iwerne for Alan

Fri 10 Apr: Richard to Cambridge

Wed 15 Apr: Girls return to school

Thurs 16 Apr : Alan finishes at Iwerne

[nothing more until June 7]

Sun 7 Jun: Lawrence died

Premium bonds

Notes at end of diary:
seven numbers of premium bonds 'mine
'three numbers for Anne

1959: Diary

10 Jan
Snow v cold

Collinson say no sign of Alan's trunk

11 Jan

V cold

Wrote to LPO Manchester re Alan's trunk

13 Jan

Letter from Iris

Violet goes to see her specialist in Lancaster

She stays night with Gribbons

Wrote to Iris and Richard

Marriott has found Alan's trunk

14 Jan

Violet returns

Sent key of trunk to Marriott

Library book chargeable

22 Jan

Children arrive London and stay night with Robert

23 Jan

Snow

Children home

Sunday 25 Jan

Children leave for school

Spring holiday

2 Apr

Alan arrives home

12-15 Fiona dentist and dance at Giggleswick Jane Entwistle

3 Apr

Alan goes fishing

4 Apr

Fiona returns

Sunday 5 Apr

Children to church

8 Apr

Alan takes dog down to London

11 Apr

Card from Alan

12 Apr

Gribbons come to spend day

13 Apr

4-15 Anne dentist
Richard arrives

14 Apr
Mrs Shaw writes that Juno is a great success and is having a good time at East Meon

15 Apr
Girls go back [to school]

17 Apr
Letter from Telephones to say that our line must be shared with Mrs Simoniz of Belmont
Miss Sylvia Murphy comes from Blackpool. Dorothy and Rachel [Knappett] to TV

18 Apr
Drinks with Manzi Fe
Alan returns

19 Apr
Tea with D Knappett and her daughter

21 Apr
Went to tea with Paul Bridson and saw Pixley
Alan bikes to fish at Sedbergh

22 Apr
Richard leaves and looks in at Mardwell but Billy is not there

25 Apr
Alan goes fishing at Sedbergh
Planted out Sprouts
Wrote to Bank

26 Apr
10 am Alan dentist
[Dentist seems to have usually been just before term]

28 Apr
Manzi Fe has accident on his scooter

30 Apr
Alan goes back
Wrote to Annie

Summer Holidays 1959

Tue 28 Jul
Alan returns home
Girls go to Scotland

29 Jul
Alan goes to Kendal about bike

30 Jul
Alan goes to Ambleside sports

10 cwt coak received
Drinks with Dorothy and family

Sat 1 Aug
Violet and Alan go to Cinema

4 Aug
Occulist 2 pm Brownlee
Mrs Shaw arrives with Juno
Fiona a returns

6 Aug
Alan and Fiona go South
Billy Julia and family arrive
[This was the start of my continental tour with Ian Campbell]

[Alan away, hence omitted]

3 Sep
Alan returns
Fiona leaves for Derby

5 Sep
Won £5-8-0
Card from Fiona
Very dry weather

6 Sep
Tarn Hows with Juno

7 Sep
Alan bikes to Newcastle
Anne goes to Workington

8 Sep
Ask about Spectacles
No sign of rain yet
Walk to Tarns with Sanderson

10 Sep
Alan's motor bike driving test which he failed

11 Sep
Fiona returns from Derby

12 Sep
Anne returns from near Workington
Geoff Bromley arrives

14 Sep
Alan and Geoffrey climb Coniston Old Man and Weatherlam with Juno

16 Sep
Drinks with Sykes

Philip Barr hurts eye

17 Sep

Violet goes to Kendal with girls to dentist

18 Sep

Alan goes back to school with Geoff Bromley

19 Sep 1959

Last rain 13th August and before that 12th July

24 October

Wrights leave [next-door neighbours, to be preplaced by Buckmasters]

4 Nov

Buckmasters come into residence

Sat 7 Nov

Fog - Robert to Sedbergh to lecture. Fiona plays hockey against Keswick
Alan rugger against Rossall [why I did not see Robert]

Mon 9 Nov

Robert lectures at Sedbergh

8 Dec

Alan at Oxford

[Alan was trying for a Trevelyan Scholarship]

14 Dec

Iris arrives

17 Dec

Alan arrives

18 Dec 1959

Go to High Grassings

[High Grassings was the Knappet's house, where the party was held]

23 Dec

Gribbons come to tea

[My grandmother was very keen that I should meet the 'sweetly pretty' Annette - - see under early girl friends]

Christmas 1959

My mother anticipated this Christmas in a letter of 24 November 1959.

My dear Alan,

Just a month till Christmas, this time next month I shall be standing chopping up
brussel sprouts with snow (or sleet or rain or fog?) outside and at least one child in bed
with something or other! Impossible to realise when here the sun is blazing down and

sparrows nesting in the eaves and nothing happening much at all. How I'm looking forward to log fires and Telly and skiffle sessions - and trying not to think about chilblains. Daddy is trying to devise some sort of boots with electric wires running up my legs but I feel it would end with everything going off with a bang. I do hope we get a nice cold winter all the same with some skating on the tarns, I've never seen the tarns frozen yet.

But the letter in which she presumably described the festivities to my father has been

Lakeland Life - 1960

All the letters in the first section of this chapter were written by Iris to Mac. They have been included at length since they give a strong picture of their relationship at this time, and the worries about money and our futures which filled their minds. I have omitted queries and comments by my mother about life in Assam, which usually come as a paragraph at the end of the letter.

1 Jan Field Head

My darling,

... All is well here, except a shock from the bank this morning, saying I'm £67 overdrawn and I must send some more quickly! I can't understand this as I thought you had sent £110 early in the month and another £30 later. I've issued cheques of £84-16-0 (including £40 to Mummy) so even with the previous overdraft I should have been covered. Could you please cable some money quickly darling and I'll try and pacify them for another week or so. Terribly sorry about this but I'm trying to be economical but Christmas has been the blot, and Alan's suit and F's party dress. I've been feeling quite ill all day worrying about this as I was quite sure I was within my limits. I'll ask the Bank to let me know when you send money in future, once this ruddy party is over I hope not to have to spend anything more, but there'll be 2 months rent, oh dear, I do hope Someone is going to talk to Remnant! Our "do" is on the 6th so think of us! Everybody is busily writing lists of what they want to eat, shrimp patties, mushroom flans etc! They'll be luck! It's all a bit of a nightmare for me, but I try not to damp their enthusiasm and I suppose we shall scramble through somehow. Trying to entertain all those people and not spend anything is my chief problem. Anyway darling we're all well, and enjoying life, though the Telly has just packed up (temporarily I trust!). Anne is the only one who really minds! We went up to see ours and Richard's coloured slides the other evening and ours looked much better through his projector, and I saw the ones of the Manas and Kaziranga, some of which were very good. They all 3 went to a dance at Angela's parents but found it a bit dull and all got their feet well trodden on, Annie has to be driven out of the house with a horsewhip but quite enjoyed it. Darling this isn't a proper letter, just an S.O.S. so will write again soon, do hope the flap over Remnant isn't too exhausting and that Tessa is better. Love you lots. Totty

5 Jan Field Head

My darling, Just a short hectic letter to let you know we're all well and still sane. Our preparations haven't quite reached fever pitch, that'll come to-morrow and I have a tiny bottle of brandy by me to meet all the ghastly crises that are bound to arise. It's very complicated as we have to carry all our stuffed eggs and cellotape up to the Knappetts and Mummy keeps sending down messages for the long lace tablecloth in the bottom trunk in the shed! We're having sausage rolls, mushroom patties, sausage rolls, chippolata sausages, cheese straws, salmon mould and sardine rolls plus various jellies and my plaster of paris meringues. We've made it all except the sausage rolls which I've ordered, they only real complications are Mummy with all her bright and impractical ideas, Mrs K's cats which take fright and disappear every time strangers appear, and Fiona who is so terrified we shall shame her in front of her friends that Mummy and I think we shall have to crawl about on our hands and knees with periscopes! The three of them have just had a frightful row, and Fiona stamped out without any lunch saying

everyone always picks on her!! I think they've had too many excitements and late nights, 4 dances running till yesterday when I shovelled them into bed at 10. Fiona always meets some gorgeous man and goes about in a dream and we all tease her - poor darling, luckily she doesn't brood and always comes up smiling. On Saturday they went over to Piggy's, Fiona in a bus, Alan hiccoughing off into the night on his motorbike. I hated the idea of him making such a long journey at night and actually he had an eventful journey getting lost in the Duddon Valley and his lights failing on steep hills - glad I didn't know. We've absolutely lost count of whose coming to the dance and can't imagine where they'll park their cars, never mind I'll write and tell you all about it, we shall have some laughs I don't doubt. I shall be thinking of you and your party, do hope somebody has talked to Remnant about our financial plight. All the tea firms (Brooke Bond etc) are booming, it seems a bit hard that we should get poorer and poorer. Will write sensibly on Thursday darling. Love you lots and lots. Totty.

7 Jan Field Head

[At top] £80 has arrived, so I have £7! Expect you've sent more, thanks darling.

My darling,

Blissful peace, we're sitting in front of the fire eating left-over sausage rolls and the relief is terrific - after 2 hours sleep and 4 extra people in the house I'm pretty tired but its a jolly nice sort of tiredness. Alan, Anne and I have slumped out Fiona is up at David's painting the cellar for a "dive"! Her energy is fantastic, they weren't in bed till 4 a.m. and have been dashing about all day, I'll write you a long letter about it in detail, but just wanted to let you know the party was a success - at least I imagine so by the noise and the hour it broke up - 3 a.m. and only then because Mummy kept going in and glaring at the clock apparently! I walked home at midnight, as I was dead beat, had been dashing backwards and forwards all day with salmon moulds, the first lot of guests arrived at mid-day and they continued to dribble in till 9 when the party officially started. I don't think it cost too much, I put a 10/- bottle of whisky into cider for a hot punch and a 6/- bottle of wine into cider for the cup, and there were some soft drinks and that was all. The eats looked wonderful when they were spread out, but very little was eaten so we've had stuffed eggs for every meal since. Two of Alan's friends were due, and then another two suddenly turned up, but luckily the Buckmasters filled the gap, they're wonderful value. Martin spent the day ferrying everybody about. There were about 30 people and Fiona had the whale of a time being fought over by the 2 best looking boys, Alan got off with the prettiest girl so they both enjoyed it, though there were odd awkward-looking figures looming when I peered round the door at intervals - daren't let myself be seen! I hope that would be their last party but they've just been invited out again to-morrow. All the young men Fiona meets have their own cars and yachts and are altogether out of our class, most of them are nice boys, but one of the 15-year old girls we offered a punch to said she never drank anything but gin actually! The part I hate is the driving, thank goodness they aren't going out to-night as there is thick fog and frost, its awful cold. Haven't heard from you for ages, hope all is well darling and there isn't too much of a FLAP on - please send me a few lines often as I worry. All our love, Totty

Saturday 9 Jan Field Head

Darling heart,

A letter at last, I was getting worried as I hadn't heard for nearly 2 weeks. I'm sorry you're so depressed darling, try to hang on, its only 8 weeks now and it'll go very quickly. I hardly have time to think or feel anything, except tired but I wish so often you were here - and not only to do with the washing up! The children are very good company, but they think and talk of nothing but their teen-age friends and what they all said to each other and sometimes I wouldn't mind some other conversation! I'm also finding all this driving about at night very hard on the nerves, there are horrid frosty patches these days and last night they were roaring backwards and forward to the Tarns, Fiona just can't get enough company and I hate to be a spoilsport and every time I come out with the "you're too young" line I get told that all the other girls do it, which is quite true - but! Anyway they're going back to school on 15th and then we shall all have some nice early nights. Fiona took out her books for the first time to-day and finds she has 20 chapters of Caesar, 2 Biology books and a dozen French verbs to learn in the next few days. She's in such a whirl about her boys that she can't settle down to work, but I've told her if she doesn't get a grant she'll have to go to work in the local cafe - poor darling. She finds the rest of us so stodgy and down to earth. Let's hope she lands one of her rich boy-friends, it'll be the best solution.

About the money darling, I think the muddle started because nobody told me £50 had been transferred to Martins. I understood I was allowed to cash up to £50 on my Grindlays Account, and haven't touched that 50 yet. I couldn't understand how, when I'd only cashed £84 I should be £67 overdrawn, which meant you'd only sent 40 odd pounds last month. Anyway I'll now be able to pay the 2 months rent I owe and other oddments and then will juggle my bills. I really am going to try and get a job, and if you get the sack there are lots of jobs in the Westmorland Gazette and I heard the driver of the Hawkshead bus saying how short they were! But hang on if you can till you come on leave, you can judge better what if anything the company is going to do about us. This is the next evening, it's awfully difficult to concentrate against the Telly, we had 3 bouts of wrestling yesterday and then a thriller which was fatal. An I.T.V. aerial has now joined the other 2! It's been freezing for several nights and all to-day so we hope for some skating before they go back. to-morrow we've got to start off in the dark dawn (8 a.m) to Kendal to the dentist and Alan is having another driving test - he failed his first for being too cautious! He is looking so much better than he did when he got back from school, and is rather dreading this term with more exams and interviews, I suppose its all worth it.

We're sitting by a roaring fire, on a Sunday evening, eating Daphne Meredith's chocolates - which reminds me - could you send me Daphne's address and Peter Sehmer's - as we can't write thank you letters? Also those facts about tea-bushes for my book? Don't forget darling.

I must finish this or I never will, supper time and we must have an early night if possible, usually don't hit the pillow till midnight. I'm using Daddy's electric blanket and its heaven, we must have one in our own double bed when you retire, the only snag is I don't always remember to turn it on. Will do that now and then try and find inspiration for a meal. So glad Tessa is better, I've been worrying about her. My regards to the Hon. Peter -

Take care of yourself sweet and write often. I love you lots, Totty

14 Jan: Snow, Looked over Borwick Lodge Cottage which Manzi Fe's offer us
Manzi Fe writes that we can have cottage from 21 March till 10 October at 4 and a half gns a week

15 Jan: Alan goes back to school

16 Jan Field Head

My darling - You would love to be in my position - sitting by the fire with the England-Wales Rugger starting on the Telly. I wish you were here, it seems so unfair that we should have all this lovely sport and you nothing.

I never got any further, the match was too exciting, and M and D came down for it. It was wonderful Rugger, the English fly-half Sharp was the star - rather like John Sharp actually. Now the Barrs are installed in front of the Lone Ranger and I'm up in my bedroom in front of the electric fire - the farm-yard smell from 3 Barrs in a warm room is too overpowering even for me! I was supposed to be going in to see Miss Wharton to-day but had a slight headache and made that an excuse - didn't want to miss the Rugger or stand about in bus queues. Its been jolly cold for the last few days, but not as bad here as most of the country, only one snowfall and none of the roads impassable. Alan went off yesterday by bus, the girls had gone in the morning and the house felt horribly bleak - but only for an hour or two thank goodness. I was pretty tired (the children keep urging me to take Horlicks, Lucosade etc as I'm always complaining of feeling tired!) getting Alan off clean with cakes, guitars and darned socks was quite an effort, but it was wonderful just to have to find one clean blouse each for the others. Fiona has been working spasmodically for the last few days, but I'm a bit horrified by how little she seems to know.

I went down to see old Mr Haslam about her Latin and he said he didn't think she had a hope of passing - it was like trying to teach a butterfly to build a honey comb he said! He made me drink repulsive coffee out of a filthy thermos in a room that was quite uniquely and indescribably dirty - he was sitting in a hat, gloves and macintosh in the kitchen with a couple of hissing cats on his knees - really very pathetic but he just won't be helped. Mentally he is incredibly spry (he's 84 apparently) as he remembers all his Latin. Alan has been helping David Manzi Fe to whitewash a barn and came back with 30/- and a lovely sweater - so it was a most profitable undertaking. David is off to Switzerland for a couple of months to learn languages before being handed a job with the Kendal Provincial Insurance Co! Our day in Kendal at the dentist wasn't too bad. Anne had 3 fillings, Fiona 2 and Alan 1. I'm to get another pair of snappers free, so that's something. Alan failed his driving test again! he put out his hand to turn left, but didn't look round - with all his clothes, goggles etc. on, he practically can't - anyway he isn't worried. He never goes more than 20 miles an hour, must be the safest motor-cyclist on the roads. He has quite fallen for Annette Gribbon (the grand-daughter of Dorothy Black, the writer - click?). She is a ravishing platinum blond so I fear he'll have a lot of competition, and I'm afraid the happy days of fobbing him off with Daddy's old corduroys are coming to an end. I suppose they had to soon. I enclose his report and snap taken on his tour last summer. I'll send the girls reports in my next. Have you got their bills? I tracked down that £50 to Martins, nobody had told me about it! It will go in paying rent etc. and I'll manage with the £70 will pay the girls bills out of it. I do hope somebody spoke to Remnant about our finances, everybody here is rolling in money, everybody. Actually I find England smug and grasping, makes me a bit sick thinking about all those poor wretches without jobs in Assam, here its quite repulsive to see greasy little couples on the "Telly" going off with enormous cars and washing machines for answering questions a child of ten would know. Money and teen-agers seem to be all that count here, and there's plenty of both about, perhaps its because I'm poor and middle-aged that I find it a bit depressing - but I don't think so!

... Darling I feel ill every morning too, so lonely at the thought of another day without you, but it will pass and then we'll be together always. So try not to get too gloomy and worried please - I feel the bad period is coming to an end. I love you lots - write to the girls soon. Always, Totty

Sunday 24 Field Head

Please write to the girls [at top]

My darling,

... Here we've had floods. A sudden thaw and a day's rain and the road between here and Ambleside was under water in several places. I went in on the 4 o'clock bus to see sport, and on the 5.30 bus back we got stuck in the middle of a torrent with the water splashing up to the windows. The bus driver was full of fun and told us to get out our bikinis but we managed to get going again only it wasn't very nice as the brakes weren't working properly and I was sure we were going to slide backwards downhills. Robert and Angela came over yesterday and the road was quite dry again. They spent the day which I found a bit exhausting as we were making marmalade as well, and the Aga and I were just about played out! Still we had quite a good lunch and played Mah Jong and luckily its very warm again now. I had 2 blissful days of trays in front of the drawing room fire, before M & D returned, now we have long long lunches that last till nearly 3 and then its almost time to start the girls tea! ... My interview with Sport about the girls didn't get us far really. Fiona has ability she says, but doesn't bother to work may or may not pass her GCE depending on whether she bothers herself or not. Fiona takes a delightfully care-free attitude to it all, and I don't quite know what to do about her, short of incessant nagging! She is so erratic and up in the clouds that nothing I say really penetrated - hate to damp her enthusiasm poor darling but -! Alan rang up a couple of days ago for his birth certificate for some entrance exam he's supposed to be taking, he's also trying for a scholarship to Cambridge so is up to his eyes in work. I'm glad we're home this year to see them through all this, it's going to be a bit worrying but they should all have their futures vaguely settled by the time we go back.

This is the next morning and the girls have just departed for school. All goes smoothly until 5 minutes before the bus, and then Fiona disappears into her bedroom to look at herself from every angle in every mirror and there's finally a thundering of steps down the stairs and much shouting and door slamming before they finally get off. We've had a week-end without the Telly, it packed up on Thursday and Daddy wandered about ringing his hands and saying "Of course it's the Tube - we'll never afford another" - but luckily it wasn't and we hope to have it back to-day. Anne is completely lost without it, and it'll be a very good thing for her to get away from it Completely. Darling I will come to London to meet you if you really want, but it seems rather an expense, and all of them will be home by then. M & D leave on March 21st so I shall have time to clean up a bit and fill all available dustbins before you arrive. It doesn't look much as if I shall get a job, the only things I see at Kendal. Anyway I'm trying to spend as little as I possibly can, the £70 hasn't arrived yet but I expect it will soon. Shall have to ask if I can pay Alan's bill in installments. I still owe M. about £12. We'll muddle through as long as Lahoty is prepared to hang on - but it is irritating that everyone else (including tea firms) should be prospering while we slowly sink. Anyway darling I love you and I know we shall get through this bad patch very soon I'm sure. Such a lovely morning, wish I could take a sketching block out on to the hills but ! Longing to see your picture please bring it home.

All love my sweet, Always - Totty

1 Feb Field Head

[At top] Are you getting the papers?]

My darling - Half past eight of a grey morning the girls departed for school, and a little space before I start the chores. We've hardly stepped out of doors this week-end as it's been snowing and raining alternately, the snow has all gone now. I had Anne in bed with a cold most of last week, she wasn't ill but very heavy so spent the mornings in bed and came down for the Telly at tea time. Touch wood the rest of us haven't succumbed as yet though Fiona's had toothache which is annoying so soon after her visit to the dentist. Yesterday I asked Mr Buckmaster and Martin over for lunch, as Mrs is away, as usual the meal seemed to last most of the day by the time it was got ready and cleared away! We all sat glued to the Telly all afternoon and I had a splitting headache by the time it came to tackling the girls' homework which they always leave to the 11th hour. Fiona is working quite hard now so perhaps will scrape through after all. We are supposed to be going over to Sedbergh to take Alan next week-end, I got a panic-stricken letter from him telling me to keep control of Fiona and not let her into Lupton for more than 3 minutes! Martin is supposed to be driving us but it'll depend on the weather. Alan has had 'flu. The £70 has arrived, thank you darling. I'll pay one of the girls bills and other odd bills like coal and groceries and finish paying off Mummy. She is going away for a week this month to stay with Billy and Julia. I was going up to Edinburgh but doubt if I shall make it now. Come home early in April won't you, don't get mixed up with Easter which is about 10th I think. Is your passage fixed yet? Was there anything about intermediary passages in the new terms? ... Will write again in a couple of days love to doggies and lots and lots to you, my darling always Totty

3 Feb 1960 Field Head

My sweet, My quiet time after breakfast so I'll send you another few lines. It's very cosy in my room by the electric fire with wind and rain battering at the window, ghastly weather for the last couple of days and we shall have floods again I think. Yesterday morning I had to go into Ambleside in it, to do some shopping, my umbrella was practically wrenched out of my arms and I was sodden and exhausted by the time I finally tottered home. To-day I haven't got to go anywhere thank goodness. Fiona brought a friend home for the night, a pretty little thing (Mike Doogan's girl-friend!) but F. is so excited and silly when she is with other girls (and cheeky!) that she's hardly recognisable. I don't wonder her mistresses complain if that's how she behaves at school. Martin has just driven the three of them to school which saved them getting soaked. He's supposed to be taking us to Sedbergh on Saturday, I'm afraid its going to be an expensive outing as Fiona is bringing a friend out and Alan 2 so there'll be 7 of us to go to a cinema and feed. Still Alan does owe several boys outings so it can't be helped. Sedbergh is stricken with 'flu so I hope they don't bring their germs with them. I've given up the idea of getting a job now, sorry darling - but it's rather hopeless with Mummy going away for 10 days this month and there doesn't seem to be anything close at hand here. I got a letter from the bank saying £70 had arrived. Can't quite make it out as came on Jan 30th but you've already sent your quote for Jan. Anyway they're send me a statement sometime I suppose. Do hope you're feeling less depressed now darling, I get terrible fits of it too, specially in the evenings when I'm tired and cold (M. pulls her chair right up in front of the fire and the rest of us freeze. I usually come up here!) But it really isn't long now, and then we shall have 6 months of freedom from

T.R.D's and L-E's and the rest. Anyway we needn't worry about getting the sack if that's what they do for you. I suggest you sell the factory in tidy lots and when L-E tumbles to it that it isn't there we can be sacked and get a nice pension and no worries. I suppose dear Houlden wangled it. Let me know what day you are arriving, Fiona says you won't look at me when you see her in her straight skirt probably true but I hope not as I need lots of love and encouragement, middle aged and oniony as I am. All my love and long kisses - Totty.

Wednesday 10 Feb Field Head

My own darling,

Letters pouring in for us all - thank you darling. So sorry to hear about your cold. I can imagine what the dust must be like, do hope you get some rain soon. Thank you also for the £100 I had 2 letters from the bank, one on 13th and one on 30th saying they had received £70 but I knew there must be a mistake, I will spend this £100 on paying half Alan's bill and 1 of the girls, and if you can get another £100 home early next month I'll pay the rest off. I have £30 left of the £70 but bills of £26 still to be paid. My head is in a whirl of trying to make ends meet, it just isn't possible and even the thought of your leave is being spoilt by worries as we shall have to find another £200 as soon as you arrive for next term! I didn't realise you were coming as late as April 10th darling, the children break up on March 29th. Fiona had a lift down to London on 1st and was planning to stay a few days with friends and then meet you, still I suppose its too late to alter things now. I'll fix the hotel, and do your driving license when I get it. You might tell Houldey that I couldn't afford the fare down to meet you - not that he cares! I knew Peter Remnant would come and go without anything happening - oh dear this is a miserable letter. Yes, book both girls back by boat with me, I shall definitely bring Anne not sure about Fiona but anyway we can cancel it later. Don't take any notice of my moans, we'll struggle through, we can always get the sack (you might tell Houldey that too - that our best bet is to get the sack for bad management as Cappie!). The big news here is Angela's daughter, born yesterday morning, and supposedly like Robert! They're both well and Mummy has gone off to see them to-day though its snowing. We had a good day on Saturday seeing Alan and his friends will write again to-morrow and tell you all about it. Fiona has a cold but touch wood I'm still free. Both Alan's study mates, Ian Campbell and Geoffrey Bromley have pneumonia! He sits his scholarship (to Cambridge) exam next week but says he's had no time at all to revise. Tell me more about the compound darling, which flowers are nice? How are the cats? do keep an eye open for a pony for Annie when we go back (if we do?!) Hope this moan doesn't depress you, don't let it. I just get gloomy, hopeless spells but they don't last. It'll be better when we're together, and that isn't very long now, we've got more than half way. Take care of your sniffles and keep loving me as I do you - always. Will write to-morrow. Totty

12 Feb Field Head

[At top] Expect a delay in letters if the rail strike comes off.

My darling - Afraid my letter of yesterday was a bit peevish - one of those moods when there seems no opening anywhere. I feel much better to-day for no particular reason, except perhaps that its a lovely sunny day. Flurries of snow now and then but in between like spring, I have a white narcissus out in a bowl on the windowsill and behind it the yew tree is tossing gently and behind that the lake is glittering. All combine to

make me feel life is worth living after all, and to hell with money, if we haven't got it we haven't but we can make the most of what we have got - and that's plenty (I sound like the Sherriff on on of Anne's westerns!). Anyway I'll tell you about last Saturday - we left her about 11.30 with Martin and picked up Lois (F's friend) and some buns in Ambleside. It was a gorgeous day, frosty but bright and we had a picnic lunch overlooking Kendal on the Sedbergh road. Fiona insisted on putting the car roof down so we arrived in Sedbergh purple with cold with our hair in our mouths. We picked up Alan and 2 friends (the same 2 that came to the dance) so that made 7 of us, 2 girls and 2 boys at the back, Alan and Martin and I in front. We headed back to Kendal and saw "The Student Prince" the only film on, it was pretty feeble but they ate lots of fruit gums and then we had tea and fish and chips at a rather gloomy hotel. As we were the only people in the dining room we could relax and they polished off everything in sight and then we all went back to Sedbergh and sat in front of the fire in Alan's study listening to records and singing skiffle. Finally made a mad dash back to Fairfield and threw Lois in at the back door as Miss Wharton walked in the front! Alan really has a wonderful time with a lovely big fire in his study and endless little fags skuttling in and out every time he wants a lump of coal put on. He was looking quite well but has pulled a tendon in his foot so is off games. I didn't see Mr Marriot. I'll try and get over by myself a bit later. Alan now plans to go to Canada if he can't get into a University this year, live with Ian's people and earn vast sums of money doing unskilled work for the year he is waiting - and possibly go to a Canadian University if he likes it there. A good idea I think, as he needs some practice in fending for himself and he can keep himself too which will help. M and D are going to the Manzi Fe's at the beginning of March. So I shall have a month on my own here, shall employ it in writing a play for the B.B.C. competition - and cleaning the house. What time is your flight due in? If its earlyish I might come down by bus because its horrid not to be met if you've got hours to fill in. Love you darling - kisses. Totty

25 Feb Field Head

My own darling husband - for 19 years to-day (I hope). This is to say how much I love you and hope to spend at least another 50 years with you - promise? I shall drink a tiny little toast to you in cooking sherry but we'll save the real celebration till you come back. Please don't have morbid thoughts about not giving me anything, you have given me all the important things darling and I now have everything any woman would want. I promise you that's true, and you mustn't listen to my moans about money (I wasn't going to mention that word, bother!) I think we're coming to the end of our difficult period anyway, and we shall soon look back on it and wonder what the fuss was about. As long as we have our love nothing else matters, not even this house, or the job - nothing. And I think we'll have that for always don't you? I feel pretty smug about it! I hadn't heard from you for two weeks (till yesterday) and Fiona kept teasing me that you'd run off with another woman, but I was much more worried that you were ill or depressed or in prison - anyway I got 2 letters and feel on top of the world. I'll send off the form when I get your license. I think you said you'd sent it with the bills but they haven't arrived yet. It would be a good idea to drive straight up from the Air Terminal, or even the Airport? I could send the money there, if you tell me your flight number. That would save you going into London at all. I shouldn't come up the M.I but don't go by too many back roads. I want you as soon as possible! We've been living like a Greenland expedition over the week-end. It was snowing so hard on Thursday that I sent for the girls from school and they didn't go back till Monday. I don't ever

remember such deep snow, we couldn't get out without digging and of course nothing could get here. Electricity and telephone packed up and I was just waiting for Fiona to have an attack of appendicitis! I did bless the Aga as everyone else was cooking on the fire. Mummy got away south on her second attempt, though the taxi stuck in the snow at the bottom of the lane and we didn't think she'd make it. It's been absolutely beautiful, hard packed snow and sunshine, but now its pouring with rain and I expect we'll have floods!

The poor sheep have been looking absolutely miserable and a lot must have been lost and the birds have been mile long queues at the kitchen window sill. I'll write again tomorrow darling about finance, but don't worry, I'm not flapping any more. I'll just tell you exactly how things are. The bank hasn't sent me a statement this month. Not long now before we can fight it over together - oh how I long for that shoulder of yours - I'm not the sort of woman who can manage alone - but soon you'll be here and I'll cast myself and my troubles into your arms. All my love, Tott

9 Mar Field Head

[At top] Have you an A.A. membership no. for a provisional licence?

My darling - No letter since my anniversary one 10 days ago - but I expect it's been held up. the lovely spring weather has gone and it's bitterly cold again with talk of snow. I hope M & D manage to get away. They're off in the morning. the house is in a gorgeously chaotic state as you can imagine and we're all heaving trunks and cupboards downstairs and piling them in the hall. There's a man making shelves upstairs at the moment, it looked so nice without the cupboard that used to be there, but Mummy couldn't bear the sight of an empty space! I'm persuading her to take as much as possible - including the sofa - so there! I don't know if the Manzi Fe's will relish the arrival of a furniture lorry piled high with worm-holey chairs but still! I've had Fiona in bed for the last couple of days with 'flu, a mild variety that seems to be going around. She's a hopeless patient, like you, can't like still and never loses her appetite! She went off to school in an arctic east wind this morning so I hope will be all right. Mummy got back on Saturday evening - did I tell you? Billy and Julia are coming up on April 12th or so. I trust we won't be too over-run by my family - you mustn't be hurt if the children Alan and Fiona activities - they hardly noticed my arrival at Christmas they were so busy with themselves! It's only natural I suppose. I do hope you aren't going to have too many rows with F - she's a sweetie, but terribly rude and outspoken to both me and M and D. She says its because she treats me as a sister but its all I can do not to throw the rolling pin at her sometimes! Anne and I get on like a house on fire when we're alone, but the moment Fiona appears the shouting starts! Could you book us back on a B.I. boat, taking us to Calcutta? Would save a lot of trouble. The bank say they haven't got the £30 you were sending last month, or any thing this month. If you didn't send the £30 off, could you please send the full £150 this month darling? I got my book with a bill for £14 for typing - I nearly swooned. I promise that's my last effort! Anyway I'm £30 in the red, with 1 and a half school bills still to pay (and my local bills) so you see it's a bit tricky. As I say, I shan't move out of the house or bath or have any lunch this month but will need something for rent. After they go, or a birthday present for Fiona (her birthday on April 1st don't forget!). It seems no time at all till I shall be getting ready for you, lovely thought, apparently I can get a provisional driving licence for a week or so if yours doesn't arrive, but it should. Love you so much my love - Totty

17 Mar Field Head

[At top: 'Hawkshead 307' - the telephone number of the house]

My darling one,

Time is really passing now, and it'll be no time at all before you're on your way. I shall definitely come to meet you. I'm coming by night bus and taking Lucy (Robert and Angela's baby) as they're driving down in their rickety car, and aren't happy about her. I'll meet you at the Terminal. If your driving license hasn't arrived we shall have to collect a provisional one - come to think of it we can't on a Sunday. So send me your A.A. membership card and I'll get one here if I can. Thank you for the money darling. We'll manage, the next lot of school bills can wait a bit, the last for the girls. Fiona seems quite happy at the thought of coming back with us but Anne says its quite spoilt the thought for her - they loath each other! Alan goes down to Oxford to-day to have his interview for Worcester College, I'm really not too hopeful about him getting in but he's certainly trying hard enough. He's been in the san again with tonsillitis (?) so it hasn't been a very good term. Fiona had two days of flu in the middle of her exams, but managed to pass everything except Latin which she failed by 2 marks so I feel fairly confident she'll get through in July. We went up to have lunch with M and D at their new cottage, it's really delightful and the Manzi Fe's have taken a lot of trouble. It's bigger than this if anything with a gorgeous beamed sitting room. As you can imagine the bonfires have been blazing since they left and the bedrooms look quite large, we have one each at the moment. I have a divan bed in mine and Alan's room looks quite different without that awful old carpet. We want to do some painting before you come but don't know if we'll get round to it. I've hired a typewriter for a week to try and type my play but it's going to be a bit of a rush and I've hardly had time to read it through. We went over to Cartmel on Monday to see the baby, very sweet - Angela is just the same. They've taken a flat in Surrey for 3 months. I had the neighbours over for coffee yesterday. Mr and Mrs, son, daughter, friend and child. They have the old granny there too. I don't know how Mrs copes, they're such nice people. Well darling, keep going for another couple of weeks, what you suggest is plenty for the animals. Couldn't the cook do pani-wallah for the Corps or Chowkidar work? I'll write to Lavender. All my love till I see you and give it to you. Totty

Sunday 27 Mar Field Head

My darling,

Just to put your mind at rest about your license which arrived yesterday and I bunged it straight off to Kendal so it should be all right. Which is one worry off our minds. Now most of the worries are with you, getting everything settled, especially the animals. Do hope there won't be any hitches darling. I hate this time just before you leave in case anything goes wrong, but try and get on that plane darling, even if it means selling the factory. Once you're here nothing will matter any more, you and I can live on bread and cheese quite happily can't we, I have been for the past couple of weeks and feel better for it. The bliss of not having to cook a large mid-day meal - I get myself a plate - full of eggs, bacon, tomato and chips and eat with a glass of milk and an orange and some cheese, lovely! I've been typing madly all this week, I've got a typewriter for a week so am doing my play - a useless task really, I've hardly had time to read it through. Still some of the plays you see on Telly are so grisly you never know! At the moment we're looking at an awful play in which people are dangling about in blizzards on

mountains, at least I'm trying not to watch. Juno went over next door and half killed one of the little daschunds, I'm really feeling a bit desperate about her, she's completely out of control. Perhaps you'll be able to knock some sense into her. I had a letter from Pat Cowan yesterday saying she and Felicity want to come here for a week from 31-8th it's not really what I want just before you come but I suppose I shall have to say yes. She'll have to amuse herself though. If only the spring would come. It's still so cold, but the sun is out this afternoon so perhaps the end is in sight. Alan went down to Oxford this week for an interview, but I haven't heard how got on. He'll need a real rest after this term. Darling I can't write properly with this thing on, but I wanted to tell you about the licence. Will write again in a couple of days, soon it'll be my last letter - very soon darling - and then!! All my love till then. Totty.

28 Mar: Heard that Alan has got into Worcester College Oxford

Monday 28 Mar Field Head

Darling - My one but last letter, I really can't believe it can you. Life has been going along so slowly and dully and now suddenly everything is going to happen at once. I do hope you will have a good trip, don't bring us any presents please, we would much rather choose something here. Thank you very much for the £15 darling, it made all the difference. the bank is allowing me an overdraft this month and we'll just have to catch up slowly. Alan didn't seem very hopeful about his Oxford interview, it is just a matter of luck I think, but whatever happens I shall give in his 'notice' at the beginning of next term I think, he can always squat at home if necessary. I went to have coffee with Fiona's Head Mistress on Friday. They're all a bit depressed at the thought of the state taking over the school. She is a wild, vague creature but nice and has promised to take me digging at an old roman site, will you come?! Yesterday I went down to have a drink with the Johnsons who live in one of those cottages in Outgate opposite the post office, they have oodles of money (this is their Country Cottage) so we were given cocktails, olives, shrimps, caviar etc - "we" being the Manzi-Fe's, Buckmasters, and Bramwells. I had to walk down and arrive rather puffed in my boots with my hair on end to find them all draped round in exotic frocks - not my sort of world, or yours I think. It has been such lovely weather for the past week, cold but sunny and yesterday Anne and I spent the morning heaving dustbins and lumps of wood and old macintoshes from the central position they were occupying to one not quite so obvious. Also trying to conceal the heap of egg-shelves and dung which Daddy had tastefully raised outside the shed, bless him! Do hope the daffodils will still be out when you come, they're so gorgeous. I'm not sure when Alan is coming back, sometime this week. I wish I didn't have the Cowans to cope with as well. Never mind darling, battered and half-asleep if I am, I shall be there to meet you, at the Air Terminal and don't intend to let you out of my sight for more than the time it takes to go and fill the coal skuttle again! In case this is my last letter - see you in London, with all my misses till then - Totty

29 Mar: Alan returns [the end of Sedbergh]

[Letter damaged]

30 Mar Field Head

My darling - So sorry to get your worried letter yesterday about the encroachment trouble. Why do you always get yourself arrested just before you leave darling? Seriously though I'm terribly sorry you've had all this worry on top of everything else, and then [gap - L-E?] being tiresome too, you are quite right to stand up to him, its what he needs and the Board but nobody else will. I suppose it's just penetrated their thick heads that they're going to lose all the money they've invested in Africa, or rather I suppose its us who will lose indirectly. Anyway, a bit of news that I hope will cheer you up - Alan has got a place at Worcester College. I'm delighted and I know you will be. I'd begun to feel there was no hope at all. I don't really know why he is going back to school next term, but he seems to be organising everything and I suppose we can't very whirl him away the minute we want to. He came back yesterday, arrived just after lunch driven by a friend - I'd just washed my hair and it was hanging in dripping strands round my ears. He is looking a bit tired as he always does, but is very cheerful and itching to go off fishing. The girls come back to-day and the Cowans arrive to-morrow, so I shall be well occupied - if only it wasn't for the cooking, which I loathe. I've not arranged anything for F's birthday we want to wait till you arrive. I haven't even got her a present yet. Don't get us anything remember.

I went to get this off with Anne, so no more for now, see you on Sunday darling (I hope) and try not to get yourself in a state about it all, though I know its difficult. So glad the Rosses have got a flat.

All my love and mind you got on that plane. Always, Totty

*

I arrived back in the Lakes from Sedbergh on Tuesday 29 March. I had imagined that I would be going back to School for my last summer term, and indeed I did not think it likely that I would get into Oxford. On the morning of 28th March my mother had written to my father *Alan didn't seem very hopeful about his Oxford interview, it is just a matter of luck I think, but whatever happens I shall give in his 'notice' at the beginning of next term I think, he can always squat at home if necessary.* It is clear that my parents could not afford to keep me on for an extra winter term to try again if I failed this time. But later that same day my grandfather wrote in his diary: 'Heard that Alan has got into Worcester College Oxford'. This was to change my life.

The letter of acceptance from Worcester is in the College archive and dated March 23rd. But it seems to have taken some time to get to Sedbergh, and then the news to get on from there.

The correspondence below is preserved in the Worcester College Archives.

23rd March 1960 (carbon - typed)

Dear Macfarlane,

I am glad to tell you that you were successful in our recent College entrance examination and we are glad to offer you a place here in October 1960.

Please let me know if you wish to accept the place.

Yours sincerely, D. Mitchell

I then wrote back as follows:

Field Head, Outgate, Nr Ambleside, Lancs

Dear Sir,

Thank you very much for your letter offering me a place at Worcester College in October 1960. I am glad to accept this place and read History there in October 1960. Could you let me know any further details in regard to entrance?

I am yours gratefully, A.D.J. Macfarlane (Sedbergh School)

My letter was enclosed with another from my mother which frankly lays out the reasons for wanting to take me out of school a term early. I presume, from the contents, that we had already discussed the matter and I was planning to go abroad for a job.

A hand-written letter in the Worcester archive.
"Field Head", Outgate, Ambleside, Westmorland April 3rd [1960]

Dear Mr Mitchell,

My son, A.D.J. Macfarlane, has just written to accept a place you have offered him at Worcester College in October.

I am now writing to ask if the College would object to his leaving school now, instead of in July. His school tutor is quite agreeable to his spending three months travelling & then a couple of months in relaxation & reading, & feels this would be as profitable a preparation for Oxford as another term. Frankly it would be a great help to us to have a breathing space too, as my husband's job is in India & with the cost of living as high as it is out there & two homes & three lots of school bills, we find it increasingly difficult to manage.

I would be grateful if you would let me know what you feel about this, so that I can let Sedbergh know. We are very grateful for the place given to Alan knowing how many applicants there are these days.

Yours sincerely, Iris Macfarlane *MRS D.K. MACFARLANE*

My parents were always very short of money, and the thought of saving a term's fees, and perhaps a feeling that it would do me more good to have a sort of mini 'gap' work experience summer, meant that they decided to take me out of school. For many years I regretted (and dreamt about) that I missed the last, lazy, summer with my friends - fishing and cricket and saying good-bye. It seemed like an amputation. Just as the last terms (and especially the summer) at the Dragon were like paradise, so that last term as a School Prefect at Sedbergh would have been the culmination.

There was, however, the large compensation that my mother was already home on leave from India and I could look forward to a summer with my family (my father arrived back on 10 April), something I had not enjoyed for a couple of years.

Much of the summer has passed into a blur. Yet some remaining diaries, letters and writings suddenly bring back a few important themes, each anticipating events at Oxford and later. I shall deal with two of these separately, my first love affair my first real experience of travel abroad on my own. Here are a few fragments of other events in that summer.

*

I was at home with my parents from March 29th until May 5th, when I left for Norway. I was away until June 9th and then I returned for the rest of the summer. I worked in a bakery for a month or six weeks, but otherwise spent the time fishing, preparing a small dinghy I had bought, and starting to read in preparation for my

University course in history. Small hints of the life which my parents and sisters lived are contained in my mother's letters to me in Norway. I do not remember a great deal about my first job in England, working in Watson's café and bakery in Windermere. I can picture the place in my mind's eye and remember that I helped get the delicious warm bread and cakes out in the morning from the bakery, but my main job was serving in the shop. There were long periods with few customers when I used to read, somewhat to the annoyance of the proprietor. It was a very boring job, as I recall. I must have got there each day by motorbike and suspect that I went across on the Ferry over Windermere.

*

One thing I had totally forgotten, and which may account for much of my time in the last month my parents were around, was preparing for Oxford. I do mention in a letter from Oxford that I seemed to be better prepared than some of my contemporaries through having done more work before I came up. I have some evidence of what I was doing in sets of notes on the three historians whom we would be analysing in the first term. All these notes are dated September 1960, with only those on Gibbon given the more precise date of September 24. The writing on Alexis de Tocqueville and Lord Macaulay take the form of notes, under various headings. The notes on Macaulay are a thin one and a half pages, those on Tocqueville a fuller three pages. Perhaps most interesting is the one essay, on Edward Gibbon. Since this gives the first glimpse of my intellectual state a week before my parents left and two weeks before I went to Oxford, I shall include a small part of this first essay to give an idea of my intellectual level at this time.

*

SEDBERGH SCHOOL

INTRODUCTORY FRAGMENTS

[Written before and in the early phases of Sedbergh writing.]

Sedbergh - some preliminary thoughts. 25.2.09

Have started to sort through my folders for my time at Sedbergh. I am very surprised to find how much remains from that time. There is the real possibility of a kind of Wordsworthian reconstruction of the mind (and spirit) of the growing boy between the ages of 13 and 18, when I turned from a child into a young man.

If I had asked myself what there was a few days ago, I would have said that there was just a small file of letters from my mother to me, the 'Brown' books which list the school, some school reports and a handful of essays and some photographs. In fact there is a large pile of materials, equivalent to about six box files, about six times as much as there is for the Dragon and easily enough for three or four chapters of the putative autobiography.

There are a considerable number of letters, including a file of letters I wrote to my parents in Assam, and a good number, often long and typed, from my mother to me. This constitutes an internal (my) and closely external account of my growing thoughts and along with some letters from my mother to my father, as well as an invaluable scrap of her diary when she returned to England in 1957, and possibly other bits in what I am reading now (an autobiographical novel called 'Going Home') may well make it possible to get into our two respective minds in an unusual way.

What is especially exciting is that the development of my mind can be studied quite closely through a large set of work materials which I had more or less forgotten. There are a number of notebooks of my reading, planning, notes for essays etc., which show how my work methods developed and what I considered important. For example there is one on poetry which shows my enthusiasm for Shelley and Manley Hopkins and what I thought worth extracting. There are also time lines, planning notes and other things.

Most importantly, perhaps, are my synthesized thoughts in the shape of a very considerable number of essays written during my last three years at Sedbergh - from the Lower 6th History, into which I moved in Winter Term 1957 when I was still fifteen. So from fifteen to eighteen (when I left in March 1960), I have a very full set of expressions of my world views on numerous subjects, from the philosophical, through social and religious, to political, historical and economic. Supplemented by various other writings - prizes, editorials for magazines, plays etc - it gives a very clear and detailed picture of how my world view grew and was shaped. I learn what I was interested by, moved by, repelled by, my prejudices, my biases, my misunderstandings, my growing enthusiasms. I suspect that not many people could study this in such depth in that crucial period (to which 'Letters to Lily' is addressed) of adolescence.

Alongside this are other things - detailed school reports, the Brown books, ephemera of various kinds showing my sporting and other activities. There are also

diaries, mainly of my grandfather, showing some key events and something of the life at Field Head where I went for holidays. There are also two of my own diaries for the Spring term of 1956 and 1957 which give some insight into the gruelling world of snow, skating, running etc.

There is also another kind of particularly intriguing diary. When I was still sixteen, and at the start of this change into adulthood, I went out with my sisters to Assam and spent my seventeenth birthday there. I have the diary (with photos) of that visit, and also the (much more mature) diary of my sister Fiona of the same event. This relays something of my reaction to Calcutta and the life of a planter's family which was later to influence my life and career choice. A second diary is that of a tour round the Continent with my friend Ian Campbell when I was seventeen and a half, in the summer of 1958. We followed Wordsworth's footsteps as much as we could, especially in his crossing of the Simplon pass from Italy to France. I have some of my original notes, a very long letter describing the events to my parents, and a synthesis of the Wordsworthian side (including reflections on living in Wordsworth's valley at Hawkshead) submitted for the Trevelyan Scholarship.

I left the school in April 1960, having won a place at Worcester College, Oxford. So I had half a year before going to University. I spent part of this visiting Norway and working on a Norwegian boat sailing to Holland. My diary of that short period still exists, as does another short diary of my summer in 1960, particularly concerned with my first serious crush - it would be too much to call it an affair - with a girl a couple of years younger than me. It seems probable that these two diaries should be included in the rounding off of my time before going to Oxford.

One of the central themes which linked Sedbergh and Field Head were the mountains - of the Lake District and the Yorkshire Moors. The mountains were important as the setting for two major shaping features of this period. One was my growing love of nature, poetry and above all of Wordsworth who had gone to school a mile from my home in Esthwaite Dale. The second was my obsession with fishing - especially for trout - which was something I shared with my father and which absorbed much of my waking life.

I suspect that growing up in the shadow of Wordsworth and being aware from early on that in the Prelude he had attempted to recapture his youthful vision, had an enormous effect on me. I identified with his idea that childhood was magical and integrated and that the prison bars closing round the growing boy, the splitting, the over-rationality, and many things I would later be interested in, came from Wordsworth. He made me want to store as many memories as possible - hence, from about the age of 14 or 15 (I may be able to date) my resolve not to throw away any significant papers, photographs, objects or other things which would help me re-explore my childhood when I came to a point when, like Wordsworth, I wanted to do so. So the fact that I have so much now to work through is probably a great deal to do with this, alongside my family's (esp. grandmother's) hanging on to things in a highly fluctuating world.

Nearly all accounts of childhood (cf. Fox, Adams et al) are based almost exclusively on memory, and nothing more. Yet I have the contemporary observations by others of me (reports, parents etc), as well as my very own thoughts at the time, trying to make sense of the world from various angles. A little of this is also foreshadowed in an essay

called 'The Past' where I outline the virtues of remembering things, and in an (sadly at present half missing) essay on 'Confessions of a School Child', which is a start of a sort of autobiography.

So, while I had thought up to now, before I became aware of how rich the materials are, that I would just have enough for one chapter on Sedbergh and then move on to Oxford, which I know is much better documented, I am re-thinking this. In fact there is such a treasure trove of rich material which may be extremely unusual, and, when combined with my anthropological and historical background, unique, that it would be a pity to rush it and not enjoy the pleasure of writing a proper account of the growing mind, heart and spirit of a young boy – myself.

Of course, as with the piece on the Dragon, all this needs to be set in a wider context. That is to say it should make allusion to what happened before and after (later developments of my ideas on anthropology and history) in my life, what was happening in the outer world (e.g. Suez and retreat from Empire), the aims and methods of boarding education and what Sedbergh was about. It is likely that, as with Tocqueville and others, my thoughts which would lead into an obsession with Englishness, with the deep contradictions of modernity, etc., were already being formed quite explicitly at Sedbergh. In all of this my first adventures out of the rather closed world of a boarding school and life in the Lake District – to India, Italy, Norway, are a fitting ending to the story. It is like watching a very small and simple sapling with one stem – as at the Dragon – in these five years put up a number of small branches which would later themselves have sub-branches. It is this branching structure of growth which I hope this analysis will show.

Thoughts on Sedbergh

(2.4.2010 – Good Friday)

Before I sat down to analyze the letters and diaries of the Dragon period I wrote down everything I thought I could remember about the period between 1947-1955. This was to try to recover as much as possible before it was overlaid with paper memories. I may do some of this for the Sedbergh period, 1955-60 also – but perhaps in a somewhat different way, suiting changing age and sources.

For the early period I felt I could remember almost nothing – yet I must try. For the period 13-18, once I start to think in a concentrated way, memories flood in. I can remember the physical and emotional details – both in the Lakes and at Sedbergh. The question is not one of remembering, but selecting from many memories. I was now in the age of memory, and my memories are vivid. Furthermore, the sources are much richer. For the Dragon, there were perhaps three Foolscap box folders: for Sedbergh there are ten box folders, more than three times as much, of which three are essays, two school notebooks and the other half are letters, diaries and various mementoes. I also know more about what I am doing, having done a pilot run with the Dragon.

So what I think I shall probably do is to restrict my pre-source looking memory work to a few days. But then, with the use of the 'Bamboo' database, I can do something which I did not try before, namely write my memories down in the 'Notes', so, for example, when it mentions Mrs Knappett, or someone else, or a special event, I shall

allow myself the time to write down the memories associated with that event. (In the event, I only did a little of this). These memories can then be collected and used alongside the sources in the final version.

So, as spring furtively creeps in, let me make a start.

Who I was when I went to Sedbergh

As I discovered in my conversations with my friend Gerry Martin about the forging of a Japanese sword, the strength of the sword comes from the many times it is beaten, re-bent, heated and beaten again. The hundreds of foldings over of the steel, hammering and heating, is the source of its strength. Then, at the end, there is the final sharpening and polishing.

This is not a bad metaphor for what my education was meant to do. At the age of eight I was taken from my home and my mind, body and spirit began to be seriously hammered into shape. The blows were innumerable, if mostly gentle. There were constant pressures, assessments, tests, challenges at all levels which were to toughen me up – ‘By hard work or striving to the Sun’. Five years of this at the Dragon and many re-bendings and re-heatings and then re-hammering into shape occurred. By the end of the process I was in the higher streams, top teams and dormitory, a fairly tough little boy in all senses. Much of my outlook and character was already formed pretty strongly. My basic skill set and the goals and drives of my life were largely in place. Using other metaphors, the rough map was drawn, the sapling had been pruned and shaped, the ship was fitted out for the voyage.

So the little boy who went to the lakes and then to Sedbergh in September 1955 was already largely formed. Yet the idea seems to have been that the little sword would have to be re-heated again and the whole process of beating it into shape would have to be repeated – for another five years. The lessons I had learned at the Dragon, starting at the bottom as a deprived and largely powerless person, gradually accumulating some power and responsibility, ending up at the top, would be repeated. The virtues – comradeship, team spirit, honesty, modesty, appreciation, self-confidence, decisiveness – all these would be made secure by being challenged and tried through the fire once again – and then re-inscribed on me in an indelible way.

So Sedbergh, in a way, was the Dragon all over again, except that my body was larger (and going through puberty), that the setting was tougher and more Spartan amongst the Yorkshire moors.

Then, after these two really powerful and repeated experiences, instilling ‘character’ and certain intellectual techniques, I would move on to the third experience – University. By analogy with the sword, this was the phase of sharpening and polishing. The tough but rather blunt instrument produced by ten years of boarding education would be placed in a mellower, but intellectually more challenging, setting. Here I would be finished, turned into a gentleman and perhaps a scholar. The final product would then be ready for all adventures and challenges – a ruler of men, a leader of Empire, the ultimate well-defended Pilgrim ready for his Progress.

In my case, I chose two further sharpenings and polishings. In order for the sword to be as effective as possible, I needed to be taught not just how to think, but how to do systematic research. So I did my D.Phil. in history at Oxford, and then a second polishing to make me a research anthropologist, at the LSE and SOAS. So, in the end, ten years of hardening at boarding schools was complemented by about the same length of period at Oxford and London Universities. A total period of over twenty years was devoted to this preparation – from the age of eight to thirty. Some preparation!

Some themes or areas of reflection

There is a danger that the mind gets caught in a mould, or in a furrow, as Gerry and I used to discuss. There is a temptation after writing the draft chapters on the Dragon and Dorset to think in terms of a similar shape for the Sedbergh-Lakes period. It immediately seems to make sense to think in terms of two parallel volumes, one on life in the Lakes with my sisters and grandparents and parents when they were on leave, and including the trip to Assam, the Continent and to Norway. The other volume would then be on school life at Sedbergh. This could work, but as I work on the materials it looks as if there may be better ways to organize the materials. I could do it chronologically, as Jamie has done, but I don't think this is very satisfactory either. I shall see.

Assuming I do the volumes separately, or even together, there is the question of how to divide them up. I suspect that the events are too dissimilar to make the headings and chapters of the first part on the Dragon relevant. For example, pain and sickness, I suspect, are much less prevalent and can be compressed in a sub-section. Likewise, playground games at school seem less vivid – but are replaced by life in the study, in the house, etc., from junior day room through to the senior prefect's study.

Furthermore, both in the Lakes and Sedbergh, the exploration of the natural world becomes much more important and in both, the questions of sex, God, politics etc. start to assume importance. In relation to my mother, with Fiona and Anne no longer around in Assam, her interest in Assam and Assamese etc. increased and this is a period when she began to write articles etc. Our trip to Assam was remembered and experienced in a much richer way.

This was also a time for the blossoming of hobbies – not toy soldier and model railways, but fishing, walking skiffle and, at the end, sailing. It was also the real start of the love of poetry, classical music and writing. It was the start of my hoarding and interest in archives and their preservation and methodical work.

In terms of my character, there seems to have been something of a similar pattern to the Dragon. Whether this was my own personality, or something structural, I am not certain – but it seems to be part of the technique. There was the movement from Inferno-Purgatorio-Paradiso once again. I started again at Sedbergh, my parents having left a few weeks after I went to school, as a quiet, somewhat sad, frowning and very small boy. I grew physically, as well as in confidence and happiness – and by the end, as at the Dragon, I did not want to leave. A somewhat similar pattern was partially repeated at Oxford and then at Cambridge.

Part of what I would like to capture is the contrast of the ambience and context of these two periods at boarding schools. The first volumes, especially those covering 1947-52, cover the harsh, post-war, years of austerity where both at the national and family level, things were mainly grim, shortages, cold, rationing, a sinking middle class. They started to improve from about 1953-4 and were capped for us by the purchase of our house in the Lake District, Field Head, in 1955.

The period 1955-1960 is that start of the post-war boom in earnest. It is the period of 'You've never had it so good', skiffle, Elvis and rock, and the rapid spread of consumer durables - televisions, cars, cheaper planes, fridges etc. It seemed an optimistic and hopeful time. It is not yet the swinging sixties, which will be the backdrop to my Oxford and London accounts, but there is definitely an improvement in the wider context.

The relative absence of painful illness, the general rise in affluence were the backdrop, though Suez and the Cold War were ominously present. It is difficult to separate the personal and the national. My memory is that our family was getting more prosperous - we had a house of our own, bigger cars, a television set. (Yet now I have worked on the letters I see that my parents were as desperately worried about and short of money as ever, if not more so.) My grandparents were busy and happy without as many worries or the constant effort to make money from keeping chickens. At the personal psychological level I was beginning to get used to my parents being away, though the shock of their leaving at the start of my time at Sedbergh was again very considerable.

It is likely that the emphasis will tend to be more personal and less institutional in this account. Sedbergh was somewhat less interesting and original as a school than the Dragon. The Dragon was one of the best and most interesting preparatory schools in the world. Sedbergh was one of the best public schools in northern England. Sedbergh was only really special for its superb setting and its outstanding sports. It did produce Empire builders and maintainers, impressive soldiers and district officers and a few intellectuals. Yet it was not as idiosyncratic and, in itself as an institution as magical, as the Dragon.

On the other hand, my own intellectual and spiritual growth is much better documented for this period. My letters to my parents are deeper, and I have the boxes of school notes and my essays which will make a deeper analysis of the intellectual growth of a boy possible. The theme I am attracted to is that of Wordsworth's *Prelude*. The association of Wordsworth both with Esthwaite Water and Sedbergh (where his son went to school) is a constant background to my work. And the very strong link between Sedbergh and Cambridge, especially with St John's College, makes the connection later in my life (forty years in Cambridge) relevant.

Another difference in how I shall approach this is methodological. In working on the Dragon I was stumbling along. I did not know what might be useful or how much could be recovered. I was in a blundering hurry, so I tended to type in bits and pieces - mainly into text files which I then searched using very basic search and find tools.

I now know that there will be an immense amount of information on the Sedbergh years. I know that the school archives will be important. I know that my letters, my parent's letters, and all our diaries, however fragmentary, are important.

I am also going to move up a gear in setting up a Bamboo database of all the materials. In due time this, with many scanned photos and documents, can be linked to other parts of the story, for example Sarah's work on Jamaica, so that there will be a virtual or imagined family history.

It has to be done, like a jigsaw, bit by bit. But finally I hope to put all the partial puzzles together into the full jigsaw with its many parts spanning five centuries.

Finally, like a jigsaw, or a cross-word or Sudoku, it is the start that is most difficult. Already what I now know about 1947-1955 is helping me understand 1955-1960. And it works backwards too, for each new thing I discover about Sedbergh feeds back understanding on the earlier period – even to the extent of finding materials, such as the Dragon geography notebooks, in the later boxes. I expect the same thing will happen when I move on to Oxford.

Thoughts on my intellectual good-fortune (20 April 2010)

Having typed in the documents for the first seven terms of Sedbergh, 1955-7, I am now starting 1958. I am aware that I am on the brink of a new chapter, for it was in 1957-8, in the Lower History Sixth, that I became really absorbed in my work. It was the turning point. But as I contemplate what I have written on the Dragon, what I am reading and thinking about Sedbergh, and what I know will come with Oxford and London and Cambridge, I become increasingly aware of how miraculously fortunate I was in my intellectual “partners”, or colleagues or teachers.

I shall leave on side the two greatest good fortunes and influences – my mother and Sarah – who have done by far the most to shape and energise and inspire me. And I shall just list some of the main sets of good fortune.

Firstly there is the Dragon. As I have discovered, it was an amazing and innovative school and it gave me a better start than I could possibly have received from almost any other. Its particular ethos, culture and inspiration are dealt with in great detail in “Dragon Days”.

Then there was Sedbergh. Again, until starting to work on it, I had only been dimly aware of how unusual a school it was – on the surface Spartan, but internally a strong touch of Athens (as the political philosopher W.B.Gallie realized in his book on the school). The masters were excellent, especially A.L.Morgan and David Alaban and Clio was special. I shall pursue this.

Then Oxford, with James Campbell, Harry Pitt and Lady Clay and others at the undergraduate level, and then Keith Thomas at the D.Phil level, was really special again. It is difficult to think how I could have done better.

Then LSE at its height and then Christoph von Furer-Haimendorf at S.O.A.S. were again special.

Finally, Social Anthropology, Social History and King's College in the 1970's to 1990's were amazing.

So I have trod a magical path with inspired companions. The very best I could have had and from one superb institution to another. Fortunate indeed.

Some themes for Sedbergh (25 April)

As I come to see it now, the Dragon period is about character, about social relationship and the foundations of thinking. It is largely about emotional control and social bonding. By the end of the Dragon my character was largely formed – in a rough shape. The Sedbergh years then re-beat that character and sit it firmly, consolidating it into something really hard which would not alter over a lifetime. It did this by expanding the early treatment and broadening it in certain ways.

The Dragon had disciplined my body in games and sports – but it was still a child's body, small and quite vulnerable. Sedbergh turned this into a man's body, taller, heavier, with strong muscles and expanded lungs. I went through proper puberty and my voice changed from treble to base. My body became hairier – when did I start to shave I wonder?

Sedbergh was one of the two or three most famed schools for this bodily toughening – set in austere hills, where the simple Quaker faith had started – and re-built on Spartan lines by Henry Hart and others. So the regime was about the fit body – about discipline and endurance and the central events were running and rugby-football – but also fell-walking, fishing etc.

The toughening of the body was complemented by a toughening of the social skills. The quality of the Dragon gave way to a much more hierarchical model, with fags, dayrooms to studies, and prefects. It was the progress of the Dragon but with a much steeper social gradient, just as the geographical gradients were much steeper. So I learnt how to serve in a way absent from the Dragon and how to rule as a prefect, again missing from the Dragon. All this is good training for running Empires or businesses.

The Dragon laid the foundations for ways of thinking and in many ways my first two years up to 'O' level at Sedbergh were really at much the same level as the Dragon. After these first two years I was probably still at 2A level at the Dragon. But after that, as I entered the Lower VIth in history, and then especially in Clio in my last two years, my teaching and my learning went up a gear. The gradient was again steeper and I found myself, to use the fells metaphor, out on Higher Winder rather than Winder, out in the open air, starting to have my own thoughts, making my own linkages, observing and expressing ideas which I had not received from others. I was now adventuring in ideas, starting on new paths in poetry, drama and history, which would absorb me for the rest of my academic life.

I have long noticed that a number of the questions I have continued to puzzle over – the nature of enchantment in literature, the meaning of life and the numinous in poetry and theology, the nature of liberty and equality in political science, the origins of the modern world in the Renaissance etc, were all starting to be asked from about sixteen – in the lower sixth – onwards. The academic year 1957-8 was the turning year, as my history master noted.

This was as much a change in temperament and method as in development of intellect. My form master noted in the Winter Term that because of my broken nose and thumb and not being able to play rugger, I seem to have transferred my energy to the classroom. I think, in fact, that several things happened together.

Firstly I more or less stopped growing physically and this with other things made me realize that, unlike the Dragon, sheer physical effort would not turn me into a first-class sportsman – I would never be an outstanding boxer, fives player, cricketer or rugby player or runner. However hard I tried my body would have set a barrier. Symbolically I threw myself at rugger, injured myself, and turned my attention to other things – this was 1958.

Secondly, I moved away from subjects I was not much good at, or could not see the point of – particularly languages, especially Latin and Greek, but also French, and towards the two which I found I really enjoyed – English and History. So I began to show some promise or University potential.

The excitement of history and English was ensured by a number of excellent teachers. Rogers in Lower VI History was obviously good and supportive, but has been overshadowed in my memory by Andrew Morgan in Clio. He was a brilliant teacher who drew many boys out to a level which was only just below that of the University.

The separate world of Clio in its different classroom and the Library, the tutorial and supervision system based on Oxbridge, made me feel I was thinking my own thoughts and my ideas were valued. I felt the real excitement of being at the forefront of knowledge – I became fired by the desire to explore for myself. When he gave an address to his old teacher, Lord Bingham, one of his students, made precisely this point – Andrew opened the door into magic gardens for us.

It was in Clio, as I shall examine in my work books and essay (which, to a certain extent, I have from my second year at Sedbergh, in Lower 5b Classical) and indexing system, that I learnt the basics of storing and accessing information and the art of essay writing. I also began to plan my time meticulously so that nothing was wasted. In my organizational efficiency, I emulated, unknowingly, the work and time discipline of Benjamin Franklin.

Part of what drove me was that anxiety for salvation which Max Weber so brilliantly analysed. [See my new year's resolutions in the diary]. In my case, it was at this very point that my religious fervour began to peak, perhaps my most religious phase being from 16-19. I had been confirmed in November 1957, aged just under 16, and went to the religious boy's camp at Iwerne several times, and I have a good deal on my attempts to be a Christian.

Yet it was also at this point that I found that I was most 'sinful' and unable to control sin – particularly the lusts of the body. Sexual drives are probably strongest between about 15-20, and of course we could not talk about them, so this was the very time when, in an all-boys boarding-school, I found myself constantly tempted to give way to sexual urges – which had to be masturbation. Each time I gave way, which was often several times a week, I felt guilt, anxiety at being caught, a sense of uncleanness and

failure. So this built up into a large battle of spirit versus matter, mind versus body, the religious versus the secular, the ideal versus the real.

As Weber and his successors have shown, this religious conflict was somehow sublimated into an iron work-discipline, an obsession with time, hard work, self-organization. Even if I could not control my lustful body, I could try to control myself in other ways. So I became a little puritan, as Andrew Morgan realized when he set me to read 'South Wind' (see my reading notes on this book which are interesting). I did not carry on with this religious interest, as some of my closest friends, Christopher Heber-Percy and Geoffrey Bromley (I think) did, by becoming a clergyman. But it set up a pattern between the ages of 16-18 which I have never really escaped from and which lay beneath my whole University career, both as a student and a teacher. 'Driven' I think is the word, but driven by these clashes - a driven nature we find in Wordsworth or Maitland, though in neither case is there evidence that there was a strong sexual battle at the heart of it.

A further important change in this period was in my relation to my mother. At the Dragon and before she had rather despaired of me and decided I would be middling - less bright than my sisters. During the first two years at Sedbergh I was still really mediocre, though with some promise. But from my last two years onwards I began to be a serious intellectual partner for her. Her desperate need for some intellectual stimulus in Assam, after her children had left, combined with my growing maturity and the sudden desire to understand and master the world, fitted perfectly with her needs.

So from about 1958, when her letters to me suddenly become much longer, and certainly in 1959, I suspect, when mine become more interesting, we began an intellectual partnership which lasted at least until my relationship with Sarah. I began to enjoy the things she had long loved - poetry, drama, novels, touches of anthropology of an amateur kind, classical music. So we climbed together, at first with her leading, then side by side, and at the end I was partly setting the trails and the pace.

In order to profit from the excellent teaching and to collaborate with my mother, I began to realize that I needed to work out methods to store and organize the very large amount of paper which I was starting to collect. This was the period when I rather informally and without much conscious effort, as I recall, took various decisions. One was to try to record as many of my experiences and thoughts as possible - hence the Assam and other diaries and various notes and thoughts scattered through my files. A second was to save and store everything which might be useful for further reflections and work - including for a possible biography or even autobiography many years ahead. This leads to my quite extensive collection, starting really from my second year at Sedbergh onwards, of materials of various kinds including ephemera.

So began in simple shape my filing systems - which have become a hobby through my life, starting with tomato boxes which I bought in Kendal, through folders and files and index cards and filing cabinets, finally to the computer system ending with 'Muscat', 'Bamboo' and other filing systems, to which I have devoted so much of my life with Sarah.

What I was doing, in other words, was trying to lay foundations, to develop methods of work which, in a very simple fashion, parallel the much more sophisticated system

described by Descartes in his 'Discourse on Method'. In order to solve large problems of a quasi-philosophical kind, to understand the world as it unfolded around me, I needed a method - as Descartes realized. My methods were partly practical - 'one fact one card' - arranging facts, organizing time, rests, organizing space. Partly they were theoretical - chains of causation, multi-factor analysis, the mixture of deduction and induction. In many ways the period 1958-1960 is the essential foundation for my future career as an academic.

Sedbergh built on the Dragon in terms of the body, society and the mind. It also opened up new avenues, particularly in terms of arts and culture. Partly this was towards the 'popular culture' of the later fifties and sixties. This was the period when 'pop', particularly in music, was really born. My materials will show how much my life was swept up by the new excitements of skiffle, rock and roll, jazz etc. In parallel to this was a developing first love for classical music which again dates from this period. The pop side was, of course, mixed up with girls and friendship and socializing.

At another extreme I was drawn to high culture in literature, particularly to poetry (especially the Romantics) and to a certain extent other literature. This will be one of the more difficult threads to follow, although there is a surprising amount in my notebooks and compositions with which to chart in this most rich area of my imagination. The pursuit of beauty and feeling, which borders on religion and the numinous, as in Wordsworth, but which was always in tension with a rather puritan Evangelical Christianity, is a feature of this time. I was already in sympathy with Wordsworth's feeling of the loss of enchantment, of the richly integrated imaginative world of a child, of innocence, of childhood certainties, of integration between the head and the heart.

This feature of the Sedbergh years meant that, as at Oxford, I was consciously trying to slow down the process of growing up. I did not want to leave the magic garden too quickly. It was not Peter Pan exactly, but it was definitely a sense of loss, of recession, of Keats awakening at the end of the 'Ode to a Nightingale', and of course to Wordsworth (and at Oxford, I would discover, Tennyson and the later Victorians). This tension between reason and enchantment, most brilliantly summarized for me now in Handel's setting of Milton's words 'As breaks the dawn upon the day', has fed into much of my work. I wanted to know how the Renaissance and the Reformation, the Scientific Revolution and capitalism, had broken up the integration. It is behind my work on witchcraft, on Nepal and on Japan, and even on Cambridge. And it is a central theme of this account.

Yet at the same time all I knew at the time was that I did not want my imaginative world, created largely in the pre-Sedbergh years, the world of Mowgli, Puck, the Secret Garden etc., to be blown away. Here I think I was enormously fortunate in having someone very close to me who understood all this - namely my mother. Her quest for meaning through Buddhism, painting, children's story writing, poetry, had been very close to mine. So I could linger some time longer in a sort of dream, a land on the edge of the world, half way between childhood and adulthood, for some years, roughly the period between the age of fifteen and twenty-one.

So though to a certain extent I turned from child to adult at Sedbergh, I deliberately clung onto innocence, integration, otherness as long as I could - and the attempt to

hold on goes through my undergraduate days at Oxford and even into my recognition of the delights of a non-Axial, integrated, world in Nepal when I first went there and in my work on Japan.

For finally I discovered the wonderful fact, largely through my friendship and observation of Lily, that in fact we do not have to choose. Humans can inhabit several worlds alongside each other. The forced choice between two sides of a coin, as the philosopher Ernest Gellner believed it to be, between cosy, irrational, integrated, warmth, and cold, rational, split, efficiency, is not necessary. We can, to a considerable extent, have both, as T.S. Eliot's 'Four Quartets' argues. In love, music, gardens, poetry and special people and places, the innocence can lie alongside the mature efficiency.

So a central theme of the Sedbergh book is to show the passage from childhood to physical and intellectual maturity, while at the same time preserving as undamaged as possible some of the innocence, curiosity and confidence of childhood. I needed to keep this for the reasons which Einstein noted - to go on asking the big 'why' questions in a world where, as George Steiner argued to me, they should no longer be asked. I was amazingly fortunate to be able to do this - and I shall explore a few of the conditions which allowed me to do this.

If I can explain this, at least to myself, it will help me (and perhaps a few others) to understand what is at the heart of my books, films and other endeavours, and what it is that I am exploring in all my work. It is a similar search to hold together the two sides of our nature which I admire in the work of Smith, Tocqueville, Marx, Weber, Maitland and even Durkheim, and which is my central interest in anthropology - how can we reconcile meaning and love with efficiency and fairness.

Continuities and Linkages (26.4.2010)

When I wrote the chapters on the Dragon years, I was aware that it was abstracted from a much longer narrative of my life. What I did not fully realize, but is becoming increasingly apparent as I become involved with the Sedbergh period, is how much light each part of the story throws on others - and how connected they all are. As with a growing tree, one only understands it fully by looking at its whole growth from acorn to oak. So I understand Sedbergh in a new way after writing about the Dragon and in reverse, understand the Dragon better all the time as I watch the tiny, almost unobservable, traces of ideas and character become more fully formed later at Sedbergh.

If this is so for my account so far, where there has only been a relatively small overlap of two periods, I am sure that as I proceed to work on Sedbergh, and then move on to Oxford and later, I will find this all the more strongly. Each period will become refracted and reflected and magnified by the other - which is why I should not publish any of it until all is done, at least in draft.

Sedbergh is, in many ways, the pivot. Before it lay the character preparation and the formation of who I was. After Sedbergh lay my academic career for the next fifty years, from 18-68. Sedbergh took the springs of rather undirected emotion and intellect and began to channel them so that they ran in a certain direction 0- towards books, writing, storage systems, trying to resolve large questions about who we are and where we come

from. Although perhaps less intrinsically unusual in some ways, because many have written about their public school period – which is easier to remember – it is vital to the education of Alan Macfarlane. And because I have discovered how much I have preserved, I may be able to write about it in a way which has not been attempted before. I can begin to get inside what I thought at the time, a sort of anthropological exercise of entering an alien thought system and its inner logic, which was impossible for the Dragon.

One reason that it is only now that I can write all this was explained in my idea of ‘the point of outcome/destination’. Looking in a rear-view mirror, though distorting the past with hindsight, is also very helpful in discerning latent tendencies, as yet undeveloped potencies, beginnings which later flourished. To use the horticultural metaphor, so strong as I sit looking out at the late Spring bursting out in our garden – unless I had the later outcomes, the branches and twigs which developed, I would not be able to discern the importance of the tiny bumps and buds of those early years.

While writing ‘Letters to Lily’ I made some attempt to trace back some themes, the deeper roots of ideas I have pursued all my life and in Letters. I was aware that much of my life’s striving and its outcome in those Letters were present in the discussions and agonizings in the last two years of Sedbergh and in undergraduate work at Oxford. Yet in those ‘trails’, I had to rely very much on hurried memories, so they are often wrong or at least truncated. Now I have the time and the primary sources to do the job properly and to follow the paths through from my early childhood, through the Dragon, Sedbergh, Oxford, the experience in Nepal, right up to the present through the Cambridge days.

Suppose that, in my film interviews of ‘beautiful minds’, I was only able to take the interviews up to 18 or even 21. The story would be rather empty when one does not know what the person did with their life. So I need to move on quickly and to make a sketch of the whole life, before I can understand the parts.

My progress on the Dragon was speedy, for the primary sources, letters, diaries, my papers, were quite limited – to about 3 box files. Now I come to Sedbergh there is more than three times that amount, and Oxford is three times that of Sedbergh, while my Cambridge years are ten times those of Oxford or more. I was already starting to get bogged down in long typing just for 1958. My mother’s letters to me, for example, become much fuller in that year and I have boxes of work books and essays. It looked as if each stage in my life from now on would entail four or five months typing in sources before I could write at all.

Fortunately, yesterday, in discussion with Sarah, I decided to do two things. One I am doing now, which is to follow my advice to my students, i.e. to write a bit each day alongside gathering data, in other words to observe while participating. So I will set aside an hour or two each day from the start to reflect on what I am finding.

Secondly, we had long thought that we would scan in voluminous materials as analogue pictures which people can read in their entirety. These would be linked to an abstract or partial extracts in the database. Thus, for example, as I am doing with my mother’s letters from Assam, I am putting in the date and any direct comments about my life, replies to my letters, arrangements for us, etc. I also put in the first line of each

paragraph, which usually introduces a vignette of Assam – and if there are particularly important or relevant pieces, e.g. the traumatic shooting of a leopard, my mother’s attempts to write a book, discussions of ideas etc – then I put them in. But by doing this – and I can always type in the missing parts later – I can do a long letter in ten minutes instead of thirty or so. Later, if and when I know I need more on some aspect of life in Assam or my mother’s life, I can come back to it.

I shall probably do the same thing with my essays and school notebooks. And the same approach may be ideal for the voluminous materials on Oxford, the LSE, SOAS and, particularly, Cambridge.

At least I will then be able to find all the materials for a particular place, person or date, and some subjects, even if I have to go back to the original or scanned documents for the detail.

This should allow me comfortably to spend two or three months on putting in the material on Sedbergh – and then four or five months writing it – say 8 or 9 months – rather than a year or more. And the same with later sections where the huge mass of materials would have slowed me down even more.

Our lives are much like snowballs. As snowballs roll down a hill picking up more snow, they very soon come to a halt, too heavy and bulky to move on. This is my feeling hitherto with my life. This may be why most autobiographers tend not to use their personal records – or even to consult them – for they realize they would be overwhelmed. So would I, particularly as I have saved so much, if I did not have the database system with the potential of linking to scans of materials. If such a methodology had been available when we did Earls Colne or the Nagas, that is probably what we could have done – and it would both have halved the effort and made it more useful. But we were at that time simultaneously inventing the method alongside doing the project. Now with the web and Bamboo etc, there is the potential for something new and more effective.

So I shall try to skate more swiftly over the years, and come back to parts I want to explore in more detail later. Though fairly detailed, this is a preliminary mapping or reconnaissance of a new territory. I need to climb to the top of various mountains, or to get the measure of various forests and lakes very roughly. Then I can come back to specific areas and map them more minutely, once I know their context and why they are important.

The theme, as it seems to me now, is a double one. One is the education of Alan Macfarlane, the personal growth of a child and his imagination, not dissimilar to that of Wordsworth in the Prelude. The other is a broad story of British history and imperialism, seen through the archives of an interesting family and their records. This second theme will be present in my life, but it will be the overarching idea which links that to the earlier accounts of Jamaica, India, Burma etc.

A changing, developing, boy (3 May 2010)

It seems clear that as we grow our development does not make a smooth ascent, but, as with catastrophe theory, in certain leaps, punctuated equilibrium perhaps,

discontinuities and reversals and then very large simultaneous alterations. We are like salmon. For a year or two at the start of Sedbergh I ticked along mentally and grew physically, recovering perhaps from the shock of my leap from the safety of the Dragon pool. Then in 1957 I leapt up into the 6th form and a new pool and in that year in Lower VIth made a sudden spurt. The following two years (minus a term) in Clio I again leapt up a pool. This was really the two years of changing from a child to an adult – physically I was almost fully grown, mentally I was excited and concentrated and I was ambitious and started to hoard things. Socially I was spreading my wings – my first motorbike on which I roved in August 1958, the trip to Assam in winter 1958, the continental tour in summer 1959.

Yet while I showed great effort and attention in class, my teachers noted a certain clumsiness, a lack of maturity and confidence in my work. I was acute about others, but seemed unable to emulate their style or be willing to take risks.

Looking back, I suspect that part of me was still a child – in terms of questioning adult values and striking out on my own, and in terms of fluent self-expression in writing, I was still immature.

What my teachers did not realize was that this was partly deliberate. As my childhood began to fade, in other words from 16 onwards, I tried to slow down the process. Like Wordsworth, I did not want the bars of the prison house to close too quickly. Like Keats I did not want the music to fly away, the enchantment to end. I did not want to enter, until I absolutely had to, the grey, divided, post-Cartesian world of adult rationality.

This struggle to retain unity, to resist Eliot's dissociation of sensibility, to keep my head and heart together, is a major theme right through the last half of Sedbergh and then on to Oxford, where it was very pronounced right up to 1963. Even during my Ph.D. I was studying enchantment, and through anthropology with its unified vision I got a reprieve.

I was playing a long game. From very early on I realized that life was probably long – there was no hurry. I should savour each stage and particularly the innocence and integration of childhood. This made me sensitive to the agonizing of others. Hence my sympathetic reading of the romantics, of Gerard Manley Hopkins, of Milton and the metaphysicals. Yet it also meant that my work lacked the adult self-confidence, tinged with cynicism, which would have impressed my teachers who were looking for signs of the brilliant sophistication that a few 18 year olds, for example Christopher Heber-Percy, were capable of. So they kept writing of my potential, that one day I would stretch my wings and fly.

Interesting, my uncle Robert in his letter to the Provost of Worcester says this explicitly (see quote) – that I was full of potential but, like most of my family, was a late developer. Perhaps this was something he went through as well.

The metaphor of opening my wings and flying is from Andrew Morgan my history teacher in Clio. I was very much a fledgling who had made a few tentative trials of my wings in the safety of my nest, but decided not to leave that nest until I absolutely had to – and was sure that my wings were strong enough.

In a way I was following a good course. By prolonging my childlikeness into adulthood I paralleled many writers (Wordsworth/Keats) or scientists (Einstein/ Tim Hunt) who kept asking the child-like questions as their power to approach an answer grew. The questions I ask in 'Letters to Lily' are the 'Why' questions of childhood. They stayed with me and forty years later I had some tentative answers. But I did not win the open scholarships to Oxbridge or the early glittering prizes. But when the middle and later parts of the race were reached, I overtook many of the early sprinters - like Heber-Percy et al.

Memories and thoughts on Sedbergh (Halle, 12 May 2010)

Sitting here in Halle it is difficult to cast myself back to those days, nearly 55 years ago, in the Sedbergh Hills. What strikes me now is that while the Dragon was an intensely tribal world, that is to say there were few separations (houses were not important, prefects and hierarchy were minimal, the gap between masters and boys was minimized), we were constantly inter-acting with others, highly social, rushing somewhat thoughtlessly around, noisy and her-like and energetic and full of play, Sedbergh was the start of a process of separation. It was starting to introduce us to the associational, hierarchical, divided, gesellschaft of adult life.

So, in a way the move was from gemeinschaft of an intense asylum-like existence, to the gesellschaft of increased privacy, hierarchy and differentiation out of the individual. So the move in one's life from total holism - early family life, to a slight admixture of individualism at the Dragon, then more at Sedbergh, and even more at Oxford until, in theory, we had the best of both - sentiment and warmth, freedom and choice. This is also the theme of Wordsworth's Prelude.

Some expressions of the growing separation are the following. We started in a day room at Sedbergh with no privacy or personal space and in with the herd, then one moved into studies, shared with two or three.

Then there was the increasing possibility of choice and privacy in leisure. Fishing, in particular, is a single pursuit, almost impossible to share. And wandering over the fells could and was often alone or with one other. So 'I wandered lonely as a cloud', as apt for this increasing isolation and communion with something larger and outside myself as it was for Wordsworth - far off from the 'busy hum of men', as Milton put it. This was something I shared with the poet, where we often find him close in intense moments with nature, or perhaps one other. The life is now only partly about teams, playgrounds, herds and gangs. This was what Sedbergh developed for me.

Thirdly, the intellectual world became more individual and separate. As we moved up the school we began to do individual projects, and in our last year to get one-to-one tutorials or supervisions. We were encouraged to go off and read and think for ourselves and to come up with our own original and distinct theories and opinions. We were starting to taste the excitement of intellectual exploration on our own - even if there were others to guide us. This would train us for independence, responsibility, the kind of intellectual challenge of exploration which as a teacher, researcher and writer I have pursued for most of my adult life.

In other words, having been yanked out of the cocoon of indulgent family life and taught how to be a good social being at the Dragon, I was further eased away from too much social pressure towards near self-sufficient individuals, Robinson Crusoes with our whole world within us. Yet we were also expected to remain team players, to balance original, independent, self-sufficiency, with agreeable, co-operative team playing.

The great thing about my experience is that within their limits both the Dragon and Sedbergh (and Oxford) were set up in a way which fulfilled these functions in a pretty effective way. The Dragon was an ideal adventure playground for a child, full of fun, friendship, freedom with control, a relatively happy atmosphere, not too obsessive about any single aspect of our lives. It was family-like while being full of strangers and we learnt to encounter strangers and turn them into friends. The Dragon did this intensely because it was a boarding school, but with reasonable gentleness and encouragement.

Then came Sedbergh in its mountain fastness, as Wordsworth found nearby, an ideal place to turn from men to nature, God and the sublime. It was free as air, liberal, tough but tender, and helped temper us in a reasonable way. I could relax, grow, explore and become an adult within a sheltered environment in exactly the way in which Wordsworth described.

Finally, Oxford added further depth to the side of fellowship, trust, intellectual adventure and restored the importance of society from the Dragon. Each experience led into the next and it was an impressive package of 15 years of boarding education. There was a strong continuity of one stage to the next, and yet the emphases shifted and the institutions managed to keep a balance between the two contradictory antitheses of community and association, the group and the individual, conformity and originality, co-operation and striking out afresh.

I was not, of course, conscious that I was being propelled through this peculiarly English trajectory or what the intensive training was trying to produce in me. I don't suppose that even my teachers had an over-all vision or understood much of what was happening. Only now, looking back, can I see a few of the forces at play and the way in which such a training, a resolution of contradictions and conflicts, led into some of the main themes of my later work on individualism, fellowship, Cambridge and other matters.

Underlying themes

(Blue Toshiko notebook, 111 - 13/7/2010)

It is now about a year since my 'retirement' party & hence I have been working on this project of the family archives for about a year. There have always been wider themes behind it, but as I worked on the Dragon years I was largely lost in the wonder of recovering my lost childhood. So though the detailed text had echoes of larger themes, partly implicit, especially in my mothers letters and in a realization of the aftershock of war, the physical improvement from about 1953 etc, mostly I was concerned with education and the growth of a child.

I am now embarked on the Sedbergh years & have written a few chapters. Now I feel as if the plane has risen well above the runway and the town up into the middle height where I can see further in all directions. Having twelve or so years, 1948-1960, instead of just 7 allows me to see real changes & shifts. I suspect that if I consider the whole period from my mother's arrival in India in 1939 up to the end of the story in 1966, when I finished my D.Phil., I shall be able to see from some height & over wide distances.

What I am beginning to see is that the story which Jamie & I are assembling is about more than just English education & my life. It is the end of the long story which I shall be telling in the earlier volumes, the closing of the great chapter of British imperialism, industrialism & ascendancy.

The realization that 1953 saw the start of a huge material change & technological change (fridges cars, television etc) and that 1956 saw the start of a huge cultural change (rock, teddy boys, youth culture, Angry Young Men etc) makes me aware, as Jamie put it, that the period up to about 1960 was the end of the C19 & before, closer to the 1930's, while the 'modern age' really began in this period.

Thus the narrative we will be telling needs to be written as one complete long story, & integrated with the earlier account of Jamaica, India, Burma etc. It is in many ways similar to the attempt of Tocqueville. He described first the modern - Democracy in America was a young man's book written out of the shock of discovering the new world that was emerging. He then went back to see where this had emerged from & wrote the actual book on the 'Ancien Regime' and the virtual book on England.

Tocqueville's greatness came from the fact that he was brought up in one world, where his heart lay, but tried to understand with his mind the new world which he saw as the future - individualism, equality, etc. The clash & contradictions give his account, like those of the Scottish Enlightenment, their deep insight.

What we shall try to do is something similar - an account of the enormous transformation which we have lived through. My mother's observations on all this are tremendously important for in many ways, as she often said & wrote, the wrench for her was even greater. 'I was brought up with all the colonial claptrap of my kind'. Then by taking this theme of the end of Empire, I shall, hopefully, be doing justice to her deepest work. My uncle Richard also lived through this - as did Andrew Morgan - and are good sources on it. In a sense I saw the already diminished force of this older world at the Dragon & Sedbergh & in my grandparents - but already things were changing, India was gone, Africa on the way, America had taken over, much of the paradigm was shattered.

The background is Orwell & Kipling - the new worlds is Beatles and the Swinging Sixties & Vietnam etc. The main underlying themes could thus be seen as:

Technology: From boats, letters, steam, dynamite, radio, bicycles TO planes, phones, electricity, cars, nuclear power, television

Culture: From the Victorian/Edwardian literature, drama, music etc, through TO the rebellion of the cock and roll & the Angry decades

Empire: from British imperial superiority TO divestment from Empire

Class: from fairly rigid and confrontational classes TO the mixing and confusion of the 1960's

Theoretically; from functionalism TO structuralism/ Marxism

Age: from old age TO youth rebellion

And so on and so on.

But all these to be explored delicately & indirectly in the narrative

A walk round Sedbergh in my memory

[While originally written on 13 May 2010 in Germany, it has been typed out just after-revisiting Sedbergh. Any additions after a real visit will be in square brackets.]

Let me start on the fells above Sedbergh as one approached from Kendal. High up here was the northern tip of Firbank and the open air preaching place known as Fox's pulpit. The Quaker association links in my mind to the tiny, calm Quaker Meeting House at Brigg Flatts [which we visited]. The whole area was suffused with the simplicity and austerity of Quakerism, with nonconformity more generally, and with the independence in religion and in character of the 'Dalesmen'.

In this respect it was all one with my home area of Hawkshead where a whitewashed Quaker meeting house was also to be found [at Colthouse - we visited this also] where the 'statesmen' farmers who were the backbone of Quakerism were also present. So in terms of religion, atmosphere, farming and social structure I moved very little when I travelled from home to school and back again. All was mountains and fell-land with lakes and stone walls and sheep and nonconformity - all was a Wordsworthian landscape. [Travelling between the two I noticed that they were similar but not the same - the shape of the mountains was more jagged in the Lakes, there were many lakes and tarns, there were more woods.]

Coming down from the top of the road from Kendal, you pass the wood-surrounded large tan of Lylmere on the right, where I fished once or twice and likewise skated a little. Then you go down a very steep hill, called for reasons I have not discovered, Scots Jeans. Round a sharp corner at the bottom the road goes past an old pub where there is still a sign, and then down a straight road to Lincoln's Inn bridge - again named after a vanished inn.

This narrow bridge, where cars could not pass, crossed the Lune a mile or two above its junction with the Rawthey at the pool known as 'Water's Meet'. When we came to fish or swim it was often from this bridge that we set off - almost always upstream. Here were some of the wonderful pools amongst the rocks where I was to play my first salmon and experience the joys of snorkelling - all of which I can elaborate from letters and from a published article. [Amongst the photos we copied at the school are some of river bathing on the Lune around here.]

Another mile or so of road took us past another former Chapel on a sharp bend on the right. Soon the road was joined on the left by a road which took you up on the back road to Penrith along the flanks of the Howgill Fells. This side-road soon went under a railway bridge and that railway soon intersected with the main road at Sedbergh Station.

This railway line, which threaded down the Lune Valley and also went north to Carlisle, was still in use when I was at Sedbergh. Special trains were laid on at the start and end of term to take boys home or to the school. I went on this - perhaps a steam train - also when I broke my nose and went to hospital at Carlisle.

On from the station the fields were flatter and the main road to Kirby Lonsdale and the Lune Valley joined it on the right. A final straight part would bring the main school

buildings, Powell Hall and the adjacent schoolrooms [which I only discovered were a separate block on this trip] into view. A small road off to the right led to Guldrey Park and a rather spooky park amongst rhododendrons near it. The main gates of the school with perhaps a gate house, and no doubt the school motto and crest, was on the right. But it was not an entrance we ever used.

Let me continue into the little stone-built town, dominated by the steep slopes of Winder fell on the left. The buildings were tall and substantial and after Lowes's shoe shop on the right one came to the first school house - Evans, named after the reforming, Sparta-influenced, housemaster of the later C19 who pulled the school out of its somnolence and started its modern era. I have a feeling that there was a fishing shop near there too.

After Evans there was a narrow walkway down to the Parish Church, which was old and substantial. When we went to the remembrance day service there, the flags came out. The living was held by Trinity College, Cambridge, adding to the very strong connections with Cambridge also shown in the scholarship to St John's and the foundation by a previous fellow of King's College, Roger Lupton.

On the opposite side to Evans was a Bank and a little further on one of the two big Inns (?the Bull). The other big Inn was on the corner of the road where the road to Dent went off to the right. Named the White Hart, my parents and grandparents sometimes took us to a meal there, or even stayed overnight at least once.

Continuing along the main street, on the right was the shop where we bought our school books, had them stamped with our name (one of the first things on arriving at the school was to have a name stamp made), and bought many school supplies.

Further on, the road went up sharply to the left leading to a track up onto the Winder Fells, by way of the house where Andrew Morgan once lived and where I would go for coaching or to hand in work.

The main road went on past a cinema on the left, certainly there in the 1970's, but whether it was there in the 1950's I am not sure, past a mound where my friends were excavating for early remains, to a fork. The road to the right went off up to the Cough river and later to Hawes, the road straight on wound up the Rawthey Valley and crossed the river many times. The area of the Rawthey from the school to a mile or two above the Cross Keys Inn at Cautley, with its tributaries such as Hebblethwaite and Cautley becks, was my chief area for wandering and fishing.

It was a beautiful valley. The Dent fault ran down the valley so that the ancient geology which inspired Adam Sedgwick and hence contributed to the founding of modern geology, was very visible. On the left the mountains, Winder, Higher Winder, Calf, Cautley and the Howgill Fells were steep and rounded and made of one kind of rock. To the right mountains rose much more gently and were of limestone. So the vegetation and feeling was different on each side, a very minor form of that sudden fault or division or contrast which led A.R. Wallace with his Wallace Line in the Pacific to discover the theory of evolution at the same time as Charles Darwin (Sedgwick's pupil).

Thus there was a great continuity in the landscapes that so deeply affected me into these years – fells, tarns, becks, heather, rowan, bracken, juniper, bogs and berries, birch and pine, stone walls and sheep. At the time I did not think explicitly about the subtle differences between the two sides of the Rawthey valley, or their difference from the Lakes. Yet all this gave a variety and mystery which was endlessly exciting and enticing – even in the humble experience of the different fishing conditions, the look and feel of the water, the types of flower and lichen on the rocks and flies buzzing on the streams.

Coming back to the town, let us walk back from the roads which forked to Clough and Rawthey. In front the road forked off down ‘Back Lane’ on the left. On the left side of this lane were rough playing fields and up on the hill another house – Winder. Towards the end on the right there was a narrow building – an annex. This was where I spent a year or two in the Junior dormitories. After that there is a large mock-Tudor timbered black and white town house – which was Lupton House.

It was not until I saw my house through the eyes of Jamie Bruce-Lockhart in School House that I realized how fortunate I was to be at Lupton. He described Lupton as on a fringe, more original, carefree, spontaneous, with its own rules and freer from the conformity of the central houses – a sort of Wales or Scotland. He thought of it [and this was confirmed by Andrew Morgan] as border territory, a Spencer Chapman sort of place where the boys were happier, less conformist, more of the spirit of the Dragon. This probably reflected the character of various housemasters, Meister, Christopherson, Collison, Marriott and the Assistant A.T.I. Boggis, as much as its slight separation. Yet the fact that it was a converted town house, not a purpose-built school house, unlike Winder, Hart, School House, meant it felt less like institutional life – less like a prison, hospital, army barracks, less of an asylum. [This has been exploited very fully now it is a girl’s house as we discovered on our tour round.]

That I not only went to this freer and peripheral house, but by choosing to read history ended up for my last two years in a satellite classroom – Clio – which was next door to Lupton, emphasized my sense of disengagement from the institutional regimentation of a boy’s boarding school. Add to this the fact that the eighteenth century school building, a fine late Renaissance grammar school building, later turned into the school library, was just opposite Lupton, and I found myself in a perfect position to explore ideas in a secluded region. In the particularly formative last two years, which coincided with my withdrawal into fishing, work, skiffle and such things, this meant that I was able to develop in a way that anticipated to a considerable extent the opening horizons of Oxford.

The pressures to conformity, to sportiness, to the Spartan creed, were much diminished and my mind, body and spirit were freer to derive the greatest benefit from such a school. I was indeed fortunate.

Let us move on beyond Lupton. At the T junction with the road to Dent on the right was a house which had been a small shop and was associated with Harvey Askew, who taught me fly-tying. Going to the left past the School Library with its heraldic front, a long low building the left was the ‘Grubber’ or school tuck shop. It was set back a little from the road. It was around here that the Ten Mile race ended. On the right was the beautiful great cricket field – the central plateau of the school, emerald below the

brown and purple mountains. On its far side was the pavilion and, I think, a place where we could buy sports clothing.

Returning to the road up the hill beyond the grubber there was a row of cottages on the left which ended at a driveway where the road to Winder House went off to the left and on the far side of the drive there were several very large houses. On the right another road wound off past School House on one side and the Chapel on the other, surrounded by rhododendrons. Further down that road stood Sedgwick and Powell Houses and beyond that another sports ground where athletics and rugby took place. On the right was the Arts School and to the left footpaths led down to the Rawthey.

If one climbed the hill up to Powell Hall, the huge, striking and costly war memorial cloisters faced one. For some reason I cannot recall the interior of Powell Hall, apart from the main hall itself with its stage and organ which I remember well. But how we got to our classrooms and where I was specifically I shall need to refresh with a visit. [The visit occurred and I discovered my classrooms - to my surprise in an entirely separate, detached, block next to Powell Hall. Huge rooms with high ceilings. Though I still could not visualize which of them I was taught in. Some are old with raked seating.] What I do remember is, like the Dragon, the early panic as we had to rush from class to class - each 45 mins with very little time between and very short morning break - when we rushed back to Lupton.

At the end of the Hall there was another block which was for sciences I think, so I did not go in, but on the walls were pinned the school games teams. To the left were the school toilets, the only ones which I knew of which had lockable doors - though a long walk from Lupton. Beyond them there was a sweeping drive (where I was caught throwing stones at another boy and suffered a beating by a school prefect in Evans house). This gave way to a narrow walkway, now with the cricket pitch on the right. Hart House and the Parish Church were up on the left.

One of the principal differences between the Dragon and Sedbergh was in the House system. In this respect the public school and later the Oxbridge Colleges form themselves, at least temporarily, into artificial communities. There is a unity of place, the physical 'House'; there is a strong sense of identity (expressed through games, symbolic boundaries, myths and traditions, crests and flags and badges), but no links of blood (except occasionally when two or three brothers overlapped in the House). Hence the house formed an artificial, chance, conglomeration of people who also formed some kind of fellowship or even quasi-family.

The physical and social structure of the House is central to understanding the public school system. Lupton was in three parts. There was the housemaster's private area, where presumably some of the servants and the matron also lived. There was the main house which contained the Junior and Senior Dayrooms next to the front door, three or four middling studies and two prefect's studies. There was a dining room and in the basement a changing room. In the attic were two large dormitories as I remember. [I now discover that one of them was aptly called 'Siberia' - a name it still bears.] Behind the main building was a yard with the (doorless) toilets and a shed where we kept our 'tuck' in boxes. In a separate annex building were the rest of the dormitories on two floors, with a library and the rooms of the assistant housemaster, the Rev. A.T.I. Boggis.

Down the front steps and through a small garden and across the road was a walled and tarmac yard where we mainly played 'yard' football and occasionally other games or a little skating. Between the yard and the library was a strip of land on which were a couple of fives courts (and a squash court?). I also seem to recall some allotments where, perhaps, some of us did a little gardening. The football pitch, very hilly and uneven, below the house was initially connected to the house.

Each part of the physical structure is invested with strong memories and associations. The cold Junior Day Room with its wooden desks round the walls, where we kept all our personal possessions and work things, and a ping-ping table in the middle. The large windows were kept open, I suspect, in all weathers. Here we shivered and wrapped our knees in blankets and acted as fags, rushing to the prefects' studies when the bell rang. We were really at the bottom of the heap again after having attained the top of the pile in our preparatory schools. This was the first year and much of our life was centred on this room with a dozen other little boys.

Across the corridor was the Senior Dayroom which I remember less well, though I must have been there for a year or so. On the other side of the passage from the Junior Day room was a study where I think I first went after leaving the crowded communal life of the dayrooms - perhaps at the start of my third year. The layout as I remember it was like this

[SEE diagram on p.8 of the notebook]

Then we went to the next floor and here there were, as I recall, several more studies, a sort of common-room [which was wood-panelled and is still more or less unchanged and now a library room], with a music practice room and the housemaster's study.

[SEE diagram]

The basement was where the coke boiler roared and was usually warm and filled with clothes. There were also a series of baths, basins, pegs for clothes. The attic had perhaps two large dormitories, each with ten or so boys in them.

The "House" was thus a physical, material, spiritual, social, political and economic unit to a large extent - its relationship to the School was not dissimilar to that of an Oxbridge College where games, symbols, networks, teaching and living constituted a whole world. The main loyalty someone feels to the School is usually to his (and nowadays her as well) house. Being an Old Luptonian is in many ways more important than being an Old Sedberghian. Thus it was the house magazine, the Luptonian, which had a long section on old boys - there was nothing equivalent in the school magazine the Sedberghian. The same was later true of Oxford - it was to my college Worcester, rather than Oxford University, that I feel attachment.

[Wider map of the first walk taken above - see map on p.9 of notebook]

NOTES

The following are just notes – to be expanded. They are in alphabetic order.

A tribal system of segmentation

The way in which most societies are organized is based on what anthropologists call a segmentary lineage model – as famously expounded by Evans-Pritchard and supposedly based on the British army. That is to say, there are levels of segmentation where units on the same level are the enemies, but may also be united at a higher level.

To take the case of a boy such as myself in my third year at Sedbergh. I was opposed to the three other boys in my study – for instance we might quarrel mildly about the pin-ups or the music we wanted to play. But if my study and its honour were impugned, I stood with the others against other studies. These studies were in competition with each other, but if the prefect above or dayroom boys below attacked a particular study, we would unite. Then, while opposed to other parts of Lupton, if the house was in its many competitions with other houses, we would join as Luptonians. But if town boys or some outside force attacked Evans, then we would be united as Sedberghians. And as Sedberghians we contested with Rossall or Uppingham, but in the holidays I united with my public school friends against non-public schoolboys. But in the trenches or supporting the English football team (though I tended to support Scotland where I could), we were English or British versus the rest.

So our identities and loyalties were multi-level in the same way as they were to be at Oxford or later in my life at Cambridge. Because of the house organization, Sedbergh segmentary structure was stronger at the lower levels than at the Dragon. Sets and classes at the Dragon, as at Sedbergh, were never more than functional groupings, with little sense of loyalty or identity. You fight with the people you eat, play, and share sleeping space with, not with the people you just study with. The house spirit was an effective way of binding us into wider loyalties and creating an artificial identity of a kind which was neither ethnic nor national, but based on temporary affiliations.

Age and age sets

One strong feature of both the Dragon and Sedbergh, continued into Oxbridge, is the way in which our world was organized on age principles. All of these ‘total’ institutions were dealing with children and young adults who were changing very rapidly in a short period of time. My letters and other papers show the continuity of my character, but also the large gap between say a nine year old and a twelve year old, let alone a fourteen or sixteen year old. Our bodies, minds and emotions changed very rapidly and the schools had to make their teaching and their structures work for people going through these great transformations. So we were very much treated differently on the basis of our age.

We were also largely ruled through the mechanism of age. Many tribal societies, especially pastoralists, divide people into age sets who go through their lives with the

same people and at different stages in life play, train, marry, have families, retire and die, often roughly in line with the famous seven ages of man (or woman).

In the intense atmosphere of a closed boarding school a good way to keep control and enhance integration was by emphasizing age boundaries. This was done in many ways, as I examined in the Dragon; the tables at which we sat for meals, where our classroom was, the house or dormitories one was in, a subtle expansion of privilege.

While age-grading was powerful at the Dragon, it seems to have been even more pronounced at Sedbergh. The fagging system and the fear of erotic relations of older and younger boys added to the dynamics, as did the system of studies and privatization of space. So there was once again that sense of movement – starting with hardly any space, status or power as ‘new boy’, then gradually growing stronger in every way until at the later age you were at the top.

Since not every one could be good at games or at work, the automatic elevation by way of the process of ageing was a compensation. Even a not very bright or sporty seventeen year old had a respect and status well above a brilliant and sporty fifteen year old. And any cheek from a much younger boy would quickly be punished.

The ancient art of divide and rule seeped into all aspects of our lives. The constant jockeying and confrontations between houses, sets, forms, dorms, age groups, kept the boys in a constant state of mild mutual antagonism and with separate interests. The lack of class consciousness and unit, of a consolidated ‘we the pupils’ against ‘you the authorities’, which Marx bewailed in his ‘potatoes in sack’ metaphor for the disunity of peasantries, or the antagonisms and divisions within a class society, was present at school. We were unlikely to rebel, for each of the sub-sets of the school had different goals and different stakes in the status quo.

In many societies there is a heavy marking of the move from one age grade to another – at puberty, at first success as a warrior, at marriage, at childbirth. What is surprising in the English case, as I have often noticed, is that puberty and marriageable ages are so little marked. Where was the puberty ritual at Sedbergh? In one way the whole five years was similar to the seclusion and indoctrination – often through suffering – of classic puberty rituals. Yet it was done over a long period, with subtle and gradual shifts continuous happening, and no single dramatic ritual marked the transition.

The Ten Mile Run, the CCF Field Day, the GCSE exams, the Confirmation Service, the moving from trebles to basses, the being a head of dayroom, the move from Colts to upper sports teams, the becoming a prefect, all were steps along the path from childhood to adulthood. And at home there were others – above all my purchase of my first motorbike at the age of seventeen. But they were not all bundled together into one huge event. And the sexual side, which is so marked, especially for women, in many societies, was hardly referred to at all. It was noted that we lost our treble voices, that our bodies expanded. Yet there was no discussion or obvious interest by the wider society in our development into sexual maturity.

Indeed we were almost artificially kept away from all this. Being a single-sex school formally obliterated women from our consciousness. We were almost temporary

eunuchs – muscular, mature, yet without sex. This was one of the many paradoxes and contradictions of this strange world of growing lads, who remained ‘lads’ until they went off to Oxbridge and suddenly became ‘young gentlemen’.

Asylums

I considered under the Dragon the degree to which that school conformed to Goffman’s model of the asylum. I found that in its central essence, that is as a multi-level, multi-functional place where people ate, slept, worked, played in one place with the same set of people, and consequently there was a good deal of control through various rules and some surveillance, it was a kind of asylum.

Sedbergh was likewise an asylum in Goffman’s sense with all the consequences. In some ways it was more so, for example in having a formal authority structure through the prefect system. [This prefect system I must analyse, since it was a template for the delegated system of power within the British Empire]. Sedbergh was almost purely a boarding school, as it still is, while the Dragon had almost half day boys, and even a few girls.

On the other hand, though the Dragon was very relaxed about our wandering about, the combination of our younger age and being in the suburbs of a city meant that the boundaries, the asylum walls, had to be stronger. We did not feel this as a constraint but just took it for granted – after all it was probably not very different from our home experience. Like well-trained dogs, we would not wander off our small territory, or not too far or too often.

In Sedbergh, however, the school had a perfect location since apart from the small town of Sedbergh and the village of Dent, the nearest towns were ten miles or more away. So we had a buffer zone round us and could expand as we liked. Indeed we were encouraged to take off with our pack-lunches and to roam the countryside. So it never felt closed or like an asylum. The open fells, the huge mountains, the vast skies, the rivers which we fished up, all gave us a strong sense of openness and exploration.

In many ways it felt as free at Sedbergh as it did at home, where the only constraints were imposed by transport. From a young age in the Lakes I was allowed to wander off over the fells or go into the nearby town of Ambleside, both by myself and with my sisters Fiona and Anne from their early teens. I wonder what would be allowed nowadays.

So though Sedbergh had its front and back stage, its rituals of inclusion and exclusion, its surveillance and its internal hierarchies, it was a very free asylum and started to prepare us for a world where, when we went up to University, we would have to monitor our own behaviour and be responsible for our own mistakes. The process of emancipation was very gradual and phased and there was no moment when we were suddenly released – none of the shock of a long-term prisoner or monk suddenly being released into the world.

Boundaries and borders

We all live within blinkers, of which we are little aware. We are circumscribed in time, space, class, and mental inheritance. As we live our lives we are largely unaware of these invisible constraints. This gives them control over our lives. Yet one of the advantages of hindsight is that it should be possible to see a little of what constrained us, to examine our unspoken, unacknowledged, set of expectations and mental spectacles.

One way is to think of the oppositions we used, one side of which was 'out of bounds' - a favourite school metaphor which was employed constantly by the guardians of our 'asylums'.

At Sedbergh there was a strict line between the school and the town. Though I am not sure, I think that the main part of the town, though only a few yards away from Lupton House, was out of bounds unless we had a particular reason for going up into town, such as buying school equipment. Such a boundary must have been much more difficult to enforce for Evans House with its front door on the Main Street. It was bad enough for Lupton, where a little lane led up from Back Lane to the main road. For other houses it was a bigger distance and easier to police.

The town was out of bounds partly for our safety, the danger of the few cars and the dangers of being sucked into the whirlpools of drink, smoking, girls and other vices. The idea that there might be older predatory males about was not one I remember ever being mentioned.

We were allowed enormous freedom to roam the fells and I don't remember that other towns were out of bounds - if we could reach them. There are many stories of boys going for an illicit pint of beer at Dent, but fortunately for the school the Cross Keys Inn at Cautley with its delicious ham and eggs, was even then a teetotal institution.

Yet there must have been some outer boundary I suppose. We were not allowed to hitchhike so places like Carlisle, Penrith, Lancaster and even Kendal were normally out of range. Kirkby Lonsdale with its added attraction of the girls schools at Casterton was probably out of bounds, though there are stories of boys lurking in the undergrowth to watch the girls playing games - something I do not remember ever doing.

Within the house, space was carefully bounded. A junior boy would never go into a study (except the Prefects) and a Junior Dayroom boy was not allowed into the Senior Dayroom. The half of the house lived in by the House Master, matron and servants was strictly out of bounds, as were other boys' dormitories, though there were no doubt dormitory raids. In the school itself there were form rooms one should or shouldn't enter, and playing fields for certain games. Entering another house without permission, I suspect, was forbidden.

In other words, as in all closed worlds, whether a Himalayan village, a Cambridge College, or a Japanese street, there were many conventions, customs and taboos about space which we learnt and did not really question. Part of moving up in the school led to a relaxation of some of these. Older boys could go into more junior parts of the house and would be more likely to get permission to roam further afield. Yet the

intensity of the kind of asylum we lived in is shown by the strength of the symbolic boundaries. Space, as I explain in relation to Cambridge, had elements of the sacred and the secular one finds in tribal societies, it was filled with hidden barriers and pitfalls.

Class

I don't think I was aggressively snobbish at this stage in my life, yet it is obvious that class entered into every aspect of my life. Sedbergh took children of businessmen and industrialists from the north of England and gave them the polish to move up socially. I think I was aware of this even at the time and felt a slight difference coming from a downwardly mobile professional family (army, law etc.). When I went out with boys like Alan Barnes or David Porter I was aware that I was mixing with something different, but I felt no difficulty at all. Likewise at home I realized that the farm boys, from the Barr family our neighbours were very different - they spoke in a North Lancashire accent to start with. I can't remember ever going into their farm house, though they came to visit us and my mother gives a telling account of her repulsion at the smell of sweat and manure. But being my mother, she was also welcoming - ambivalence she often shows in her writing about Indians.

One example of my class awareness I remember well. After many months of watching a pretty girl walk past our house on her way back from school I dared to ask her something and she said 'Pardon' in a lower middle class voice, mixed with a local accent. My desire was immediately frozen. I also remember vaguely, and was retold that when my friend Stephen Grieve started to date his future wife Carol, his family and a number of friends were critical because she was 'below' him socially. Later I discovered from Carol that this was mainly because she had gone to a local grammar school rather than to a posh school.

My sister Fiona was no respecter of class and her warm personality attracted a number of waifs and strays. I think the reformed prostitute Val, who I became good friends with and who stayed with us a number of times, was probably from my Oxford days. And there were others. I suspect her boarding school being cheaper than Sedbergh had a broader intake.

The strange thing about class was that although it was all-pervasive, it was almost invisible, at least to those who considered themselves near the top of the highly graded social hierarchy. We sensed who were "us" and "them", but seldom put into words how we knew this and how important it was.

At Sedbergh I think we may have made fun of the "skivvies" as we derogatively called the House servants. We did not get to know the local youth, unless they were in the handful who were coming to the school. At Field Head we lived in a little middle class bubble, away from the much larger group of local residents. [Recently I was amazed to find on returning to the Lakes that the very small group of middle class children spread so thinly over the area where I lived knew each other so well. But people like my neighbour Martin Buckmaster were on the border.] On buses or in shops we instinctively picked up the signals and behaved in the usual caste-like way - but never talked about it explicitly as I remember.

I suppose my grandmother would occasionally remark that a certain person was “common” because of certain characteristics. Yet on the whole we picked up the mannerisms and made the distinctions without being formally instructed. We would not have taken certain people we knew into our homes – though the Barrs were an exception. I shall examine the letters and other materials further for the little signs which give away the snobbery and class differentiation which was manifest in language, furnishings, schooling and so many ways.

What I suspect was that we were, along with many others, in that classic category of ‘genteel poverty’ or ‘distressed gentlefolk’. The children were going to expensive schools, the grandfather was a Lt. Colonel, two uncles had been to Oxford and another was a surgeon, even my parents were in a reasonably status-satisfactory job in tea. My grandmother was clearly a formidable middle class lady. So we had all the accoutrements of the middle to upper middle class – gentlefolk, even with some claim which the family was constantly investigating, to bear arms.

On the other hand we were clearly awfully short of money – as I have written about elsewhere. Most of the time we had no car, we did not go for serious holidays, we did not have ponies or a shoot or a beat or a tennis court. We lived simply and skimped. Yet I suspect the shame of all this was not great because we were alongside a goodly number of the middle class who had suffered serious erosion to their incomes and pensions since 1940. We were living in an adequate house, were not short of food and were reasonably clothed. So we clung to our middle-class, or even upper middle class, status in the face of all the odds.

Conflicts, disagreements, fights and quarrels

Strangely, I do not remember any serious conflicts or fights during my time at Sedbergh. Of course there were staged fights, for example when we went on snowballing runs and fought through the snow, or on summer evenings when we went up Winder with older boys and fought in a mock way on the hillside. I also did some boxing and a tried to learn a little judo. Yet serious fights or quarrels in the dayrooms, dormitories or studies I do not remember. I do not remember any mechanisms like duelling our jousting, and cannot recall any serious beatings up of individuals by gangs or even any serious fights between other boys.

If this is a true recollection, then it needs some explanation. We were tough little boys and there were plenty of occasions when we literally or metaphorically trod on each other’s toes. Why was there not more violence? One suggestion might be because of the diversion of energies into fairly violent games, especially rigger. This was clearly part of what lay behind the heavy emphasis on sports and games at public schools – channelling aggression into something useful and controlled. Another view might be that there were other ways of overcoming differences, through conversation or other devices. Whether the ever-present prefects would have spotted the build up of tensions and used their authority to defuse possible feuds, I do not know. If they did, then they were acting just like District Commissioners in the British Empire.

Again I suspect that, like the Gurungs which whom I have worked and who preserve an amazing degree of harmony despite the potentials for serious quarrels, we were

aware that in a small intense community like this it would be easy for a quarrel to tear the community apart. So feuds and quarrels were dampened down by group pressure.

All I can remember is that I seemed seldom to get angry with other boys, which is odd given the endless minor potential causes of friction over property, space, status and other things. Why older boys were not constantly pummelling junior boys who had been cheeky or stepped out of line, why we did not accidentally offend others constantly, I do not know. All I seem to remember is a place with no noticeable bullying, little inter-personal violence and fighting, a rather harmonious, co-operative and peaceful atmosphere on the whole.

Of course this is what a school such as this would hope to achieve and its success lies largely in the hands of the headmaster and the housemasters. Discipline seems to have been good and morale reasonable. The prefect system, with even delegated powers further down, for instance the heads of dayrooms had certain powers, certainly helped.

An added factor may have been the constant pervasive influence of Christianity with its 'turn the other cheek' exhortations and, in this Quaker area, its pacifist streak. We were to absorb insults, to believe in ourselves and to respect others. Forgiveness was a virtue. Not to strike back was a sign of strength and not weakness. It was far from a jungle where the strongest ruled. Outwardly it was a tough and machismo kind of school. But inwardly as I remember it, there was a rather peaceful atmosphere.

I found this to be exactly the same as what I found when I worked with the Gurungs of Nepal. They were internationally known as the fearsome tribesmen from whom the renowned Gurkhas were drawn, just as Sedbergh was internationally known for its fierce rucker players and tough runners. Yet within their villages, as I discovered, the Gurungs were extremely unaggressive and gentle and physical assaults and serious feuds were hardly known. The same was true of Sedbergh, as far as I recall. It will be interesting to see what Jamie feels. This is an important area, for the 'pax Britannica', an orderly non-feuding world maintained by a small number of white rulers and their 'prefects' is supposed to be one of the wonders of the British Empire.

Power, responsibility, prefects and punishment

While the Dragon was mainly about teaching us to live in a community away from home, the rules of communal living, the making of friends, how to co-operate and originate, Sedbergh was different. It was a more conventional school in many ways and as we grew we were being taught different lessons, in particular how to accept and then assume authority, how to be ruled and how to rule.

In many ways the organization of the British public school and the British Empire were analogous. Both were attempted solutions to the problem of ruling indirectly, systems of the delegation of power so that people learnt to rule themselves.

A housemaster faced with fifty boys aged thirteen to eighteen, living an intense 'asylum' life had very few sanctions or ways of controlling the boys directly. He would find it best to appoint five or so trustworthy ('trusties') prefects who were given considerable sub-delegated powers. These prefects would, in effect, have servants - 'fags' - to relieve them of humdrum duties such as cleaning shoes or cleaning their

studies. In the Empire there were numerous servants to help with houses, gardens, animals – and this was that world in miniature.

The prefects could punish with lighter punishments ('maps' or detentions) up to beating. They were poised exactly half-way between the master and the boys – boys themselves, they were able to represent their juniors, yet they could also represent the power of the masters to the boys. So they were like the native princes in India, or chiefs in Africa. They kept an eye out, administered local justice, and did much of the practical and day-to-day work of administration.

In the case of the school, this was perceived to have two advantages. For the housemaster, or headmaster, as explained, it made the running of a house far easier. The house ran itself and the master's power was almost invisible in the true tradition of imperial power. The 'natives' appeared to be ruled effortlessly. There was no basic antagonism of the natives against the ruler, as in so many empires, since the natives – and this even occurred within the slave societies such as Jamaica – were partially co-opted into the role of ruling themselves and each other. The top slaves would rule the lower slaves.

The second advantage was that the schools felt (justifiably) that they were teaching not only academic subjects but also an ability to lead and rule responsibly. A prefect had to have authority as well as power in order to be effective. He should be trusted, liked, respected, not an arbitrary, selfish or cruel despot. So as I grew through the system in Sedbergh I was learning how to become a ruler of my juniors.

The question for the imperial project was what would happen when the prefects asked to be masters, fought out most dramatically in the last days of the Raj. The ideology was that prefects would go to university, as Nehru did to Cambridge, or to law colleges, as Gandhi did, and then come back to be masters and perhaps one day headmaster, as Nehru, against much resistance, did.

The art of ruling people through authority rather than naked power is a difficult one. I found it surprisingly easy to move from being a servant and powerless, to being a ruler of servants and within my limits powerful. It seemed a natural progress. I found the gradual awarding of small signs of privilege, the unbuttoned jacket of a house prefect, the umbrella of the School Prefect, the increasing private space and personal initiative in work, were all a great pleasure. Yet I tried to rule without physical sanctions. I decided early on that I would not beat a junior boy. I had always hated causing pain to animals and was not going to start now. So I never did beat a boy. I even felt that if I could devise punishments of a constructive kind that would be better than mindless punishments, so I set people cataloguing and clearing up the house library and such things.

So we learnt deference to authority and how to exercise power without revealing the iron hand behind the gloves. We had learnt the customary norms and values of our culture, when hitting was allowed, when a white lie was permissible, how humour could deflect tension, how to make two people feel they had received justice and no-one's pride had been hurt, how to end feuds, how to encourage people to do their best by leadership and enthusiasm. In other words we had learnt all the arts of rhetoric and

dispute-settlement which a good African chief or elder needs in his tribal society. These are the arts of face-to-face leadership which public schools are meant to teach.

These are nowadays somewhat derided skills. Yet they came in useful later. For example, being Head of a Department in Cambridge when everyone is more or less equal and some much older and more experienced than myself, and where I had no sanctions, is extremely testing. Yet I did this minimally and without too much trouble a number of times and likewise ran the Faculty and a number of committees without too much difficulty. Without my early Sedbergh training I am not sure I would have managed as easily. I have seen the difficulty that some non-public school individuals have had in this same task.

Ruling well is an art, and as subtle and important an art as any other. In a democracy with a great deal of devolved power and a rich civil society of non-governmental organizations, where the ruled should feel they have freedom and justice, it is highly important. This is what we mostly felt was happening in our school days and it was not unnatural to feel that one day we might be ruling over a larger unit than a small boarding house.

Rules and the breaking of rules

Perhaps because the running of an intense, asylum-like, institution where a great deal has to be done by people in close proximity, a sort of social density which is a little unusual except in villages and tribes, the abundance of rules was evident. These rules also had to deal with the rapidly changing situation as people passed through the carefully graded age-class system as they became older. So rules were characteristic of both the Dragon and Sedbergh in the same way that Hasluck and others have noticed the multiplicity of rules in feuding pastoral societies. Orwell noticed the plethora of rules in his preparatory school and they are evident in the accounts of the school he went to – Eton.

Many of the rules seem very petty and small, and the punishments, for example for being late into bed or running down the corridors or leaving one's clothes untidy, seem out of proportion to the gravity of the offence. Yet the proliferation of rules and the severity of punishment for their infringement, as in other asylums, reflect a perhaps accurate knowledge on the part of the authorities that they were sitting on a volcano. So all our lives were tightly disciplined and rule bound. And the rules were not only set by the school authorities, but the boys devised many others in order to control each other. It was an orderly anarchy, as described by many anthropologists. The written rules were few, yet the informal rules were many. The title of Foucault's book, *Discipline and Punish*, could well represent one side of boarding school life.

On the other hand the system also had a strong element of flexibility, as I found in other customary communities such as the one I worked with in Nepal. Rules were for a purpose and if the purpose was better served by breaking or bending a rule, the ends could justify the means. Thus much of the skill which led to success at school was the art of understanding the rules, and then bending and adapting them to one's own use. This was taught to us in all the formal games we played, but we also learnt it in relation to all the rules of life. For example, if one had an immense amount of work to do and felt exhausted, it might be legitimate to claim that one was sick and get a few days rest in

the sickroom. Of if one was trying to write, as I did towards the end of my time at Sedbergh, one could ransack other writers for models, which were not always acknowledged.

So we learnt to internalize and respect rules, but also to learnt to question some of them, manipulate them, even break them. We learnt to realize how much of our life is constructed artificially and can be changed by an effort of will and ingenuity.

We learnt to live in a world where there was a constant evolutionary change going on. New things and ways had to be absorbed. The external world, for example technology, was changing rapidly and we had to absorb all this, along with a changing culture. In the midst of this we ourselves were changing, our bodies going through strange alterations, our emotions volatile and unpredictable, our minds suddenly interested in new thoughts and with new powers.

So we learnt the art of continuity with change, resisting unnecessary change in the conservative way that has often been noticed of schoolboys, dons and other members of closed societies. We tried to keep things as simple as possible, but when a change made good sense then we incorporated it, often with the pretence that we were just re-inventing an older tradition. A number of boys wrote in support of fagging to a newspaper, even as we suffered it. This was partly because once one has suffered through something like fagging, one wants later to benefit from it too. It is partly because if there are complex webs of customs and rules which, it is assumed, have been devised for a purpose, one has a sense that getting rid of an apparent anomaly may, in fact, reveal that it had a purpose. It is safer, as with modern China or Cambridge, to leave things alone and a preferable route is to let obsolete rules wither away through non-use.

So we learnt a great deal about power and political economy in an indirect way. It will be interesting to see what my essays in political economy show. How much did I absorb from my practical experience of the flows of power and the customs to which we were subjected? I am sure that my later interest in law and custom and the writings of F.W.Maitland and Sir Henry Maine were enriched by this experience.

Symbolic life of the school (school songs, mottoes, emblems and flags [to be expanded])

School Songs - The Wilson Run

At Olympia, far away,
In the boyhood of the world,
There were glorious games they say -
Discs were thrown and spears were hurled.
Came the athletes strong and stately,
Leapt and ran, and wrestled greatly,
While a nation stood and wonder'd,
And a shout to heav'n was thunder'd:
Chorus:
Strain and struggle, might and main;
Scorn defeat and laugh at pain,
Never shall you strive in vain

In the long run!

Sedbergh in the hardy north,
She her runners, too, can show;
Sends her fleet Athenians forth;
Trains her Spartans in the snow!
Herald March the blast is sounding
-Rugged hills the course surrounding
-Don your jerseys, make you ready,
Up and off, lads, swift and steady!

Strain and struggle, etc.

Not so fiercely as at first,
Toiling on to Cautley Bridge;
Down the hill-side with a burst,
On to Baugh Fell, up the ridge;
Plunging through the tangled heather
Garsdale finds you less together:
Panting breast and straining sinew -
Set your teeth, lads, show what's in you.

Strain and struggle, etc.

At Olympia, far away,
When the victor wore the crown,
Breathing marble, burning lay,
Made immortal his renown.
What tho' Fate hath given to Winder,
No Praxiteles or Pindar,
Yet her sons, who bravely bear them,
Sedbergh in her heart shall wear them!

Strain and struggle, etc.

We sang this song at the School Concert on the day of the Ten Mile - classic stuff
The Music was by P.A.Thomas, the words I imagine by R. St. J. Ainslie
The spirit of the school - and our future life - is well captured in this.

[See the Sedbergh School Song book for many other memorable lines!]

Symbols of identity

It is obvious that any institution such as a boarding school will manufacture a number of symbols both to instil identity, to create differences from others, and to show differential status. One powerful source of identity and expression of the ideals of the school, as at the Dragon, was the set of school songs. The founding myths and history were encapsulated in 'Floruit Sedberghia', which we had to learn by heart and sing on major occasions. I shall dissect this song later. The Wilson Run song also illustrates in particular the virtues of toughness and endurance and is referred to in the article by

Butcher on school songs. I have the Sedbergh School songbook and shall examine other songs for their overt or latent messages about what we thought we were at Sedbergh for and the sentiments which the School tried to encourage.

Then there were flags and crests. No doubt the school had a flagpole where the school flag fluttered, showing the heraldic devices adopted by the school (though not formally and officially granted until the 1980's). It had the supposed coat of arms of the founder Roger Lupton – including the ferocious wolf's head with perhaps a symbolic link to the founding of Rome and the 'hard nurse of men', i.e. being suckled by wolves. This school flag was no doubt brought into the Remembrance Day celebrations and the school crest was something a School Prefect could wear on his jacket as a badge of office.

Then each house had a special colour – Lupton was very austere, black and white, while the school with its muddy brown was also very puritan. And each house had a flag and a crest. Lupton could proudly fly the wolf's head (occasionally replaced by pyjamas at the end of term). So each house had a kind of totem, and this set up the system of totemic oppositions which acted like totemic objects in the cases analysed by anthropologists, especially Levi-Strauss.

Then there were mottoes. The school motto of 'Dura Virum Nutrix' needs to be examined both for what it says of the school and compared to other mottoes. For example, I have recently learnt from a piece on Auden (who incorporated it into one of his poems), that the motto (like the Dragon motto) was taken from a Greek source – the Odyssey, where Odysseus is the product of a 'kind but strong nurse of men'. In Henry Hart's translation into Latin, the 'kind' was significantly omitted. As far as I know, houses did not have separate mottoes, but we may have had other catchwords.

Then there was other clothing – the games uniform of brown and blue, the kilts which many of us wore (including myself), as a symbol of our Scottishness, the ties and caps, the rolled umbrellas, the doing up of buttons, army uniform, the wearing of shorts until the 1970's. What did all this mean? I shall analyse this further.

So the symbolic marking of the school is susceptible to much of that kind of analysis which anthropologists will undertake of any tribal and integrated culture. The stronger the boundaries and the intensities of inter-action within an 'asylum', the stronger the symbolic statements are likely to be. From the Dragon, through Sedbergh, to Oxford and Cambridge (and the army if I had gone there), the symbolic statements were rich and obvious, marking off the important social units from the outside world.

The Army and Military Training

Like most middle-class British imperial families, my ancestors had often been in the army. Impinging on me most directly were my grand-father, a Lt. Colonel in the Indian army, two of my uncles who had been in the Gurkhas, and my father, who had risen to the rank of Major during the Second World War.

So I took fighting and the army for granted and many of my childhood games, as I have explained in the second on Dorset Days, involved soldiers and fighting, forts, battles, six

guns and war. This was also something my uncle Robert was interested in and he later came to write a book on the Gallipoli campaign.

Yet there was also another strand. The Dragon, as I have explained, was a rather unmilitary school and there was no corps, drill or event Scouts. Yet when I went to Sedbergh I was back in a much more mainstream militaristic world. Many Sedberghian boys went on into the services, the war memorial cloister dominated the hillside below Powell Hall, and there were a series of Combined Cadet Force (CCF) events which I slotted into. I am surprised on reading through the Brown Books, Sedberghians and my own letters and notes, how much there is about the Corps.

I have a scrap of paper where I listed my corps equipment and I now remember what a panic I would get into before parade trying to locate things and how much time I spent putting brown stuff onto my leggings, trying to shine the little bits of brass with wads of 'Brasso', the shining of the boots and creasing of the uniforms. I don't think I enjoyed this side of army life at all, nor was I particularly excited by the time we spent learning to dismantle and clean ancient guns, or shooting - which hurt my ears. I remember then or later being amused by the poem 'Judging Distances' by Henry Reed, with its play on army terminology and time - and also his poem called something like 'The naming of the parts'.

I vaguely remember rather pointless marching up and down and I give quite a lively and critical account of one of the Fields Days in a letter. I also remember vaguely going on a CCF camp. All I remember at present is a huge hanger-like place, perhaps the NAAFI - where there was a piano and a boy called Wood played Fats Waller type music very well. I also remember the large tin mugs of tea which were rumoured to be laced with some kind of substance to lower our sex drive, which I worried might harm me for life. And I remember the greasy tins of breakfast food. But where it was, perhaps Catterick, I am not yet sure.

Money worries

The section on the Dorset years has a chapter on money worries. There I explore a side of my childhood which was invisible to me at the time but comes out very strongly in my parents' letters - namely their constant worry about money and how short they were of it.

At the end of the Dragon, in their last leave of 1954-5, things seem to ease a little. They bought a house, there is slightly less worry expressed. Yet now that I read through the Sedbergh letters I see that they were just as worried during the Sedbergh years, if not more so. They seemed to be hanging on the edge of a cliff. There are particularly strong anxieties about the consequence of having the three of us children out to India at Christmas 1958.

There are frequent references to the fact that this will set my parents back for years, their attempts at saving by giving up drinks, smoking, the club and so on. One new thing about the situation are that my mother occasionally shares her worries with me - or at least tells me that they are very short of money in order to explain why they can't afford to pay for a hiking trip on the continent - until my headmaster offers to do so - or to buy me a motorbike or guitar.

The second novelty is that I begin actively to participate at a conscious level in the capitalist economy and its implications. I do this especially around my hobbies – fishing, the guitar and travel (motorbike). I write quite a lot about my ideas of how to raise small sums of money in order to buy something. I appear not to be too demanding or unrealistic and to consult in a moderately careful way with my parents (and since they also lent me money, my grandparents also) about my purchases.

From about the age of sixteen onwards I talk about getting holiday jobs, but do not seem ever to have done so until I left Sedbergh, when I worked over the summer on a Norwegian cargo boat and in a bakery. This was to save money to buy a small sailing dinghy. On the whole my parents gave me all I needed in the way of pocket money, so I was very fortunate.

Yet the fact that a senior manager of a Tea Estate, acting as General Manager for four or five months at one point, should find it so difficult to manage at this time is another indication of how things have changed since those days. Admittedly our boarding schools, and especially Sedbergh, must have been a huge drain. My parents envisaged the possibility of sending my sisters to a grammar school when their school was talking of closing down, but they never seem to have contemplated taking me out of Sedbergh and sending me to a free local school. Was their pride, or pretension, or the strong desire to give a wonderful start on the life which they had always dreamt for me behind this? A part of each, I suppose, but above all the last motive.

What strikes me is how little back-up or support there was in the way of credit. The Assam Company seemed reluctant to lend money and in any case there was a strict limit of £150 per month that could be sent home from India. In England the banks had given a loan for the purchase of the house, but any further attempts to borrow were refused on the grounds that the bank could not be certain of assets and debts in India. There were no thoughts of borrowing money from my uncles or any other kin, or from any friends. The only people from whom, in effect, my parents could borrow was from my grandparents – in the form of asking them to hold off a repayment for our costs or to buy something “on account” for us. This slightly eased my parents’ position, but the borrowing had to be repaid quite rapidly as my grandparents themselves were in a difficult position. They were in such straits that my grandfather was actively discussing cashing in his major life insurance policy to raise money – a step my mother encouraged on the grounds that my grandmother could count on her four children to look after her if it later became necessary. A rash promise as it turned out, though I am not certain as yet whether the policy was cashed in.

My own accounts and discussions of small sums of money for guitars, motorbikes and so on show that I had a reasonable grasp of basic domestic economics, but also that while I did not feel embarrassed by money (as my father did), nor did I find it particularly interesting. I was never a great hoarder, but nor did I get into serious debt. If I had money I would tend to spend it when I wanted something, but from sixteen onwards I clearly had a bank account (Martin’s Bank at Ambleside as I recall, opposite to Varty’s, the second hand bookshop). There seem to have been quite long periods when I left money in the account for longer periods without feeling I must spend it. I think I was learning to use money, to be neither its slave nor master, to avoid ‘the love of money’ and envy. There were many of my pleasures which required very little

money - fishing, music, reading, walking - so I do not recall being desperate for more or cutting corners to acquire it. The days when I stole money from my family to buy seeds or toys were a distant memory and I was now more or less ready to handle my own accounts, as I was to do at Oxford.

BEFORE OXFORD: APRIL - SEPTEMBER 1960

I arrived back in the Lakes from Sedbergh on Tuesday 29 March. I had imagined that I would be going back to School for my last summer term, and indeed I did not think it likely that I would get into Oxford. On the morning of 28th March my mother had written to my father *Alan didn't seem very hopeful about his Oxford interview, it is just a matter of luck I think, but whatever happens I shall give in his 'notice' at the beginning of next term I think, he can always squat at home if necessary.* It is clear that my parents could not afford to keep me on for an extra winter term to try again if I failed this time. But later that same day my grandfather wrote in his diary: 'Heard that Alan has got into Worcester College Oxford'. This was to change my life.

The letter of acceptance from Worcester is in the College archive and dated March 23rd. But it seems to have taken some time to get to Sedbergh, and then the news to get on from there.

23rd March 1960 (carbon - typed)

Dear Macfarlane,

I am glad to tell you that you were successful in our recent College entrance examination and we are glad to offer you a place here in October 1960.

Please let me know if you wish to accept the place.

Yours sincerely, D. Mitchell

The day after I arrived back my mother wrote again to my father:

Anyway, a bit of news that I hope will cheer you up - Alan has got a place at Worcester College. I'm delighted and I know you will be. I'd begun to feel there was no hope at all. I don't really know why [he] is going back to school next term, but he seems to be organizing everything and I suppose we can't very well whirl him away the minute we want to. He came back yesterday, arrived just after lunch driven by a friend - I'd just washed my hair and it was hanging in dripping strands round my ears. He is looking a bit tired as he always does, but is very cheerful and itching to go off fishing.

Field Head, Outgate, Nr Ambleside, Lancs

Dear Sir,

Thank you very much for your letter offering me a place at Worcester College in October 1960. I am glad to accept this place and read History there in October 1960. Could you let me know any further details in regard to entrance?

I am yours gratefully, A.D.J. Macfarlane (Sedbergh School)

My letter was enclosed with another from my mother which frankly lays out the reasons for wanting to take me out of school a term early. I presume, from the contents, that we had already discussed the matter and I was planning to go abroad for a job.

A hand-written letter in the Worcester archive.

"Field Head", Outgate, Ambleside, Westmorland April 3rd [1960]

Dear Mr Mitchell,

My son, A.D.J. Macfarlane, has just written to accept a place you have offered him at Worcester College in October.

I am now writing to ask if the College would object to his leaving school now, instead of in July. His school tutor is quite agreeable to his spending three months travelling & then a couple of months in relaxation & reading, & feels this would be as profitable a preparation for Oxford as another term. Frankly it would be a great help to us to have a breathing space too, as my husband's job is in India & with the cost of living as high as it is out there & two homes & three lots of school bills, we find it increasingly difficult to manage.

I would be grateful if you would let me know what you feel about this, so that I can let Sedbergh know. We are very grateful for the place given to Alan knowing how many applicants there are these days.

Yours sincerely, Iris Macfarlane MRS D.K. MACFARLANE

My parents were always very short of money, and the thought of saving a term's fees, and perhaps a feeling that it would do me more good to have a sort of mini 'gap' work experience summer, meant that they decided to take me out of school. For many years I regretted (and dreamt about) that I missed the last, lazy, summer with my friends – fishing and cricket and saying good-bye. It seemed like an amputation. Just as the last terms (and especially the summer) at the Dragon were like paradise, so that last term as a School Prefect at Sedbergh would have been the culmination.

There was, however, the large compensation that my mother was already home on leave from India and I could look forward to a summer with my family (my father arrived back on 10 April), something I had not enjoyed for a couple of years.

Much of the summer has passed into a blur. Yet some remaining diaries, letters and writings suddenly bring back a few important themes, each anticipating events at Oxford and later. I shall deal with two of these separately, my first love affair my first real experience of travel abroad on my own. Here are a few fragments of other events in that summer.

*

I was at home with my parents from March 29th until May 5th, when I left for Norway. I was away until June 9th and then I returned for the rest of the summer. I worked in a bakery for a month or six weeks, but otherwise spent the time fishing, preparing a small dinghy I had bought, and starting to read in preparation for my University course in history. Small hints of the life which my parents and sisters lived are contained in my mother's letters to me in Norway. I do not remember a great deal about my first job in England, working in Watson's café and bakery in Windermere. I can picture the place in my mind's eye and remember that I helped get the delicious warm bread and cakes out in the morning from the bakery, but my main job was serving in the shop. There were long periods with few customers when I used to read, somewhat to the annoyance of the proprietor. It was a very boring job, as I recall. I must have got there each day by motorbike and suspect that I went across on the Ferry over Windermere.

*

One continuity with the last years at Sedbergh and continuing into my first year at Oxford was an interest in evangelical Christianity. While at Sedbergh I had been to a number of boy's Christian camps at Iwerne Minster and there I had obviously met a man called Clive (I may discover his surname later). I don't think I went to Iwerne in

1960, but Clive, who was clearly a student at the theological college Ridley Hall at Cambridge, wrote to me several times during 1960, and I shall give some extracts from his letters as a key to the fact that religion continued important to me. The first was obviously written to Sedbergh, but fits in better here.

The first I have is on 27 February 1960.

Dear Alan,

Thank you very much for your letter of last term. Sorry not to have replied sooner than this, it was good to hear all your news and to know that you are trying for Worcester. I was there the other day when visiting Oxford. Do let me know what happens and whether you manage to get in. Bad luck about the Trevelyan Schol: I believe there's enormous competition....

I was interested to hear of your difficulties to find time for bible reading etc. I do sympathize and know how these things so easily tend to get pushed out. Remember that even if you fail you are dealing with One who understands and forgives & who longs to help. Yes, I was sorry you didn't manage to get to Iwerne in the Summer but I'm sure at the same time the experiences that you did have would have been, in their own way, most valuable to you. [later page(s) of the letter are lost.

The next letter is also from Ridley Hall, on 9 July.

Dear Alan,

Many thanks for your letter from Norway - which arrived when I was away - I apologise for the delay in my reply.

I was delighted to hear your news and that you have managed to get into Oxford - that really is wonderful (though there is one better place, you know!) I was sorry to hear that you only may be coming to Iwerne (or rather West Buckland). We do very much need the loyal help of you stalwarts who already know the ropes and I can think of no more worthwhile cause to give your time to while you are at Oxford than the Camp - first as Senior Camper to gain experience and then - who knows? - to share in the rewarding and thrilling work of being an officer and being able to give back to boys some of the benefits that you yourself have gained. Will you think about this and pray for God's guiding hand to be shown to you? We so much want really dedicated and single-minded men in the work, but, of course, its costly in time and energy. I can assure you from experience that if you're still thinking in terms of ordination there is no more wonderful training ground in speaking and in dealing with others than Camp. I remember David Sheppard saying this to me right at the beginning of my University Career and I've always been most grateful to him for it. And if it's not to be ordination the fellowship amongst Campers at Oxford will be of immense value in preparing you for a really useful life as a Christian in whatever you do.

I'm back here at Cambridge again now and have just begun my last academic year of training. My exams were not brilliant but at least I passed for which I am most grateful....

I'm going to Haileybury next week and will, no doubt, be seeing Rhodes [my uncle Richard].

Do let me know how you feel about Camp and I very much hope we shall meet in the Summer.

With ever good wish, Yours ever, Clive

The third letter is dated 15 September and is from Keepers, Welcombe, Stratford on Avon

Dear Alan

I was so pleased to get your long letter the other day and to hear your news. We missed you at West Buckland but I quite understand your position with respect to your parents departure so soon.

Don't worry about being a Freshman - a third of the University will be too! The great change you'll find, I imagine, will be that there's masses of work to be done and no one to see that you do it. If anything I regret that I didn't put more time in at the books - and not only books on my particular subjects - but more general reading. The distractions at University are many and varied and another problem will be 'What to do and what not to do.'. My order of priority was work - Christian Union activity - sport - other interests. You'll find the C.U [Christian Unikon] an enormous help in your Christian growth and I would advise you to throw yourself in with them wholly from the start. You may find the one or two in it whom you can't really take - don't worry but chat it over with another Camper there. Any Christian organization has its failings but I think you'll agree with me after a term at Oxford that the O.I.C.C.U [Oxford Inter-Collegiate Christian Union] is doing a really wonderful work putting the wonder of Christ's salvation before undergraduates.

I do regret however that I didn't do more sport and wish that I had been a little more selective in the C.U meetings I attended. I think there's a real danger of being rushed off one's feet in one's enthusiasm - Meetingitis!

Social life was for me a bit of a problem. 95% of the dances and evening parties were really merely excuses for lust and drunkenness - that's putting it strongly but I'm afraid its very near the truth, and so I didn't go. You do meet, however, through work or sport a large variety of people and tea is a great social time when one entertains one's friends. There are many opportunities to help others as a Christian - I had the most thrilling first term in this way - but my advice would be not to talk too freely at first but to make a wide circle of friends and then pray that God will show you just the odd one or two to whom you may be of some real help.

I expect much of this you know already and there are a number of Campers at Oxford who will give you any help you need. I look forward to hearing from you how it is all going. Gilbert Gauntlett is the Camp Representative - he's in his final year at Wycliffe Hall and will, no doubt, get in touch with you early in the term.

I hear you met my cousin up in the Lake District. She came over yesterday and seems to have had a lovely holiday up there.

I'm enjoying a few days peace.... I till don't know where I am to go for my first curacy but will let you know when it is fixed...

All the very best to you, Alan, and may these next three years be a time of great growth in the love and knowledge of the Lord Jesus and I know that He will guide you in the right way - as He has guided me.

With every good wish, Clive

*

One thing I had totally forgotten, and which may account for much of my time in the last month my parents were around, was preparing for Oxford. I do mention in a letter from Oxford that I seemed to be better prepared than some of my contemporaries through having done more work before I came up. I have some evidence of what I was doing in sets of notes on the three historians whom we would be analysing in the first term. All these notes are dated September 1960, with only those on Gibbon given the more precise date of September 24. The writing on Alexis de Tocqueville and Lord Macaulay take the form of notes, under various headings. The notes on Macaulay are a thin one and a half pages, those on Tocqueville a fuller three pages. Perhaps most interesting is the one essay, on Edward Gibbon. Since this gives the first glimpse of my intellectual state a week before my parents left and two weeks before I went to Oxford, I shall include a small part of this first essay to give an idea of my intellectual level at this time.

1 Introduction

The historian and painter are very similar. They both see the subject through the veil of their own personality and so stress and interpret what seems of importance to them. With regard to this Namier says “the function of the historian is ... to discover and set forth, to single and stress that which is of the nature of the thing, and not to reproduce indiscriminately all that meets the eye. To distinguish a tree you look at its shape, its bark and leaf; counting and measuring its branches would get you nowhere. Similarly [sic] what matters in history is the great outline and the significant detail; what must be avoided is the deadly mass of irrelevant narrative.” When the study is of a vast and complex spectacle such as the “Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire” this selective ability is especially essential.

2. Craftsmanship (general)

However before one can even judge the pillars on which the history stands the foundations must be examined. The foundation of both painting and history is competent craftsmanship. The historian no less than the artist must be able to translate, through his given media, his ideas and knowledge to others. Craftsmanship contains the basic problems of style, expression and co-ordinating power. It is perhaps in this sphere that we find Gibbon at his greatest.

3. Style (Gibbon)

Gibbon’s task was immense. Yet by a tremendous intellectual and imaginative effort he seemed to absorb his subject whole. Unlike most historians he was concerned with every feature of the period he studied, archaeology, geography, literature, law, life, moral phases, military tactics and constitutional issues. [footnote: See note (i) at the end for a more detailed account of his bounds.] His great achievement was to co-ordinate all these different facets of life and to present them in one rolling, deliberate, convincing and complete drama. It is a narrative which though it lacks the fire and fervour of Macaulay or Hazlitt is yet “astonishingly alive and pungent, ... the secret lies in the mastery of variation and surprise.” (G.M. Young – Gibbon). Though the paragraphs are sometimes inordinately adorned with complicated syntax (see note (ii) at end), the calculated grandeur is too well suited to its subject to be dismissed as “vicious and affected, deformed by too much literary tinsel and frippery.” (Edmund Burke).

4. Style (narrative) & method.

His narrative power is on the whole firm and capable (iii). He avoids a minute system of treatment by dealing with masses of men and events. For instance he covers the whole invasion of the Eastern Empire by the Goths in a few sweeping, bold strokes, yet conveys the spirit of horror and disaster by highlighting occasional terrible incidents and by a frequent allusion to the destruction wrought in China by the Mogul [sic] invasion. Despite an extraordinary ability which enables him to weave many separate threads into a single strand (iv) in tense language he sometimes relapses. There are passages in which we sink into a mine of bombastic and turgid sentences which lack conciseness and clarity (v).

There are then sections on his 4. Style (narrative) & method., 5. Descriptive power, with examples, and another on 6. ‘Gibbon and objectivity’, and another long one on ‘7. Personal Preferences’. The penultimate section is titled:

8. The sociological balance.

Paradoxically one of Gibbon’s greatest weaknesses, his failure to interpret the process he was relating, is a factor which largely contributes to his continued popularity. J.M. Robertson maintains that Gibbon “was not unconscious of the deep economic and social vices which undermined the great fabric ... but these considerations are not together to a luminous point ... one may say that generalized and synthesized views are conspicuous by their absence in Gibbon.” Perhaps Gibbon did satisfy his aim “to deduce the circumstances of its fall” if by

circumstances he meant incidents – but not if he meant reasons. He indeed describes “the triumph of barbarism and religion” yet he himself does not philosophically attempt to explain the decline and fall and it is left to us to offer our own conclusions. This is preferable to being told with haughty confidence that “the start of the Peloponnesian War in 431 B.C. is the inevitable beginning of the decline of Rome; (Toynbee) and as a historian did not stray into the realm of metahistory and try to show why the Empire was bound to fall. But it is surprising that Gibbon should not emphasize more the essential weakness of the Empire – in fact “empire”; that from its roots it carried with it seeds which led to its destruction (the corrupting aim of completely subordinating the provinces). It seems indeed that Gibbon may at times have confused the results (barbarism and religion as he says) with the causes of the decline.

9. Conclusion.

Gibbon has proved his merit by the continued popularity of his great History. Skilled in craftsmanship, with a special brand of irony (xiv) which cuts sharply at superstition and ignorance; profound and varied in his knowledge; objective and reasonable in his selection and liberal and humane in his philosophies he presents a living and vivid spectacle. Though claimed by its painter to be “little more than the register of the crimes, follies and miseries of mankind” it is a great and noble picture which enriches all those who study it.

[The footnotes to this minor work have been lost]

PART TWO

PLAY

A Sound Mind in a Sound Body

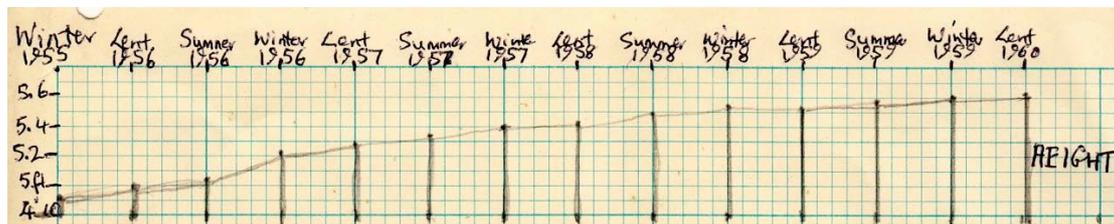
Introduction: Mens sano in mens sane corpore (a sound mind in a sound body)

Let me start with the growing body. The aim of the school was to toughen us up – hence its motto of ‘Dura virum nutrix’, a hard nurse of men. Set in the beautiful but cold and windy Yorkshire moors, priding itself on its rugby and running, the school immediately tried to discipline our bodies in a more thorough and punishing way than I ever remember of the Dragon. For example, we were sent on runs across the fells in almost all weathers – including sleet and snow. Even when it was most bitterly cold we were only allowed to wear one thin running shirt – and were not even allowed to button this up. We wore shorts through the week – and I wore a kilt at the week-end. I remember the bitter cold in the junior common rooms of my first two years which has left me with a permanent need to wrap my legs in a rug, even in warmish weather, when I work (I am wrapped thus now). The windows of class-rooms were left open, as they were of the dormitories, so that we would wake up sometimes with a drifting of snow at the bottom of our beds. And of course, in those days, there was no central heating. We were expected to have a cold bath every morning before we starting a period of preparation, and only then could we go to breakfast. The food was in short supply and rather boring and I learnt to survive by eating huge quantities of bread, and spreading everything on it. I still find it a pleasure to put things on bread.

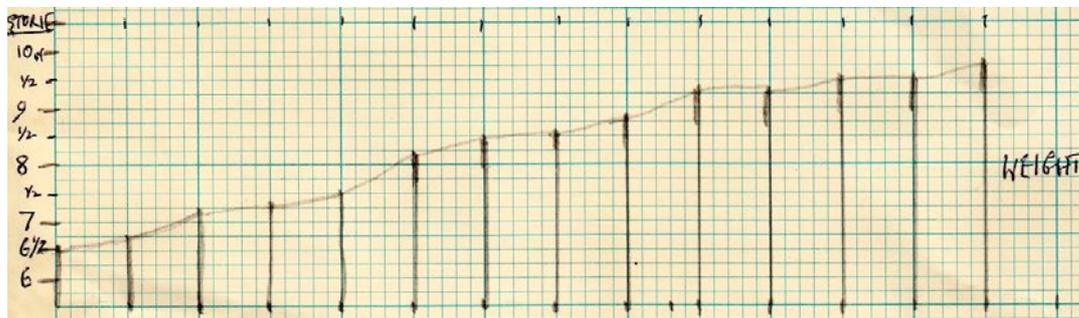
So it was tough and toughening in a way which would become unacceptable a few years after I left and it is difficult to describe to people who did not experience what were still the after-effects of rationing and the war, combined with the ethic of Spartan training set in these rugged mountains. This was the context for the growing boy who was being taught never to give in to physical challenges and be prepared for anything. One day he might be toiling up the Khyber pass with a regiment of Indian soldiers behind him, or tossing with malaria in Malaysia, or fighting the Japanese in the Burmese jungles. His Sedbergh training would then stand him in good stead. And of course there was also the fairly explicit realization that the best thing to do with the pent up energies, some of them sexual, of a large number of adolescent boys was to channel them into exhausting sports and games so that they would not find more unpleasant outcomes. Plus the intuition that a rounded person – good at games, with outdoor hobbies, with an appreciation of nature – with a sound body would be something to be produced. A sound mind in a sound body was a philosophy of a school which was matched to Gordonstoun in its hearty emphasis on bodily excellence. We might not be the Athens of boarding schools – we could not compete with Eton or Winchester. But we were the Sparta of the north.

When I arrived at Sedbergh in September 1955, aged 13 years 9 months old, I was small and thin – my height was 4 feet 10 and three quarters inches, my weight was six stone seven and a quarter pounds. Just to put this into perspective, my grand-daughter Lily, who is not yet twelve, is seven inches taller than this, though very slim and hence perhaps not much heavier. I have the measurements throughout the period. For example, by the time I went to the Lower Sixth History, aged 15 years 9 months old, I was five foot, four and a quarter inches and my weight had increased to eight stone seven pounds, which is more or less my current weight. In the last two and a half years I

only put on another two inches and just over a stone. My girth, which had gone up from 32 inches to 38 inches in the first two years, only went up another two and a half inches. So, it seems, most of my growing occurred in the first two years.



My height in feet and inches; I have remained at around five feet six inches ever since. A quick glance shows a spurt between summer and winter 1956 and then a fairly even growth and a flattening out from Summer 1958.



Weight in stone. I reached just over nine and a half stone at the end, and never exceeded that by much, and am now more than a stone lighter. There seems to have been steady growth, with a particular spurt between Lent and Winter 1957 in my fifteenth year.

I do remember something of this growth. I remember that as I toiled over the fells and raced around the sports fields I noticed very quickly that my rather thin, stick-like, legs were fattening out and I was developing the muscle-bound calves need to survive in that environment. As for how the rest of my body was developing, it was clearly at this period that I became sexually mature and I remember that a strong theme of these five years was the struggle between my inculcated ideas of sin, purity, Christian ethics, and what were condemned as the lusts of the body which were sometimes channelled into strong physical crushes on older, and later younger, boys. The school was largely free of explicit homosexual relations, at least my part of it was. But I do remember wrestling with other boys and deriving a strange delight from the entwining of bodies. Of girls there was little sign - something I shall perhaps write a little more about later.

There will be others, but I have come across one indicative description of my physical state in a diary written by my mother. Returning home from India after an absence of 18 months, my mother wrote to my father on April 18th 1957, when I had been at the school for a year and a half and had grown to five foot three inches: *Alan is taller than I am and no longer good-looking, pimply and scruffy but vastly improved in every way; contented and gay and witty and quite lost his discontented frown.* I suspect that the shock of my parents again leaving me at the school in my first term had undone

the increasing happiness of my last years at the Dragon and they had left me in a morose state. And I vaguely remember the first year or so of Sedbergh repeating the pattern of Inferno – as I will show from the Diary of my second term. This may lie behind the remark of my housemaster at the end of my first year who was very enthusiastic about my progress throughout my time at school, but wrote then ‘there has been much on which to congratulate him this term. My only criticism is that he is still rather retiring in the House.’

In general, then, my body was growing fast. My voice broke in my second term, just after my 14th birthday, as I recorded in a letter to my parents on 22 January 1956: *After the service, Mr Regan the master in charge of the choir asked if any one thought their voice was breaking and about six people said so, so he gave us a test and then told us to give our voices a rest for a term or two. So now I am not in the choir.*

I became sexually troubled, my legs and arms filled out and I turned from a little preparatory school leaver into a young adult who could, by the end of my time, go abroad on my own to work in foreign lands and was ready for another stage in my education – Oxford.

Illness and accidents

Most of the following account is concerned with the body in reasonable health – running, swimming, tackling and boxing my way through these five years. Yet one of the features that strikes me about these years is how often we were sick or injured. During the Dragon years, as I described, we had many minor illnesses, measles, mumps, flu and unpleasant boils, chilblains, chaps, impetigo. Most of these had gone by the time we arrived at Sedbergh, but there were still serious outbreaks of illness.

There seem to have been few epidemics of the mumps, measles and scarlet fever kind. The only one I have recorded is a measles epidemic in the Spring of 1957. I wrote to my parents on 20 January:

I had quite a bad cold last week but it has now gone and I am feeling o.k. again. Also on Teusday there was the 1st Meales case in the school. Luckily I have had it but the trouble is that the town is out of bounds now. But I think there have only been 2 more cases in the school so far.

I also noted in a letter of 15 June 1958, *Last week, as I told you, I was going to play for house team, but then I went into the san for about 4 days with German meazls [sic].*

The really serious epidemics were of influenza in 1957 and 1959, along with the one I had suffered from in 1954 at the Dragon, the worst of this period. For example, the 1957-8 pandemic of Asian influenza (1957-8) has attracted a great deal of attention as a very serious outbreak. At Sedbergh there are numerous comments on all this, for example the Lupton house magazine noting that up to forty people in a house of about 50 were ‘out of circulation’. My own comments on the outbreak, in a notebook I kept in the Winter term 1957, are as follows:

1. Flu Epidemic

At worst time only 18 people in house didn't have it. [Average time in = 5 days - Off ex[ercise] for 10 -12 days]. My highest temp 102.1 lowest 97.8. Highest: Pears 103.9 lowest: Crabbie 94.8 (E.M [Early morning] prep stopped)

Another serious outbreak was two years later, as I described in a couple of letters to my parents:

3 Feb 1959: At the moment I am in the sick-room (or rather a converted dormitory) suffering with about half the rest of the school from flu! It is not a very bad attack (in effect at least) you just feel a bit rotten for the first day or so, but the worst part about it is that you always seem to have a very bad cough and a cold and soar throat as well.

A week later I wrote:

10 Feb 1958: I do hope you are well and feeling more cheerful, and that you have received my last letter (from the depths of the plague-stricken sick-room) - Actually funnily enough I had rather a severe attack of home-sickness for it the day after I left it, although I had been longing to get out every day!

The home-sickness for the sickroom is an interesting comment. It mirrors comments by Jamie that the period of convalescence, in which the stress and strain of both work and sport was gone, the food was reasonable, there was time to read novels and perhaps listen to the radio, and to chat to other friends in the same position, meant that illness definitely had its compensations.

The letters of Jamie and Sandy give a much more detailed and vivid background of the constant background of illness and frequent visit to the school sanatorium. It really does seem that there was a major change in the level of perennial disease in the population with the spread of anti-biotics and increased wealth, but this happened just after I was at Sedbergh. And of course, the most common illness was the common cold, from which I periodically suffered, for example when I wrote home on 26 Jan 1958:

I have now managed to catch a miserable cold and a sore throat and cough which was not helped by having to run approximately six miles in a howling wind through a couple of inches of slush. Still I expect I will recover.

The school tried to do what it could to avert these contagious and infectious diseases. It was a standing order that 'Boys must report themselves to their Housemasters immediately on their arrival, bringing certificates that they have not been exposed to infection.' I don't remember ever getting such certificates - presumably fairly worthless since a harassed parent would either not know, or be less than keen to divulge, such information.

What the school could have done something to prevent, but this would have undermined one of its main operations, was the high level of accidents. Again there are fairly frequent mentions of various injuries, usually in competitive sports, in the letters of the Bruce Lockhart brothers. Here, however, I shall just give an insight into the sort of accidents I suffered, all of them related to the dangers of rugby football.

Perhaps I should preface this by saying that ever since my first year at the Dragon I had been noted as an intrepid and fierce rugby tackler. When I was a little boy at the Dragon this seems not to have led to anything more than serious bruises. But the boys were bigger and faster, and particularly in my last two years, the injuries became proportionately more serious.

My first injury, of which I made light, occurred within a couple of weeks of arriving at Sedbergh, and is described in a letter home on 10 October.

I am sorry I have not written but on Wednesday when I was playing rugger I was hit on the head by somebody's knee just a usual knock but our matron happened to be watching and she hauled me and another boy who had been kicked in the stomach and set us up to the hospital where I was inspected and I thought I would be sent back but no I was kept in bed until after lunch next day and then I was sent back and I did not do prep and I had an early bed.

I note being bit in the eye by a ping pong ball but not much else until the autumn term of 1958, as I approached my seventeenth birthday. Then I suffered two more serious accidents. My description of these is quite revealing about the attitude we were meant to adopt to such accidents. I wrote first on 28 September.

I have perhaps (I don't know yet) recked my chances for the 3rd XV rugger and for being able to play rugger for a while. In my second game of rugger this term (a 'house' game) after about a quarter of an hour my thumb started swelling up and hurting (I suppose I must have hit it while tackling, or something like that) and so at half time I went off to see the doctor. He wiggled it about (which didn't hurt it much) and then put it in elastoplast. He seemed to think it was either only bruised or the bone was cracked (that was on Thursday), if it is still painful tomorrow (which I think it will be, I think I will have to have an X-ray at Lancaster; still I hope I don't have to go off rugger for about a month! The trouble is, it affects lots of things i.e. my writing (it is my right thumb), my guitar lessons, and also my drum playing (because I have volunteered to be a side-drum player in the band), actually I will probably end up by playing the cymbals.

I was clearly injured sufficiently to be sent to Lancaster, and wrote in an undated letter in October.

Please excuse my queer writing but my right arm is in plaster. I went in to Lancaster on Tuesday in a taxi. There were four boys of about my age so we had quite a good time - apart from the hospital! It was the usual story of waiting around - before you X-rayed or seen by the doctor. (At one point I was dragged into a room and a beefy looking woman endeavoured to cut off my elastoplast with an enormous pair of scissors, and it didn't help matters when she said "Yell out if I dig you.") Anyhow they didn't seem very sure what was wrong with me, so Dr Hitch put most of my forearm and thumb in plaster (he is famed throughout the school for having one cure for every trouble "Put him in plaster"). Anyhow it looks as if I have had it as far as rugger goes for a month at lest. And now Mr Boggis has asked me to chase the forwards of the bottom game of rugger about, and tell them what to do, because they are so hopeless. Anyhow after we have come out of the hospital we looked round and round Lancaster for a place to have lunch. As usually happens on these occasions all the cafe's seemed to have disappeared or turned into oriental type places with palms fluttering around and

looking most expensive. In the end in desperation we all bought 1/9's worth of fish and chips and ate them in the central square!

The injury was added to by further bruising, as I described in a letter of 23 Nov:

I am a bit worried at the moment as I am afraid I might be off house-matches. The first round is in about 10 days time and I am now in a fairly sorry state. About two days ago I could hardly move of my arms! I bruised my right shoulder quite badly in a game of rugger, so I thought, as I would probably be off rugger any way, I might as well have the first of my two injections (Cholera and T.B. I think). [In preparation for a visit to India to see my parents.] I had it in my left arm and by the evening it had stiffened right up. In the morning I could hardly move either of them, it was rather funny! But the effects are now wearing off, and are nearly gone. But my bruised shoulder is still hurting. I seem to be having a nice time this term!

The other vulnerable area was my nose. I comment a couple of times about the danger to my nose in boxing and that it was bruised, but the serious injury, which I recall well though letters describing the event are missing. The house magazine for Winter 1958 mentions that 'Macfarlane concussed himself, breaking his nose in the process ...' I remember that I had to go to Carlisle to have it checked. I remember the doctor holding a pen against my nose and saying it was straight enough not to warrant an operation – and it has remained bent ever since.

Of course the very active physical life we led posed many dangers – running down scree, potholing and caving, fishing in swollen rivers, there were legion and 'health and safety' would no doubt now have prohibited much of what we did then. One thing they would certainly have prohibited were some of the exercises which took place in relation to the CCF. There were numerous dangers in playing around with even ancient guns, but the one tragic accident which comes across in the materials for this period was of a different kind and is perhaps including here.

I arrived at Sedbergh in September 1955 and among my cohort was a Geoffrey Bromley, who became one of my two closest friends at Sedbergh. I heard at some point, either from him or another, that his older brother had been drowned at the school. Until very recently I believed that this was a couple of years before I went, for I do not remember people, including Geoffrey, talking of it as a recent event. I am therefore somewhat shocked to discover that it occurred just a term before we arrived. I am further shocked at the way in which it happened, which I did not know, and the picture of young boys wading around in a flooded river trying to find a dead body is not one that is easy to reconcile with modern ideas of school behaviour. Here is the account contained in a very matter of fact way by Jamie Bruce Lockhart, writing home at the end of his first year at the school.

Jamie wrote to his parents on 13 June 1955:

Tues was CCF inspection day (we had a rather jolly looking Brigadier who took the inspection in for lunch) and the assault course was being demonstrated (lots of ropes over the river) and it had been raining hard lately and the river was in very high spate – about 6 ft. Before they started demonstrating Mageen said to Bromley 'I Pity the poor chap who goes over today' the latter replied, 'Yeah, first stop Lancaster'. – there is more

than this... As the river was up the low wires were nearly in the water so when you hanged you were half in.

Bromley, crossing, got into difficulties and Fell (S[chool] H[ouse]) rushed out to him and told Bromley to grip him. He did so but lost his grip before Fell could start going back and slipped in. The poor fellow could only just swim and managed to keep his head up for about 75 yards but then yelled for he had hit something and went under. The corps rushed off down to chase him and tried to set a net by Birks Mill but the plank bridge had been broken.

I was at the house during all this playing yard cricket when a chappie turned up and told us to come to the river and hunt for the corpse. We did so up and down the bank along about a mile of water for 2 hours but in the rain and getting very cold wading about in the shallows and prodding. In prep the studies went out to hunt but soon came back because now they had found him, about another ½ mile further down. We had a small memorial service with his favourite hymns later.

In the inquest Fell was commended for his action.

The events and the outcomes are described in a film interview I did some fifty-five years later with my English master David Alban, which will one day be available for viewing. He first told me what happened. He describes the flooded Rawthey, the actions of Bertie Mills the teacher who was in charge, and the fact that the body was found a long way down the Lune. He also describes that the way in which the new Headmaster Thornley, who had to face this awful event in his third term, dealt with it impressed the teachers, some of whom had hitherto been very critical of his appointment. He did not blame anyone and protected Bertie Mills, whom I came to know as an excellent teacher and who went on to be a Headmaster. David Alban remembers that no-one talked about the matter to Mills, and comments that of course, now, there would be a huge inquiry, probably a sacking and so on. Much must have depended on the attitude of the Bromley family, whose bravery in sending another son to the school the term after this death is impressive.

Perseverance

One of the main lessons which both the Dragon and Sedbergh in their different ways were meant to teach us was perseverance, endurance, and obstinate persistence. Obviously this would be useful to learn young. In later life it could be the force behind endeavour in many different contexts, Whether exploring, fighting, administering, writing or any other difficult and strenuous physical or mental activity, the ability to go on when the body or mind were exhausted or bored or uninspired, could make the difference between success and failure.

Part of this was to do with self-confidence and the experience of overcoming obstacles. Yet much of it was a western equivalent of many accounts of mental and bodily self-control and toughening up one finds in many parts of the world, the training of a Zen priest, a samurai warrior, a Jesuit priest.

Such toughening up is explicitly a goal in the mottoes of the two schools. We were to be trained to struggle and overcome. At the Dragon 'Arduus ad Solem' precisely meant to strive, struggle, work hard to attain the impossibly distant target. So the purpose in lessons, on the sports field and in our own games was to begin to toughen up our minds, bodies and spirits so that we could take on difficult tasks, overcome obstacles, finish jobs, not give up. By the time I left the Dragon much of this mind-set was implanted and I took to it particularly keenly I think because it is clear from accounts of my character even before the Dragon that I was determined, keen to win, a striver and ambitious. The Dragon tempered this by showing me where effort could successfully be applied and where it was futile to waste energy. It also taught me to lose more graciously and to be happy in the success of others. Yet in rugby and many other activities I really persevered.

Sedbergh was even more explicitly about perseverance. Set in the windy Yorkshire fells it set a great store by stamina and perseverance. The motto - 'A Hard Nurse of Men' - was self-consciously Spartan and toughening up. (SEE the piece in Carritt about the Odyssey and this quote.) Most explicitly in the Wilson Run or Ten Mile all the themes of going on by sheer will power against the odds were celebrated in the training, the race and the song attached to it sung by the runners. It will be worth quoting for it is an open exhortation similar to Kipling's *If*. It was the Spencer Chapman spirit which would lead boys to do redoubtable things in jungle warfare or in the Boardrooms of the world.

The ability to train, play and work hard and systematically over long periods is something I learnt in these two places and it provided the bedrock for my later life. I learnt that the race goes not to the sprinter but to the long-distance runner who paces him or herself. I learnt that one should 'keep one's wind' and some reserve of power. I learnt that there were often ways round small setbacks, that if one really wanted something and tried hard enough it could usually be attained.

Much of my life has been an effort, strenuous, running up mental mountains and swimming across turbulent intellectual seas. My reasonable degree at Oxford, a borderline upper second/first, which was resolved into an upper second by a viva, came out of dedicated hard work. The fact that I did a second set of degrees, a D.Phil., then another M.Phil for two years and another Ph.D. was not easy. Yet this was a necessary

part of my long game. All four degrees were tough in their own ways, especially the fieldwork in Nepal.

Coming to Cambridge and taking on a good deal of teaching and administration was also not easy and all the time I was also writing. That I managed to publish some 17 books over the next 34 years as a Lecturer, Reader and Professor was only possible because of systematic effort. Writing books requires a large mental effort, conceiving the ideas, researching the sources, expressing the conclusions, and cleaning the text. It is not surprising that most historians and anthropologists only produce one or two monographs.

Very often I have found that as I start on a new writing venture the task seems hopeless. As Sherlock Holmes describes it, the trail goes cold, the clues are few, I seem to be getting nowhere. Only perseverance, a trust that I will find my way through the mental jungle keeps me going. A number of my books were like this, *The Savage Wars of Peace* being the extreme example, but several others, including *Japan Through the Looking Glass*, which I wrote and re-wrote over nearly fifteen years and seemed always to elude my grasp until the end, is another. Even, at the start, to write two long Ph.D. theses was a struggle. Yet the attitude I had imbibed at the Dragon and Sedbergh helped me go on. That this was necessary, I am sure. The fact that other Old Sedberghians, even when they were academics like the political scientist W.B.Gallie, produced relatively little, shows that it is not sufficient.

The research developments and development of computer database systems and multi-media projects was even more dependent on this early training in perseverance. The huge investment of time and energy, the many years of largely unrewarded time and energy Sarah and I put into the Earls Colne Project, then into the Nagas, then into the Gurungs, and into other Websites and Youtube, as well as assembling 60,000 quotations, all this alongside the development of MUSCAT, was extremely daunting. Much of this had never been done before. The technology was still very primitive. The outcome was unpredictable. To go on required a mixture of obstinacy and self-belief and a feeling that we should attempt something really difficult and hitherto untried.

No one else has, to my knowledge, ever done anything like this and it is easy to see why. There are few intellectual credits for such an effort. It requires a huge amount of time and energy. It needs intellectual trespassing and hence the danger of being attacked by boundary maintainers. In other words it is risky, low status and quirky. Yet Sarah and I did four or five of these projects and are now embarking on the biggest of them all - 'Imagined Empires'.

For the perseverance I was early taught has now brought me to the equivalent in the Ten Mile of the long run home from Danny Bridge. The really difficult climbs up and down a boggy fell have been done and I am now on the long road home. I just have to keep up the momentum, keep up the pace, and summon the last shreds of energy for the culmination.

I could just sit back and lead a leisured and pleasant life in retirement. Instead Sarah and I are embarking on our largest ever project - the story of my family and my own life. This requires working hard each day - setting aside some hours to concentrate on often quite tedious work (especially in Sarah's case). The effort of remembering, writing, checking, putting in records into a database, all are difficult. Why bother?

Again there are no immediate rewards in status or any financial profits. Yet I go on with some idea of a distant land to which I am heading, like Tennyson's Ulysses, always exploring, discovering new things, trying to solve my lifetime's puzzles. The secret is that aiming for the stars I am working not for my own time or colleagues, but for an age not yet born, for a thousand years from now.

Only then will the work and documentation, the oral history of academic life through the two hundred interviews, or the work to preserve Christoph's legacy, or many other things really come into their own - as with the work with Mark or WOLP, the work on Gurung texts and so much else. Perseverance is the key and, of course, it is far more possible when the journey is undertaken with a companion. So the work goes on and I stick to it as I learnt I should as a little boy of nine. Try one's best; never give up until the final whistle has blown, as a Dragon song puts it. It is all part of a single story.

The perseverance and persistence which impressed my parents in Dorset and my teachers at the Dragon, and was such a feature of Sedbergh, became ingrained. It was turned from the more physical expression in games and sports, rigger and football or fishing, into mental channels. The last two years of Sedbergh saw this transformation at its height. Having just written the account of Oxford I can see the process even more clearly.

I had not realized until I re-analysed my life at Oxford how systematically and hard I worked. I paced myself very carefully, as on a long-distance run. At the height I was working 8-10 hours a day very intensively. But at the end I slackened off to be rested for exams. It was all like a long-distance run or childhood cross-country walk in Dorset.

Later I shall examine the same pattern through my post Oxford days, in later projects mentioned above. It was the product of a very focused, reach for the stars, inner-directed educational system. It is very different, but also with some overlap, with the training of a Mandarin.

PLAY

Play and Interests

One thing that strikes me, as it did with other apparently basic things like clothes and food, is the way in which the school skilfully took something which appears at first to be just physical and material, kicking a ball, running, walking, and shaped and used it quite self-consciously as a form of “education” in the widest sense. In other words, the body was a site on which teaching occurred, not just about physical endurance, bodily self-control and discipline, but social and even ‘spiritual’ education.

Bodily practices were also used very explicitly to foster community at different levels, a set of nested and hierarchical identities and allegiances. One of the main symbolic markers of a community is the feeling of ‘us’ versus ‘them’, and these can be found throughout my diaries and other materials in the frequent accounts of inter-school, inter-house and even intra-house competitions. Of course these identities and identifications were reinforced by symbols of flags, colours, musical competitions and in many other ways, but games and sports were the most important symbolic markers. So bodily practices acted at various levels, at that of the individual psychology of the growing boy, the house and the school.

All this was particularly marked since between the age of thirteen and eighteen I was going through the last major spurt of physical growth, the filling out of the body, and the breaking of my voice and the sexual changes at puberty.

Organized sport and games

Another obsession which blossoms during my school years and then faded into something different later in almost exact parallel with fishing was organized sport and games. Much of my life from the time I moved to ‘By the Way’ and came under the sporting enthusiasm of my uncle Robert, revolved around various games, particularly football, but also cricket, rugby and hockey, and to a lesser extent, later, fives, running, boxing and other minor activities.

I have already explained a little of what this meant at the Dragon. There I put into practice what I had learnt at home with Robert and by all account by the age of 13 I had reached the peak of my ability, being in all the top teams where I won my colours. From the photographs, I was small but not dwarfed by the other boys. And, as the reports show, I was very determined to do my best. The story of overcoming natural disadvantages is told there, and it is clear that I continued to try to overcome my small size and weight in the years at Sedbergh. For example, in the school report for Lent 1957 when I was 15, the housemaster noted ‘On the football field he showed quite outstanding courage and determination.’ And I clearly enjoyed sports and games very much.

At Sedbergh, as my letters and diaries will amply show, games continued as an obsession. I did not enjoy running much, though I remember trying to do well at it, including a scientific (and non-successful) attempt to use a non-banned drug, sugar sweets (glucose tablets) at intervals on my running to give me extra energy, learning how

to breathe, pacing myself etc. – but to no avail. But I ran and ran, as we had to do almost every afternoon during the winter terms, and occasionally on a fine day moving over the beautiful fells or coasting down a long hill felt the joy of the long-distance runner. On the whole, however, running was not a favourite.

Nor did I really enjoy boxing which I dabbled in for a year or two. My mother was critical of my involvement in such an aggressive sport and after I crushingly defeated a smaller boy and (according to his friends) punished him excessively, I think I felt disgusted with the sport and gave it up. The drained feeling as the punches landed on one was miserable and there seemed not much to say for it. I tried to learn some judo on my own, but that also never got far.

I quite enjoyed fives and a little squash in my mid-teens, but was never really much good at it and after being soundly thrashed by much better players did not proceed with this.

What I really loved was football. We had a game called ‘yard football’, which was played in a tarmac, walled, area in front of Lupton House. There were small teams and skill rather than strength was the determinant of success. My many games with Robert as a child meant that I was really good at this, and also good at picking teams of my friends and encouraging them to play well. So we often beat much larger and apparently stronger teams and I revelled in the game – until a ball hit my foot as I was about to put it down and my ankle was bent over. With a huge swelling I was delighted to miss the ten mile race in my last year, but I was also not able to play football.

At first I looked as if I might be a good rugby player, like my father. I was plucky and my housemaster was very encouraging so that by 15 I was fly-half on the colts team, which would normally lead on to the first fifteen. But even then I was aware that I was too small and light really to justify my position and I never proceeded further than the second fifteen. There were some very able players – in one letter I noted that the Captain of both England and Scottish schoolboys were from the school and the legendary Will Carling was an Old Sedberghian. I was really outclassed and the physical pain of playing on cold muddy fields, the brutal tackles, the punishing training, all meant that I did not really relish rugby.

Cricket was easier, but again some early promise never led me onwards and I ended up in the second eleven. My chief memory of this was the humiliation and disappointment when my parents came over to a Speech Day when I was about fifteen to watch me play and I was out for a duck. No doubt I had prayed to God for a good innings and such an outcome may have shaken my faith in his supportive love. Cricket was also an interruption to my beloved fishing, for both took place on lovely summer afternoons.

The regime was dominated by sport and games. An extract from one of my diaries for the Lent term will show both how such things were at the centre of my attention and took so much energy and time. As I grew at my greatest rate, and hurtled around the fells and playing fields, part of the energy that might have gone into work was possibly drained away. The connection was made in a report in Winter 1958 when I think (the letters refer to this and need to be inserted) I had broken my arm or had some other injury. The housemaster wrote ‘He has obviously turned the energy he would have

liked to work off on the Rugger Field to good account in school; he has also done some very good work helping to coach beginners at Rugger.' The 'working off of energy' concept is an interesting one. There must, in the minds of the teachers, have been a tension - some energy must be released, but if too much was, then it could interfere with academic pursuits.

I have written in a Letter to Lily about what I think games are about from an anthropological point of view and what lessons they teach. And it would be interesting to see whether there is anything in the letter behind the letter, explaining why I wrote that letter, anything more on the subject. Basically, it is obvious that games at a boarding school were about far more than just dampening (sexual and other) energies, or channelling them. It was clearly believed, as it was at the places the schools were aiming at - Oxbridge - that games were 'character forming'. That is to say they taught things like team playing, ability to lose without being destroyed, the art of playing just within the rules, ingenuity and tactical skills, co-ordination of the body and mind, and many other useful 'life skills'. Not only did they give a fit body as a receptacle for a fit mind, but they taught one how to behave with others, how to captain, how to organize, how to conquer when there was little hope, and so on. They were absolutely central to the whole public school spirit. They became, as B.A.C. notes, as powerful as religion, indeed many have seen them as the religion of the boarding schools.

They were also, of course, the chief determinant of status in a school, and even to a certain extent with one's family. The fact that my uncles had been at Sedbergh and had been excellent runners and legendary rugby players was a factor in my favour, as was my father's excellence in sport. My own abilities were not great, but good enough to make me an asset to my house and to protect me from being looked down on in the way which a few less skilled boys were. The school magazines, the photographs, the reporting of my skills by my grandfather in his diary or in my letters, all show the absolutely central part of games in moulding me.

So why do I not watch rugby or football on television and why have I not played any organized games after my three years as an undergraduate at Oxford? I think it is a combination of a reaction to a surfeit of games - I became tired and perhaps disappointed that I was not better. And I began to feel that energy, as the first law of thermodynamics reminds us, is finite. If we hurtle around the mountains or exhaust ourself in rugby, there is less energy for other things which I began to find more appealing, including physical things like walking, sailing, gardening. So I did not stop enjoying the use of my body, but I rejoiced in the liberty which I gained when I was no longer forced to strain my body on icy mountain tracks or cold rugby fields. One of the greatest delights that Sedbergh gave me was that after banging my head against that physical wall, I no longer had to do such things. I still enjoy playing informally with my children, and love my mock games and battles with them. But, as with fishing, I transformed the lessons and passions elsewhere.

Again it would be possible to see the formal structural similarities between physical games and the kind of games that academics play. The skills I learnt on the playing fields were not used to any good purpose to help run an empire - those days were over. I did not need to play polo or to pig-stick or to lead my team under a hot Asian sun as my grand-father did as he played for the 89th Punjabi football team. But I did need to captain my Department, to play political games which involved not dissimilar strategies

as Freddie Bailey has shown in ‘Stratagems and Spoils’. And in the greatest game of all, that which has been the central pre-occupation of my life, to prize out the secrets of man and society as an historian and anthropologist, no doubt some of the lessons I learnt from ten years of frantic games playing at the Dragon and Sedbergh were of some value.

My retreat from games was rapid. At Oxford there was also a games mania and I could have engaged in some of the numerous sports and games which would have put me on the track to some honour. The fact that I was not particularly good at any sport at this time precluded the hunt for a blue or half blue. But I had already decided that there were things I enjoyed more than games. So, under some persuasion from Paul Hyams who told me that some fresh air and change would actually improve my history, I did play for the Worcester College football team (for several seasons). A nasty gouge down one of my legs caused by a player whose boots were faulty reminded me why I was less than keen on too much sport. But I enjoyed those games, as I did the games with cousins and friends on family occasions. Now it is all over, and I only pause for a minute or two to watch the cricket or football on the Lode Passage as I walk past with a letter to the post-office. It all seems a distant passion, like a first love affair whose embers have grown cold and as one looks at the photographs of the face that ravished one, or the team photographs in which one sat or stood so proudly, it is all very puzzling.

Football crazy

Sedbergh was a turning point in my life in relation to competitive games. From a very early age, perhaps four or five onwards, and largely under the influence of my father and my uncles, especially Robert, I had been fairly games crazy. I had been desperate to win, but gradually learnt the value of team spirit and losing. I had thought by the end of the Dragon, where I was on all the top teams despite my small size, that it was indeed true that ‘anybody can do anything’ if they really applied their mind to it. I thought I had learnt that through determined application and will power I could turn myself into a first-rate footballer, rugby player, hockey and cricket player – and at the Dragon it had worked, although it did not work much with athletics or swimming.

Something changed during my time at Sedbergh. It was partly external. The school was more games mad than the Dragon and the standards were probably higher and the stakes bigger. I continued to be relatively small and stopped growing at about 16, so never really became big enough to compete at the top levels. So I peaked at the Colts and Panters stage – ie. in the under-16 teams, both of which I was on for the school. But I never reached the first XV, though I have just discovered in the Worcester archives a note by Marriott to say that I might have reached this in my last year if I had not been off sick so much in my penultimate year – I only reached the 2nd XV.

I was never much of a runner, swimmer or shooter, but to my surprise I have learnt that I was not a bad boxer until about 16 or 17. After about 1958, however, I began to flag and lose some interest. It became clear to me that I would not make the top teams however hard I tried. I did try with running, a cunning plan was to eat glucose sweets at intervals on the Ten Mile, but this got me no further and I just felt sick.

The one game I continued really to enjoy and be pretty good at was the game I had played with Robert, namely football. It was the only game I went on playing at University, for the College side. I also loved ice hockey, but this could only be played intermittently.

Alongside a realization that I would not excel was a certain disenchantment. It is clear that, as I told my mother, I had never really enjoyed rugger – even if I had thrown myself into it. I never really enjoyed running very much, though there were times on those magnificent fells as one lengthened one's stride down a hill on the spring turf when I felt the joy of running quite strongly.

I did not really enjoy boxing, or other athletics. I tried to learn judo but got nowhere. I tried shooting, but found the noise uncomfortable. I played fives, but without much success.

What I realized, I think, in the winter term 1958 when I was concussed, broke my nose and also my thumb while playing rugger, was perhaps the turning point. I realized that I enjoyed other things much more – singing, fishing, skating walking, even reading. I began to realize that while at the Dragon I was most notable as a very small but plucky and nimble games player, while academically mediocre, at Sedbergh, I was a smallish and rather mediocre games player, but the same effort and application applied to academic work gained me the praise and satisfaction which sport had done before – as Marriott noted. I switched my efforts from physical to mental games. This was a great relief, for though I continued to play at Sedbergh, I preferred to leave cricket for fishing and was glad that a foot injury meant that I missed the Ten Mile in my last term.

The shift from games becomes fully apparent at Oxford. There many of the more brilliant Sedbergh games players went on to win their blues or played as internationals. I almost completely dropped games and it was only the pressure from my friend Paul Hyams which persuaded me, somewhat reluctantly, to play for Worcester College football team. But my heart was not in it and I did not play squash, fives, tennis or all the other games of middle age – even golf. Nor was I particularly interested to watch games. Fishing and walking and exploring took the place of games, alongside conversation and work.

In a sense I had learnt all the lessons which competitive team games can teach us. Fierce and intensive games playing from six to sixteen, some ten years, was certainly enough to teach me all the lessons about team spirit, never giving up. Conceding defeat, stratagems and spoils, that I would require in life. Games were a very important phase, but they were something I could ease myself out of with the same sort of relief which I now feel in retirement. I enjoyed the teaching and even some of the administration. Yet now it is fading away I feel an immense sense of relief that I no longer need to worry, train, perform or exert myself in that way.

Both in a full-time job, as in games and school life generally, there were many satisfactions and pleasure. Yet there was always a strain, a dread of Monday morning, a gritting of the teeth, an overcoming of obstacles through will power. And in both cases, when they no longer matters so much I felt a great sense of relief and release of energy. I could do something else – not cease striving, but do things which were increasingly giving me pleasure instead. Games gave way to my academic life and the pursuit of love

and understanding. The institutional life of teaching and administration are giving way to the calmer, less stressful, pleasures of memory, writing, the garden, friendships as evidenced by this writing.

Organized sport and games

Another obsession which blossoms during my school years and then faded into something different later in almost exact parallel with fishing was organized sport and games. Much of my life from the time I moved to 'By the Way' and came under the sporting enthusiasm of my uncle Robert, revolved around various games, particularly football, but also cricket, rugby and hockey, and to a lesser extent, later, fives, running, boxing and other minor activities.

I have already explained a little of what this meant at the Dragon. There I put into practice what I had learnt at home with Robert and by all account by the age of 13 I had reached the peak of my ability, being in all the top teams where I won my colours. From the photographs, I was small but not dwarfed by the other boys. And, as the reports show, I was very determined to do my best. The story of overcoming natural disadvantages is told there, and it is clear that I continued to try to overcome my small size and weight in the years at Sedbergh. For example, in the school report for Lent 1957 when I was 15, the housemaster noted 'On the football field he showed quite outstanding courage and determination.' And I clearly enjoyed sports and games very much.

At Sedbergh, as my letters and diaries will amply show, games continued as an obsession. I did not enjoy running much, though I remember trying to do well at it, including a scientific (and non-successful) attempt to use a non-banned drug, sugar sweets (glucose tablets) at intervals on my running to give me extra energy, learning how to breathe, pacing myself etc. - but to no avail. But I ran and ran, as we had to do almost every afternoon during the winter terms, and occasionally on a fine day moving over the beautiful fells or coasting down a long hill felt the joy of the long-distance runner. On the whole, however, running was not a favourite.

Nor did I really enjoy boxing which I dabbled in for a year or two. My mother was critical of my involvement in such an aggressive sport and after I crushingly defeated a smaller boy and (according to his friends) punished him excessively, I think I felt disgusted with the sport and gave it up. The drained feeling as the punches landed on one was miserable and there seemed not much to say for it. I tried to learn some judo on my own, but that also never got far.

I quite enjoyed fives and a little squash in my mid-teens, but was never really much good at it and after being soundly thrashed by much better players did not proceed with this.

What I really loved was football. We had a game called 'yard football', which was played in a tarmac, walled, area in front of Lupton House. There were small teams and skill rather than strength was the determinant of success. My many games with Robert as a child meant that I was really good at this, and also good at picking teams of my friends and encouraging them to play well. So we often beat much larger and apparently

stronger teams and I revelled in the game – until a ball hit my foot as I was about to put it down and my ankle was bent over. With a huge swelling I was delighted to miss the ten mile race in my last year, but I was also not able to play football.

At first I looked as if I might be a good rugby player, like my father. I was plucky and my housemaster was very encouraging so that by 15 I was fly-half on the colts team, which would normally lead on to the first fifteen. But even then I was aware that I was too small and light really to justify my position and I never proceeded further than the second fifteen. There were some very able players – in one letter I noted that the Captain of both England and Scottish schoolboys were from the school and the legendary Will Carling was an Old Sedberghian. I was really outclassed and the physical pain of playing on cold muddy fields, the brutal tackles, the punishing training, all meant that I did not really relish rugby.

Cricket was easier, but again some early promise never led me onwards and I ended up in the second eleven. My chief memory of this was the humiliation and disappointment when my parents came over to a Speech Day when I was about fifteen to watch me play and I was out for a duck. No doubt I had prayed to God for a good innings and such an outcome may have shaken my faith in his supportive love. Cricket was also an interruption to my beloved fishing, for both took place on lovely summer afternoons.

The regime was dominated by sport and games. An extract from one of my diaries for the Lent term will show both how such things were at the centre of my attention and took so much energy and time. As I grew at my greatest rate, and hurtled around the fells and playing fields, part of the energy that might have gone into work was possibly drained away. The connection was made in a report in Winter 1958 when I think (the letters refer to this and need to be inserted) I had broken my arm or had some other injury. The housemaster wrote ‘He has obviously turned the energy he would have liked to work off on the Rugger Field to good account in school; he has also done some very good work helping to coach beginners at Rugger.’ The ‘working off of energy’ concept is an interesting one. There must, in the minds of the teachers, have been a tension – some energy must be released, but if too much was, then it could interfere with academic pursuits.

I have written in a Letter to Lily about what I think games are about from an anthropological point of view and what lessons they teach. And it would be interesting to see whether there is anything in the letter behind the letter, explaining why I wrote that letter, anything more on the subject. Basically, it is obvious that games at a boarding school were about far more than just dampening (sexual and other) energies, or channelling them. It was clearly believed, as it was at the places the schools were aiming at – Oxbridge – that games were ‘character forming’. That is to say they taught things like team playing, ability to lose without being destroyed, the art of playing just within the rules, ingenuity and tactical skills, co-ordination of the body and mind, and many other useful ‘life skills’. Not only did they give a fit body as a receptacle for a fit mind, but they taught one how to behave with others, how to captain, how to organize, how to conquer when there was little hope, and so on. They were absolutely central to the whole public school spirit. They became, as B.A.C. notes, as powerful as religion, indeed many have seen them as the religion of the boarding schools.

They were also, of course, the chief determinant of status in a school, and even to a certain extent with one's family. The fact that my uncles had been at Sedbergh and had been excellent runners and legendary rugby players was a factor in my favour, as was my father's excellence in sport. My own abilities were not great, but good enough to make me an asset to my house and to protect me from being looked down on in the way which a few less skilled boys were. The school magazines, the photographs, the reporting of my skills by my grandfather in his diary or in my letters, all show the absolutely central part of games in moulding me.

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My retreat from games was rapid. At Oxford there was also a games mania and I could have engaged in some of the numerous sports and games which would have put me on the track to some honour. The fact that I was not particularly good at any sport at this time precluded the hunt for a blue or half blue. But I had already decided that there were things I enjoyed more than games. So, under some persuasion from Paul Hyams who told me that some fresh air and change would actually improve my history, I did play for the Worcester College football team (for several seasons). A nasty gouge down one of my legs caused by a player whose boots were faulty reminded me why I was less than keen on too much sport. But I enjoyed those games, as I did the games with cousins and friends on family occasions. Now it is all over, and I only pause for a minute or two to watch the cricket or football on the Lode Passage as I walk past with a letter to the post-office. It all seems a distant passion, like a first love affair whose embers have grown cold and as one looks at the photographs of the face that ravished one, or the team photographs in which one sat or stood so proudly, it is all very puzzling.

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Sedbergh is a particularly good place to study all this, and the 1950's perhaps almost the last era, in which to make a detailed study of the last phase of the central tradition of muscular education which Arnold of Rugby and others had set up in the middle of the nineteenth century. The era when of sports and games became almost the defining 'religion' of boarding schools lasted for about a century after the 1860's. Sedbergh was an extreme example of this as a result of the combination of the reforms of Henry Hart, a young disciple of Arnold, and the rugged countryside and tough weather which made the shaping of the body so much more rigorous. Even the school motto, a hard nurse of men, consciously harking back to Spartan education, stressed this aspect. The spirit in the famous poem on 'There was a hush on the close...' was writ large in the school and the traces of a gruelling physical pressure on the body in preparation for the arduous life of empire and command was very much in evidence.

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How can we approach such a large and important subject? With Dragon Days we organized the topic under the three seasons - winter, spring, summer. In the case of Sedbergh a binary distinction is more satisfactory, with winter covering the first two terms, and summer from May onwards. Within these two categories, we can then divide it further into three kinds of bodily activity which reflect the number of 'players' involved and how they organize their 'play'.

The most obvious, and famously English, are team games, involving up to fifteen individuals. Then there are the oppositional or paired games, where one player (or sometimes a pair) play against another individual. Finally there is the individual physical activity. There may be a marginal team element, as in competitive running, or ice hockey, or mountain climbing, but on the whole these are individualistic pursuits. Each of these three major activities have their own dynamic and effects.

A table of the major ones is as follows:

	<u>Team</u>	<u>Paired</u>	<u>Individual</u>
<u>Winter</u>	Rugger Football	Fives Squash Boxing 'Ragging'	Running Walking Skating Sledging
<u>Summer</u>	Cricket Athletics (relays)	Shooting Tennis	Swimming Athletics Fishing Caving, stalking

Of course life is never as tidy as all this. For example the considerable effort in our last three years in relation to the Combined Cadet Force (C.C.F.) could be included here. A good deal of it was about disciplining the body through marching, drill, holding weapons, shooting etc. But for the present I shall put it under 'Character' as it was really

most important as a form of psychological induction into taking and giving orders and so on.

Another area I shall need to include is the symbolic side – the scarves, squares and special school colours, the notice boards on the wall celebrating past heroes, the honours, the celebrations such as the Ten Mile concert.

Also to consider is the generation of friendship, especially being members of a team and enjoying riotous company on away games.

I shall be dealing with sickness at this period and this includes the many accidents which our various activities caused us; the pain of breaking and recovering from numerous accidents was part of the package.

There is the whole angle of sexual sublimation; it is clear that Henry Hart and his successors believed that the difficulties of sexual frustration in an all-male boarding school during the years of puberty would be mitigated, if not eliminated, if our physical energies were stretched by games and sports which would leave us too tired to have much energy left over for sexual activities of an illicit kind.

There is also the dimension of captaining and taking command, important in team games, and of being a good loser in the paired games.

The importance of games is reflected in our letters home, for it gave something to talk about, more important than the weather or anything else.

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The section on the body should also contain other aspects of bodily development. These include:

Control of the excreta – spitting, blowing nose, peeing, defecating, toilets etc

Control of sexuality – masturbation, erotica, puberty etc.

Control of pain/illness – suffering etc.

Changing physique – weight/height etc.

Basically it is about a small, pre-pubertal, male being turned into a more or less mature adult – a crucial time of development, trying to avoid stunting and distortions, with some modified success in certain cases.

*

One obvious difficulty is that the artificial separation I have made between body, mind, spirit and character is indeed artificial and rather arbitrary. Each of them overlaps – there is plenty about the mind, spirit and character in the activities of the bodies. Yet one has to proceed in a linear fashion and the seamless shroud has to be torn in some way.

Another feature is that bodies and their inscription are important of the themes that have always interested me – individualism, British identity, even imperialism and capitalism. Our bodies and sport/games and more generally were used in the ritual, symbolic, class, status and political systems of the schools as tools for control, and also release. It is a rich and complex subject and I can only put in a few pointers here.

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One or two things have started to emerge. I had not realized that the year tended to slide a little from the communal (rugger) to the individualistic (swimming, fishing). But in fact all strands continued over the year.

Obviously the satisfactions and purposes of the three major areas of activity are very different. Team games have many obvious purposes, competitive games others (in preparation for law & politics and economic life), individual games and activities others. The blending of all three, and the shift over the year from communal to individual was a broad approach to using games and activities to shape us.

Another thing I have noticed is that the thing that is missing are the kinds of miniature games that we played at the Dragon. What happened to the enormously important games like conkers, marbles, bad eggs, hopscotch, kick the can etc? Why did they go (a parallel thing happened at home with the move from electric trains to fishing). Cards it appears were banned in school – though there was chess. Was there table football – table tennis was pretty important. All of this is a huge change from ‘crazes’ to ‘mucking about’, in other words to more individualistic activities, or things one could do with one or two chosen friends rather than a gang. Was the school against all forms of gambling and games of chance I wonder?

Skating was very important, but what about roller skating?

And why was there no hockey – an important game at the Dragon – although there was ice hockey when it was possible.

And why was rugger the game, and football contained to smaller teams within the house yards (except very occasionally). Was association football too close to the games played by the industrial working class youth of the northern cities, from whose life styles many Sedberghians were being elevated? (Was football played by any public schools I wonder? – Logie would know)

And what about golf – why was Jamie keen on this and I never played (it seemed to go with the social set in which Jamie moved). And then there was no horse riding, following of hounds, shooting animals or other blood sports as I remember it.

There is so much to say on all this, and yet a fixed upper limit of 100 pages in which to say it. So I shall have to be very disciplined in containing all this.

Yet it is a fascinating topic, given the English love of games and how different it all is to what we find in most or even all other civilizations. Probably half our attention and interest at school was focused on this bodily activity – which can be seen from the timetable. Every day there were spaces for physical activity and if we add in extra halves, half of Saturday and most of Sunday, that does add up to about half of our time.

Team and oppositional games

Team Games

Rugger

Of the three major team games which we played at Sedbergh, rugby football or 'rugger' as we called it, was by far the most important.

At first I looked as if I might be a good rugby player, like my father. I had been on the Dragon first XV and noted for my courage and persistence. My housemaster was very encouraging so that by 15 I was fly-half on the Colts team (the school under 16s), which would normally lead on to the first fifteen. But even then I was aware that I was too small and light really to justify my position and I never proceeded further than the second fifteen, though I might, according to my housemaster, have reached the first XV if I had not been off rugger for most of the winter term 1957 with various injuries. There were some very able players - in one letter I noted that the Captain of both England and Scottish schoolboys were from the school and the legendary Will Carling was an Old Sedberghian. I was really outclassed and the physical pain of playing on cold muddy fields, the brutal tackles, the punishing training, all meant that I did not really relish rugby.

Rugger, I suppose, was the ultimate game at Sedbergh for several reasons. Like football or hockey, it is a true team game, calling upon and teaching all the life skills of working closely with other people. Team-work is almost everything in rugger and the closeness of a rugger scrum and feeling of the effort put in by other people is very strong, and the well-executed try as the ball moves down the line of players to the wing is a real manifestation of collaboration. Some of this is true of football too - the team work aspect. But rugger adds the dimension of physical bravery, for it is an extremely tough and often painful game, tackling requires daring, courage and skill.

For whatever combination of reasons, the game that had been invented at Rugby school in the early nineteenth century spread and became the central feature of Sedbergh. To be a Rugby first fifteen player was the highest status in the school and half of the reporting in the school and house magazines was about this game. The success or failure of the school was reported in detail to my parents in my letter and my grandfather noted some of the outstanding games in his diary.

There are one or two external accounts of my playing. In the Luptonian for Spring 1957 it mentions that in the school team 'Our main strength lay in our backs, Goodwin and Macfarlane being outstanding.' Before I broke my nose, in the first round match, 'Macfarlane must be mentioned for his cool handling of the ball...'

*

My own accounts of the games show the inside world of rugger and how important it was to me.

In my first term, rucker started off in a dismal way. I wrote to my parents on 4 November 1955.

4 Nov 1955 On Wednesday it was pretty awfull weather poring down with rain in squalls and icy cold wind blowing through everything. In the afternoon there was the worst rucker game I have ever played in. To begin with they had a very good team. Secondly (and by far the worst) the weather was simply frightful after ten minutes I was soaked through and I couldn't feel my hands. All through the game they were aching like mad (when I could feel them) and every time I picked the ball up I did not know if I still had it if I looked up. At the end I couldn't move my hands and I would probably have perished of cold if I had stayed outside to take my boots off. So I followed the example of everyone else and took them off in the passage. And suddenly one of the prefects gave all 13 of us 2 maps each.

I still remember the game - the awful tilted pitch and the foul weather, so different from the Dragon.

Fortunately things improved and in the same letter I wrote: *On Thursday in the afternoon there was another game of rucker. This time a house game (all people in Lupton) it was jolly good fun as I was playing centre and our fly half was very good and so I got quite a lot of passes.*

In my second year I wrote at some length to my parents about the inter-house matches which were such an important feature of the game - defining house identities and loyalties, bounding and opposing us in the way which would continue for the rest of my life, but had not been present at the Dragon. On 10th December 1956 I wrote in detail to my parents as follows:

On Teusday there was the 1st round of the house matches in which we played Hart which is one of the best houses. And they beat us 6-0 in a very even game but we will do better next year as we will have the same if not a better three quarter line as we have now, and they will all be a year older: and as good a pack but all a year older. The other semifinalists were:

Powell v School (Powell 12-3)

Hart v Lupton (Hart 6-0)

Winder v Evans (Winder 6-0)

Sedgwick a bye

Sedgwick v Powell (Powell 6-3)

*Hart v Winder *Draw 3-3)*

and so it is between Powell and the winner between Hart and Evans for the final. On Thursday there was a 3rd Leagues game v Powell in which I was playing and they couldn't even scrape so we gave them two men but we absolutely beat them up and won 40-0 but it was quite good fun.

The following term I was moving onto the house Junior or second team. I wrote to my parents on 20 January 1957:

There has been quite a lot of competition to get on Juniors this term. This is the equivalent to the house 2nd XV. But we have got quite a young team as we have got 5 people who were under 15 last term. We have had quite a few practices but all the

same we were not expecting to win all of them as there were two good houses, Sedgwick and Winder going in for it. Well guess who we picked in the first round (it is American tournament rules) Sedgwick!! They have the second best Juniors team in the school. In the first 10 mins they scored a penalty goal, but a few minutes later one of our centres scored and we were winning 5-3. However their forwards were far better than ours and they heeled it nearly every time and though in the 2nd half we were unlucky not to score as we were holding them well they scored 2 more tries in each half and so won 17-5 which wasn't too bad. But today we are playing Winder (the best team in the school) who beat Sedgwick 16-0 so we probably will be mashed. I am playing fly-half and marking a boy who has got his house colours for ruggar.

By the start of my third year it looked as if I would be a reasonable ruggar player and it was during the third winter term that there is the fullest account of my feelings about the game. The team was coached by my housemaster, Mr. Marriott, and I suspect that he pushed my membership of the under 16 school 'Colts' team. Here, first, is my overview of that term's ruggar in a letter written as I returned home on 20 December 1957.

Our colts team at school had an enjoyable, if not wholly succesful season. We had good forwards and goodish backs and we were never except by a kick. I played fly-half which I enjoyed thoroughly. When I first came to Sedbergh I used to hate ruggar but now I enjoy it. I also played wing-forward (for the first time for two years) as a substitute on our House team. We had to play 3 times. The first time we drew by scoring two tries while the other house (Hart) managed to get two penalties. The second time we got two penalties and they got a try and a penalty. In the last replay they won by a penalty in the last half-minute literally.

During this term, when I was head of the Senior Day Room and on the cusp of moving up in status, I kept a set of notes headed 'House Affairs'. Here are the ruggar notes, which constitute well over half of all my notes on miscellaneous matters. [I shall prune this later.]

8. Ruggar [Sat 26 Oct]

Colts Won v Barnard Castle 13-3 (tries by Bruce, Anderson, Wood) the pitch slightly wet but a nice afternoon - watched by $\frac{3}{4}$ of school. I played mediumish but tried to go through too often (Because I took 7 steps). A goodish game our backs good in defence; not so good in attack. Our forwards good towards the end.

The Team

Colts v Barnard Castle - a list of 15 names and two added in pencil. With ticks against them, presumably showing which other matches they played in. Included Campbell. I.C. (Lupton) at wing and Macfarlane A.D. (Lupton) at fly half.

10. Colts ruggar [Sat Nove 2nd]

v St Bees. Left at 8.45 (with firsts) on the bus. Went via Ambleside & Keswick (where we stopped both ways to get something to eat & drink. Had lunch at St Bees. The game was on a small pitch and they had scored 6 pts before we had worken up. Then Steven scored a try for us. In second half we were on top but had the wind against us. A penalty each. 9 - 6 (One chap's leg got broken - on their side) Good fun on the bus back. The team was the same as last time except that Steven played instead of Cochrane

and Whitfield instead of Dickson. Macpherson played well. Stein and Anderson not so well. They had a v.g. fly half.

14. Nov 9th Colts XV v Rossall [Saturday]

Went off after first period. It is near Blackpool. Stopped at Lancaster on the way there and back. It is just by the sea (it had an open swimming bath just by the sea. We had lunch (n. v. g!) in the main hall where there are 520 boys – a very nice place with good rucker pitches.

In the game Campbell scored a good try in the first few minutes from a blindside pass from Bruce. I tried quite a bit of kicking but without much avail as they had a good full-back who could kick well. I broke through twice on[e] of which times I got within five yards of the line. Wood got half of his front two teeth knocked in. They scored a forward try in the last few minutes and the score was 5 – 3 a good game. Of course their captain was stand off. We went to watch their Juniors dancing afterwards. Merer & Goodman & Thompson went out to dance etc. Same team as last time except Berry was flag-wagger.

17. Nov 14th

House team (- Moore, Merer, Goodman, Vignoles, Harvey)

Evans House (- Ogg)

They won 9 – 6 in the last few seconds – not too bad a game. I was playing fly-half v Steven (2nd XV). I didn't have much clue!

Juniors v Evans

Peel, Campbell, Macfarlane, Beharrel. Haitwaite. They were minus one. They won 16 – 0. We played not v.g.

18. Nov 16th Colts v Ampleforth

They won 3 – 0. A penalty from our 25 in the first five mins. Apart from that they never got inside our 25. We were pressing nearly the whole time but just couldn't score. They had a good red-haired scrum-half and a v.g. full back.

23. Colts v Giggleswick [23/11]

Score We won by 54 – 0. Our forwards were by far the superior pack and played very well – although they inclined to pass forward. They only heeled it 4 times in the whole game – of which the fly-half only got it out to the centre once. And it never got to the wing. But they got into our '25' two or three times (which was more than Ampleforth). Wood scored about 3 tries. Anderson about two. Steven about 2. Bruce 3. And about 4 push-over tries. A penalty and quite a few conversions by Wood & Steven. Steven ran through them easily (once running through 7 forwards and 4 backs to score a try. Wood also played well. He is very fast and has got a good hand-of. Of the forwards Broadbent, Hodgson, Ballingall, Little & Lewis were outstanding but he rest also played very well. Bruce scored some good tries by diving over the line. A most enjoyable game really. Stein was still off and so Berry was full back.

25. Colts v Stonyhurst.

November 29th

We lost 10 – 8

We started off from school at 10.30 and reached there 12.45. A v. good lunch and a game of ping-pong v Peel afterwards. When the game they scored 10 pts in first 10 mins and then we woke up a bit and Whitfield scored a try by picking up a loose ball

and running over their line. It was converted by Steven. In the second half we scored a pushover try which was not converted. RESULT 10 - 8 to them.

29. House Match

Lupton v Hart Result 6- 6

Hat were the favourites - especially as the pitch was wet but our forwards played very well and managed to heal it fairly often. They were in our half a good deal but could not score. At the end of the first half we were winning 3 - 0 (an interception by Pears which resulted in a try). Then in the 2nd half Sangwin (with a very heavy ball) managed to convert 2 very good penalties. But by this time our three-quarters had done a very long dribble and Merer scored at the end. To be replayed.

The following year was when I had most of the term off with injuries, described elsewhere, the only other reference being in a letter of 30 November 1958:

The first round is on Tuesday against Hart, we ought to win, but you can never tell. I hope I can play, my shoulder is still hurting a bit but I really want to play, as it is my last chance of an important game until next year.

So, with the injuries, as explained elsewhere, I spent most of the term off rugger, coaching the smaller boys.

In my last year, I seem to have come back to enjoying the game and played for the second to top team. Here are two accounts in letters to my parents. The first was written in the second week of term, describing the end of a scorching summer and early autumn. I wrote on 4 October 1959:

After I had read this letter some people came into my study and said "Congratulations Mac!" - I was naturally surprised and asked them what they were congratulating me for - then it came out that I was playing for the 2nd XV in the afternoon! I hurriedly gathered together some clothes which were in a fairly clean state and duly appeared on the rugger pitch at 2.30. As drought has continued all term, except for one day's rain (the weather has in fact been absolutely wonderful - especially for the last few days when there has been a strongish, buffeting Easterly wind blowing and cloudless blue skies - amazingly hot) the rugger pitches have slowly been baking and hence are so hard that they are very uncomfortable to play on. There have been a lot of injuries as well as a lot of grazes and I think they are stopping rugger today. Several schools have closed down here for lack of water - and I have heard that Harrow has retaken up cricket this term! However as I was saying about the game of rugger - we were playing the 1st XV of a nearby grammar school who were fortunately not very good, as it would have been too hot to play really hard. After quite an interesting game we won 22-3

*

One aspect of the game which was particularly important was the element of the away games. Normally we were confined to the school, but away matches not only gave us a chance to travel some distance and to see how other schools worked, but in the sing-song after a fish and chip meal perhaps on the way back, we bonded in a way which reminds me of feasts and wine nights over the years in College. The comradeship created by a successful, exhausting, collaborative effort and the anticipation of praise by

one's friends when we returned were very special and vividly remembered as we sang 'On Ilkley More Ba Tat' or the diminishing version of "John Brown's Body" (or the rude version, "Oh Sir Jasper Do not touch Me!").

I briefly allude to a few of these pleasures in my 1957 house notes, but they were so important as an expression and creator of loyalties that it is worth giving three longer accounts. A feature of these away matches was that, to a limited extent, they were occasions when some of the rules of school were temporarily suspended and also we got to know another side of some of our teachers. On the sports field we were all equal and the closer bonds between staff and students to be found in boarding schools was clearly helped by the enthusiasm for games.

Jamie wrote home on 30 Nov 1958 to his parents:

Wizard day yesterday - 3rd XV match away against Rishworth. Mummy knows the place outside Halifax. 3 hours drive in thick fog... stopped in Keighley for coffee, meat pies and fruit. Excellent lunch at the school. Only just arrived in time because of the pea souper all around Halifax. Fog as heavy as ever, it was almost twilight. Pitches are up 800 feet above sea level and it is a bog - like playing on Frostrow or Holme Fell, black and smelly. There were times when goal posts the other end could not be seen. After the match they produced beer or shandy - a new institution by their HM, in the pavilion. No objections. Baths, then sausage and chips and back to the bus - Capuccino coffee in Skipton, fish and chips in Settle on the way back. That was the last match of the term and a thoroughly successful trip.

There is one occasion when we have two accounts of the same away match. I wrote on 25 October 1959 to my parents:

I am just beginning to enjoy rugger at the moment, probably because I am only now really fit, and don't feel puffed the whole game. We had a 2nd XV game versus a school in Blackpool yesterday, but I did not enjoy that one much as I had boots too small for me which were pinching and bad cramp in one of my calf muscles, but we had an enjoyable sing-song in the bus back. No doubt you remember the days when you have sung yourself hoarse after victorious 'away' matches (we won 8-3)?

On the same day, Jamie wrote:

Yesterday we went to Blackpool - not to see the lights but to play a 2nd XV match v. Arnold School, one of those which is called a Public Secondary School - a mixture of a second class public school and a local secondary school, half boarders, half day-boys. We arrived in the morning and Sid Braithwaite drove us along the Golden Mile and generally showed us the sights of Blackpool (where he was stationed aged 17 in the 1st World War!). It was raining and the sea was rather wild and stormy and very fine in fact and the place was almost deserted. It is about the end of the season but the rain has hurried it on.

As for the actual match we won very luckily 8-3 in the very last minute, they having had a penalty goal three minutes before that when scores were level - right under the posts which was somehow miraculously missed. This cheered us up and we got the vital try. We had a most enjoyable trip altogether with rowdy singing on the bus, fish and chips in Lancaster and so on. The only bad thing was that after an early lunch we had a

whole hour and a half being shown round their school without ever being able to have a quiet sit down. Our dogs were worn out before we stood on the field.

It is difficult to over-estimate the influence of rugger on our lives at Sedbergh and it was something so delightful and painful at the same time that it can be counted as one of the highest, and lowest, points in my life. I remember the exhaustion and the elation, the cold and the mud, the roaring supporters, the luxury of the hot bath afterwards. I would never play another game after I left Sedbergh.

Football

While rugby preoccupied us, I probably spent more time, and certainly enjoyed much more, the informal games of football played in the school yard opposite Lupton. These games were played of an afternoon or evening when other things did not intervene and teams were assembled on the spot. There were more formal competitions from time to time between members of the house and one of the virtues of the game was that older younger boys were united in this activity which happened in no other way. A good younger boy could shine and win the praise of an older boy, and otherwise awkward or shy boys could suddenly come out of their shells. I remember one occasion vividly when the top player, a large and rather overwhelming boy, chose a team consisting of some very good players, while I went for several otherwise undistinguished boys - and we triumphed.

Because the game was unrecognized by house or school - although, as we shall see the house did supply the balls, there is nothing in the formal literature, the **Brown Books** or school magazine about this. There is one mention of 'field soccer' against another house, which suggests that very occasionally we would go out onto the grass, but normally we played on a tarmac surface. There were dangers in this, of course and my other vivid memory is putting my foot down just as a ball arrived by it and going over onto the side and pulling several ligaments. The good result was that I was off running for the rest of the term (this was my last term at the school) and missing the gruelling Ten Mile. The bad result was that my ankle has been weak ever since and I occasionally go over on it painfully - a special hazard I found in walking in the Himalayas.

In the diaries I kept for the Lent term of 1956 and 1957 there is more reference to yard games than any other kind of sport or game, as follows:

1956

January

Thursday 19: We played yard in the yard which was 1" deep in snow.

Saturday 21: Played yard. Got very cold. Have got a cold. Their was the first game of rugger today. It poured all day.

February

Saturday 11: Played Yard V Evans. We won 12-7. Snowed one sixth of an inch in night.

Saturday 25: Played yard

Monday 27: Played yard. Juniors abandoned.

Tuesday 28: Played yard. It rained most of the day.

March:

Thursday 1: Senior Fives v Winder. We won by 8 points. Played yard in pouring rain with Seniors we won 8-7

Wednesday 7: Played yard bot[sic] a very good game but with new pill. Quartet abandoned

[Luptonian, Spring, p.3: 'Mr Boggis has been experimenting with various new kinds of yard ball to replace the old type, which is exorbitantly expensive. We received for "testing to destruction" a red bladderless plastic spheroid, semi-transparent, and extremely light. It found great favour; it was predictable, easy to head, to kick, and to control; and yard rapidly became very popular. Unfortunately, it punctured after only five days' use.]

Friday 9: Yard ball bust.

Wednesday 14: Played yard v Winder beat them 9-5.

Friday 16: Played yard V Winder

Saturday 17: Boxing finals, played yard

Thursday 22: I played touch rucker in the yard - not bad but a bit of quarreling.

Several points are worth noting from above, which I had forgotten. The game was often played on a Saturday, when there were no other games. It was a game we also played in friendly competition with other houses. It could also be turned into touch rucker, as at the end.

1957

January

Thursday 24: Played Juniors V mixed house team beaten 14-11. Not bad game. It snowed about quarter inch during prep but is now thawing. Played yard during long break.

Wednesday 30: House Ex. Played yard. We won 8-3. It rained quite a bit.

February

Friday 8: Juniors cancelled. Rained most of day. Played Yard. I was most Junior. We won 7-3.

Monday 18: Played Senior Yard v Evans. We won 11-8 a good game.

Wednesday 20: Played yard. A goodish game.

Friday 22: Played yard - not a bad game

Tuesday 26: Played yard we won 13-2 but a good game.

March:

Saturday 2: played yard

Monday 4: Specking (as usual) on an extra but the weather bad. Getting colder. Played yard we won 14-6 not a bad game.

Wednesday 6: Played yard, not too bad a game. We won quite easily

Friday 8: Played yard again. Pretty miserable day. We won.

Saturday 16: Horrible day. Played yard with Seniors. Only played for 1 hr.

Monday 18: Played yard V Evans. Fairly good wheather. A good game. They had Doby, Prior, Roberts, Wilkinson. We had Pears, Goodman, Rink.P, Crabbie. We won 12-3. Played with red ball [presumably the experimental ball had been mended or replaced].

Saturday 22: Yard competition. Am in Vignoles's team (Vig, Me, Moore, Savory). We beat Crabbies team 6-2. Not a bad game (I scored 3 goals).

Again there were inter-house games. The last game, when a supposedly weaker term won against the favourites, is one I remember distinctly.

Cricket

The other team game that was important was cricket. Cricket, of course, is very different. It is a team game in the additive sense - where each player's contribution adds to the total welfare or disaster of the team. But there is little direct contact - the batsman always intervenes. The nearest to collaboration is when a bowler works with a fielder or wicket-keeper in a slightly indirect way, or when two batsman work together to place themselves at the right end or to avoid running each other out. So it is very individualistic, but also has an element of team work.

I had been good at cricket at the Dragon and won my school cap – mainly for fielding and for being a general ‘all rounder’ rather than especially good at anything in particular. Concentration, attention, effort, had got me somewhere and I applied these again, but without notable success. In my first summer, I played for my under sixteen house team or ‘Panthers’ [the derivation seems to have been from ‘Panthers’, a team of the M.C.C. for a long time, and a rather specifically Sedbergh term?]. The Luptonian for the summer term gives some detail of my activities in this term.

Lupton V. School House.

...Macfarlane and Hunter batted confidently and took the score to 99.... Macfarlane being not out 18. Score 122 all out.

Lupton v Powell.

...when Little was well caught at the wicket by Macfarlane off Moore.

... Macfarlane kept wicket well, and took two good catches behind the wicket.

In the batting averages, I was third, with three innings, 18 not out in one, and total of 28. Thus an average of 14.

This was probably near the high point of my activity.

The following year I played again for the house panthers, but I particularly remember the disastrous occasion when my parents came over to watch me play. The shameful moment when I was out for a duck is etched on my memory. My mother described it thus:

INSERT

The following year, 1958, I was again playing for the house, but the report in the Luptonian does not give any mention of my actions, despite a full report, which suggests that I was not notable. I made a couple of comments on games in that term in letters to home. On 4 May I wrote:

I have also played cricket twice, once on a senior house game in which I managed to score 24 not out, but this was not very good because hardly anyone was out. And once on a "Littleside" game (from which the 3rd and 4th XI's come). But I have, I hope, been dropped from it as it is rather a high standard and also very boring.

Not only was I finding cricket increasingly ‘boring’, but it competed with my real joy in the summer term, namely fishing. So I was quite glad that my abilities were not leading me on in this direction.

There are again two accounts of a single game. I wrote on Sunday 29 June to my parents that

I am playing in our second game v School House. We lost our first game, and so did School House so this will not be a serious match. NEWS FLASH School House are 48 for 6 (having been 27 for no wicket).

Jamie, who was on the opposing team I think, wrote in a letter of 6th July:

To return to earthly things we had another house match this week and got beaten - pity. All our big men flopped. I went in 8th but never faced a ball. We were all out for 83, Lupton got 84 for 3, and one of them, a member of the 1st XI got a 56. They made

their runs very quickly and this one batsmen dealt beautifully with everything that came his way. [Very likely T.P. Goodman].

The following year I was not totally undistinguished, a report in the Luptonian describing how:

The second round was drawn against Hart House on the Gameshop pitch, when this time we batted first. Badger and Macfarlane performed well against a poor Hart attack and were on fine form, having put on 33, when Macfarlane was bowled by Williams.

I suspect that the one thing I did miss by not taking cricket seriously, or perhaps I should say, cricket not taking me seriously and elevating me to a school team, was not going away for school matches. Again this was a great pleasure, so I have to rely on Sandy for an account of such pleasures, in his case when he went to play tennis for the school, but accompanying a school cricket team to Rossall. He writes as follows in a letter of 7 July 1959:

I am going on the Six to Rossall, as is Jamie; we were playing 3rd pair together which is great fun. We left at 6.45 and drove straight to Rossall (2 hours) in a bus, with the first eleven. The bus was awful, especially in the evening when it was hot coming back. Rossall were in quarantine for chicken pox, so we were left by ourselves for 2 hours in the morning. We went down to the sea, which is only about 100 yards away from the school buildings and cricket field; and you can see the Blackpool Tower from there. We walked along the front to the first playground and refreshed ourselves there and walked along the sea shore. Lunch was at 1 and we had it only with Sedbergh boys. We started tennis at 2.30 and lost our match; all our teams lost. It is not that the other side seem any better but they seem to get the points. We played till nearly 6. There were no gaps between the netting and the main Blackpool Road which was rather off putting. On the way back we stopped in Lancaster for fish and chipps [sic] and arrived back in time for prayers and another big meal of sausage, spuds, beans and strawberries and cream. Very good..

Cricket was a game I associate with white costumes, a large grass field, eleven a side. But it appears that there was also a version which, like yard football, was played more informally and inside the house yard. There is an interesting comment on this by Dugald Bruce Lockhart, Jamie's son, who was at School House in the next generation. Some of what he says also applies to yard football, and his estimation of rugger as a 'religion and a duty' is interesting.

Dugald writes:

'Yard cricket was great fun – possibly the most fun, relaxed and happiest event of the summer term day. On a pleasant evening after supper and before prep, the whole house (pretty much) would play cricket in the yard with a tennis ball. Here the usual hierarchy and pecking order used to slip, there was fun banter and a true feeling of camaraderie. It was the solidarity in knowing that in forty minute we'd all be 'going over the top' – into our studies and dayrooms, for prep. It was always hard to bowl the last ball in yard cricket or walk the bat in and drop it off at the Bootroom. Yard cricket was what bound the house together more than anything. House Rugby was crucial – but much tougher an issue, more serious, and wasn't about the warm family feeling. Sport at Sedbergh was a religion and a duty. Not to be trifled with.'

For me, the binding force was provided by yard football, at which I was good. I don't remember yard cricket at all. Why was it so important in School House and apparently not in Lupton I wonder? It does not seem a question of a different generations, for Jamie talks about the importance of yard cricket. My uncle Robert spent hours practicing at home in Dorset the kind of skills needed in yard cricket, so perhaps it was just me, and others played it. I shall try to find out. But Dugald's comment that it was what held the house together is fascinating - and also that it broke down hierarchies.

Oppositional or confrontational games and sports

Team games taught one kind of skills and prepared one for life, it was supposed, in a certain way. Another set of skills were taught by confrontational, oppositional, sports. They taught one the arts of one to one, or two against two in doubles, combat, a succession to duelling, or the equivalent of kendo or many martial arts in the East. They would be preparations for many activities in later life - in banking, the law, politics, even academic life in the backwards and forwards of arguments. So they were strongly emphasized, teaching us to feint, parry, thrust, retreat and, after having established superiority or lost with a good grace, shaking hands and rejoicing in renewed friendship and equality after the game was over.

My memory had almost entirely excised these confrontational sports, for some reason. They were, in hindsight, less important, and if you had asked me before I started to go through the records whether I paid much attention to them, I would have said not. In particular, I had almost completely obliterated boxing as quite a serious activity at a certain point in school life. So it is with surprise that I recover such activities.

The most important for me in the winter term was (Rugby) fives, played in a court with one projection, using gloves. The fives courts were just near the house, and I started to play at the start of my second year, writing to my father on 14 October 1956: *I am just learning how to play fives and I have found it a very good game.*

I seem to have reached the peak of my activity in five the following winter term. At the end of the term I wrote to my father on 20 December:

I have also been playing fives, as I told you; I do not know if you have ever played Rugby fives but it is the game with only one buttress and no other projections. I managed to get on the last pair of our Junior fives. We got through the first round by beating Powell house but we were then beaten by Sedgwick, the team who went on to win the whole competition.

The house magazine described the term's activities briefly:

Junior Fives

'The enthusiasm displayed by the members of the team in preparing for the competition has been admirable. Much practice has been put in in Long Breaks... For the second round against Sedgwick, who have, as always a good team, Campbell moves up to second pair, replacing Macfarlane who joins Kay on third pair.'

Stop Press, All pairs lost, Third pair Lost 15-45.

This account is amplified in my 'House Affairs' diary for the term, which in which I keenly put down the details:

Junior Fives. Friday] 6th

v POWELL

1st Pair Barnes, Hunter v Little, Pearce 15 - 13, 15 - 12, 15 - 10

2nd Pair Badger, Macfarlane v Hardwick, Dickson 9 - 15, 9 - 15, 5 - 15

3rd Pair Campbell, Kay v Burgess, Booth, 15 - 2, 15 - 5, 15 - 4

TOTAL RESULT

Lupton won by 22 pts

Junior Fives

Lupton v Sedgwick

[details given, Macfarlane now on third pair with Kay, which pair lost 45 - 15- Total result, Sedgwick beat Lupton by 68 pts.

School beat Winder by 49 pts.

FIVES FINAL

Sedgwick won by 3 pts from school.

I do not recall ever playing squash, though that was a game which seems to have been very important to Jamie, who organized squash ladders. It was a game where a lot of exercise could be taken in a short time, played in all weathers, and companionly. I have noticed that a number of my University friends have centred their friendships on squash.

Boxing

Boxing, of course, was the ultimate confrontational sport - an activity in which one is specifically trying to hurt, or at least hit, the opponent and avoid his punches. It was not a sport which we had engaged in at the Dragon, and it seems that we, or certainly I, did not start to box until we were sixteen. It was also a sport which was concentrated in the second term, when pitches were often water-logged and the alternative was a gruelling run. In fact it was one reason why I seem to have taken this up.

I first mention it in a letter to my parents on 26 January 1958.

I am thinking of doing a bit of boxing for the first time in my life partly to get off a few exes (runs) partly to see if I can get into the boxing competition. Luckily [there is a boy] who is also in my study does a bit of boxing so we occasionally have sparing matches together in the study, much to the danger of everybody else.

I seem to recall that parents had to give their permission for us to box, and I am a little surprised that my parents did so - although perhaps it was my grand-parents, who were in England, who gave permission. Certainly my mother, who later became a Buddhist, was not keen on the idea, writing on 14 February from India: *Hope the Junior Rigger went off well, and the boxing, I don't know if I approve of that nasty rough game!*

[My mother's attitude was, as always, ambivalent since as I note in 'Lakeland Life' she admitted that she loved watching heavyweight wrestling on the television.]

My mother's attitude may have had a more specific reason for her anxiety, writing on 22 March, *I hope the boxing final wasn't too devastating and that you won though I hate the idea of people hitting your sensitive ears.*

I clearly did not respond to the implied question, as she wrote again on 20 April *What happened in the final of the boxing by the way?*

In fact, an account of what happened is contained in the Luptonian report as follows:

Boxing:

Hunter, A.D. Macfarlane and Badger all got through to the finals, but Hunter and Macfarlane were both beaten. Hunter's opponent was very much older, while Macfarlane's opponent, also much older, was one of the recognised pundits. However, both put up extremely good fights and in Macfarlane's case the verdict was very close.... In the whole competition the House was placed third.

I was clearly game and determined, even if rather small and not particularly good. This comes out in the report in the Luptonian in Spring 1959 which shows that I persevered until my last year.

Macfarlane gained a bye into the second round, and was drawn against Wilding-Jones. Although he lost the first round, he improved steadily, and towards the end of the bout the struggle was virtually equal, but his opponent had gained a strong lead early on, and finally won.

My own comment in a letter of 10 February was, *I hope to try and do a bit of boxing this term, but if my nose gets a bit pulverised (I have to make it sound nice) I will stop and just become resident coach.*

My own memories now are ambivalent. I just remember one or two painful minutes, and becoming unpopular when I beat up another boy a little too much in a competition. I actually found judo, which I practiced a little in my last summer, more enjoyable and elegant - though I don't think I ever actually engaged in a bout with anyone. In relation to Judo, my mother commented in a letter of 15 May, *Hope the judo goes well, most amusing description in the Tribune of all-in wrestling, the big moment was apparently when the referee got pinned under King Kong, who was being jumped on by Man Mountain, the audience laughed themselves sick - they would - ugh!*

Summer sports

In the summer there were various competitive sports, but my passion for fishing, and no natural ability, seem to have severely limited my participation in them. One was tennis. I only comment on tennis once, and now wonder why I played so little on the several tennis courts at Sedbergh. On 20 May 1958 I wrote to my parents, *I have also played tennis once. I played once last year and no times the year before, so I was not much good. Still I would like to learn to play it properly and if I got a motorbike I could join a club at home.*

I did, in fact join a tennis club some miles away from my Lakes home, but seldom played. I think it was mainly for the social life. This comes out when I compare my experience with Jamie, who played a good deal of tennis. He was a member of several tennis clubs, while I played the scaled down version of 'padder' in my back garden.

Tennis was not something I would expect to play later in my life, unless, like my parents, it became a central activity at the colonial 'club'.

Equally, while Jamie and Sandy seem to have been quite keen on shooting, both at the school and on visits to relatives, I do not seem to have been interested in shooting. Apart from an airgun in the Lakes (which was sold when I was about fifteen), I did no home shooting. I used to dislike shooting on the school range – I found both the explosive noise, and the rebound, unpleasant. And, of course, the CCF guns were First World War vintage, as I remember.

During the last few weeks of the summer term we started to get engaged in what we sometimes called athletics, or 'sports'. Again, Sandy and Jamie were more engaged in all this, and I would have thought that I did not get involved in it at all. But there are some traces of the activity – for example some photographs of a sports day show my parents were there, and my friends are in the photographs.

In the summer of 1957 I have an athletic sports programme, covering the period 18 to 27 July, showing when various events occurred. I have filled in the card with the first and second, with some of the times and heights attained, with the points the house scored. I was obviously a moderately interested observer. This is born out by a comment in a letter on 24 July 1959 when I write home: *Today is the last day of the sports, and although it will be very interesting I don't think we [Lupton] have much chance of winning.* The last comment reflects the fact that Lupton was very good at Athletics, having won the competition in 1956, 1957 and 1958. We were just pipped to the post on the last day by Sedgwick.

I have come across some evidence, presumably in the Luptonian, that I obtained a few points for the house by gaining my 'standards' in a couple of things – I think including the discus. I remember being rather taken with discus throwing, and the comment in the Luptonian for Summer 1957 which mentions 'Much of the House's surplus energy has been used this term in throwing a discus on the rugger pitches', which leads on to a more detailed description of this, brings back happy memories of that wonderful swirling movement and the discus flying off serenely.

Running, walking, caving and stalking

RUNNING RULES (1945)

1. Each House is divided into at least three packs for House-runs; the list of these packs must be approved by the Housemaster. Boys forbidden to run should walk over the course. No racing is allowed up and down Winder. Other forms of exercise may not be substituted for House-runs, except with leave from the Headmaster.
2. All boys who run in the Wilson Run or the Three Mile must produce to their Housemaster written leave from home and from the Medical Officer immediately before the race.

Runs and slogs (Alan)

One of the most distinctive features of Sedbergh was the emphasis on cross-country running. Many schools, of course, engaged in running, which was thought to be good for the body, character and perhaps mind, but Sedbergh pushed this to its limits. Set in the Yorkshire fells, there were numerous possible runs up and down the local hills and along the rivers, and the courses we went on, about 15 basic runs with the possibility of many variants by joining two together, were indicated in the section on Arriving.

Basically there were three kinds of run. The most normal was a set run, usually about three miles on full days, and up to twice that distance on half school days. All the boys would do the run, but independently of each other, though we might run with a friend. In my diary of Lent 1956 I mention on 6 March, 'Went round 3 mile gate in 45. Three mile training began. [Three mile gate was a run which extended the normal three mile run by joining on 'Gate' another run.] In a letter of letter on 21 Oct 1956: *Yesterday the ex[ercise] was Dovecote-Danny which is about 6 miles and takes about 55 mins and one of the new boys took over 100 mins over it.*

The second form were known as House Runs. They are described in the 1948 rules for the school thus: 'For House runs, which take place in the Winter and Lent terms, the boys are divided into three packs, according to their strength.' I think that they were one of the mandatory features of the system set up originally by Henry Hart to make the place a really tough nurse of men. They tended to be on Mondays and in the Lent Term and were gruelling and unpleasant. Jamie describes them generally thus: 'House runs' (obligatory runs for all) were generally hated because you were not free to trot around at your own pace. The pace was pushed by supervising prefects and times of return noted. Furthermore, runs were almost by definition held in dreadful weather when it was impossible to use the playing fields. So you were sodden, but it was alright once you got going. There were a number of set courses of some three miles in length, around which all houses sent their lads in three or four groups of runners in rotation.'

Sandy describes one rather well in a letter in his first Lent Term on 2 December 1956:

On Tuesday there were house runs which were not half as bad as everyone makes them to be. In the Trotters (there are three packs. the most junior is Trotters with 18 people in it) I came third. One starts off in a pack and spreads out quite quickly; one prefect goes behind and takes the slow people, one goes in front and takes the fast people. In

the trotters there is a difference of about 6 minutes between the first person and the last person. Everyone says you nearly die but they are really as bad as all that.

In my letters I comment twice on them. On 20 Jan 1957, *We also had House Runs last Monday but it was not a very bad one only about 3 miles.* Once the Ten Mile training was serious under way, House Runs were supposed to end, hence my indignation in a letter of 16 Mar 1959: *Then on Wednesday there was absolutely the reverse weather, the usual drizzle in other words and as a result there was a house-run, an absolutely extraordinary event, as there are not supposed to be any after March 1st and it was then the 11th! Still noone took it seriously.*

A more detailed pattern of both ordinary and house runs can be seen from the two Lent Term diaries I kept for 1956 and 1957. Isolating the runs, we find the following:

1956: [This was a term with a lot of snow and ice, and hence a number of winter sports which limited the amount of running.]

January: Monday 30: There were 4 more flu cases after smog last night. Went on House run. It was Ingmire - pretty awful.

Tuesday 31: Very cold wind. Horrible run. Scabbed [missed out] one bit

February: Monday 6: House run. Frostrow not bad.

Friday 24: House run 'Slacks'. Not too bad 31 mins.

March: Tuesday 6: Went round 3 mile gate in 56.

Monday 12: I was 1st in fortnight. Went round ex Frostrow. Lovely day should have been extra.

Thursday 15: Went round ex.

Higher Winder nab. Horrible day the wheather has clouded over.

1957: January

Monday 21: House Runs - Frostrow

not very bad - in little pack

Moseley did 23 and a quarter

I did about 28 mins

Monday 28: House Run was Ingmire. Best one so far. I took about 23 and a half.

February:

Monday 4: House runs. Strait Bridges. I took nineteen and three quarters mins. It could have been worse.

Thursday 7: Off day cancelled.

House Ex. Had haircut then Straight Br Hospital Lane 30 mins.

Monday 11: House runs for all.

Western ft [foot]. Jolly good, I took about 22 and a half.

Monday 18: A lovely day therefore not House Runs

Monday 25: NOT house run.

In the 'House Affairs' notes I kept in the Winter Term 1957 I note:

House Run

3 mile - I was in middle Pack and did it in 35 (my 2nd Ex of the term. It was quite enjoyable.

House run

Straight bridges - about 19½. Moseley first in about 17¼ - I was in middle pack and ran with Moore and Rink P.J.E. Not too bad.

11. House runs 3.11.57

Western Foot - very wet - I did it in about 22 or 23 mins. Not too bad, but it got me out of breath. Jamieson did it in about 17.

So it seems that House Runs were regularly held in the first half of the Winter Term, perhaps to get us back into shape after the summer, and then, as the various games and sports competitions built up, they diminished or ceased, and started again in the Lent up to the end of February, when we started to work on the Ten Mile in earnest.

The Three Mile and the Ten Mile

The third kind of running was racing against other boys. There were two races. The under sixteens competed in the 'Three Mile' race, which went up the banks of the Dee river and back over the Sedbergh Golf course. Only six of the best runners from each house would be entered for this, and I was fortunately not one of them. My interest in the race is shown in a diary entry for Wednesday 20 March 1957:

3 mile - Barnes Moseley 5th in 3 mile lane. Barnes drops back, Mosely 2nd, Barnes 4th, Porter 13th, Peel 18, Black 21, Hunter 30.

Hardy (1) - 19.23

Moseley (2) 19.33

Garidner (3) - 19.35

Barnes (4)

Porter (13)

Peel (18)

[There is a photo of our 3 mile hopefuls for this year in Mr. Boggis' album. He was the coach for the three mile.]

*

The defining run, and in some ways, along with rugger, the central symbol of Sedbergh activity was the Wilson run or 'Ten Mile' as we knew it. My uncle Richard who was at Lupton in the late 1930's describes it as follows:

'a test of endurance that could only happen in a school that lived among the hills. It was ten miles; along narrow lanes, across the sides of steep valleys, over open moorland, crossing running becks and a stretch of hard pounding road. It was a heaving and straining and sweating and slipping... boys argued as to whether they preferred this [winning] to a university scholarship. (Years, 182) Richard gives two accounts of running in the race, in the first he ran too fast and almost collapsed, as 'the miles unwound in agony...', coming 54th. In the second, there is a long account, which is fictionalized so that Richard comes in second, though in fact he came in third. (Years, 183, 225-6)

Jamie gives another description:

'You had to do the Ten once (unless there were medical grounds for being excused). We practiced by running (or walking) it twice beforehand (weather permitting) in the Easter term. One could also go round all or part as you wanted, e.g. on half days, so long as the course was open. The race was held between 15 and 20 March.

*

Every boy, unless they had medical leave, had to go round the course once each year, either entered for the race, or in their own time.

Thus in my first year I note in a letter home.

4 March 1956: *The ten mile course has now been opened and we are allowed to go round when we like but it has got to be a reasonable time and we have got to go round it! So that I think I am going to trot round it this afternoon.*

In my diary for that term, I note under this date: 'Went round ten in 1 hr 50 not bad

The following year, I note in a letter to my parents on 24 Feb 1957: *We will soon have to be going round the 10 mile but once that is over I will be able to look forward to not much more running as there will be no house runs after the beginning of March.*

In my diary for that term I note on Tuesday 5 March:

Went round Ten. 1.37 and a half + 35 to Cautley. 43 across Boar Fell. 19 and a half back from Danny. Could have been worse but not much. Barnes and Mosely 1.26 and three quarters.

Hardy (E) did 1.24 and a half. Quite a nice day.

My time had improved from the fairly appalling 1.50, to 1.37. I finally ended up around 1.25 I seem to remember.

*

As well as the proper race, there was an annual relay race round the course. The house was divided into two or three teams, and we would then round, each doing three quarters of a mile or so. I note this in my first Lent term in 1956:

Saturday 24 March. 'Ten mile relay. I had to run from Lily pond to 1 mile stone on Danny road. 'Handed from Daly to 1 mile post'. Time 1 hr 4.25 secs.' Even with a twenty or more boys sharing the running, the time was less than ten minutes faster than the School record for the race. I distinctly remember waiting under the tree near the Lily pond outside the large house which would later become a doctor's surgery and then an old people's home.

My second relay I also remember. It is noted in my diary for Tuesday 12 March 1957: 'Ten mile relay. I was running from great Dovecote Gill to Danny Hill. Lovely day, best this day. I was in Philps team. We were 4th.'

*

My own comments on the race suggests that while not much good myself, I was interested in the feats of others.

In my diary for 1957 I noted:

Tuesday 19 March: Ten! The ten mile. Tyler not in for it. Hilton wrecked at Red Bridge. Philp leads all the rest of way but beaten by Scott at finish. Conditions - awful. Raining all the time. Times around 1.20

The following year on 30 March 1958 I wrote to my parents.

The result of the ten mile was Johnston (Hart) 1st, Scott (Winder (2nd), Butt (Hart), 3rd, Kenmir (Evans) 4th, Mathew (School) 5th, Long (Winder) 6th. Our runners were 9th, 11th, 13th, 18th, 30th (Doogan), 44th. Which was not bad as a whole as there were 87 runners. The conditions were quite good until just before the race when it started to snow in flurries. Johnston was winning at Thrush Gill (2 miles after the start) but as noone had ever heard he was any good they thought he was trying to be clever - but he held his lead the whole way round. Most of the favourites dropped out (of the first ten) quite soon, as usual.

My only formal entry for the race was in my penultimate year, aged just 17. I wrote to my mother on 27 Jan 1959, *I think I will be going in for the '10 mile' but I am only doing it for enjoyment this year.* My mother, nevertheless, worried about me, writing on 24 March: *I'm thinking of you hard, about 2 hours before the Ghastly Ordeal is due to*

start. It's a fine day according to the wireless which should make it easier for you, anyway by the time this reaches you it'll all be over and you'll be planning a day's fishing with any luck.

I remember that I came in at around 75 out of about 120. In 1960 an injured foot prevented me from entering.

*

There are frequent allusions to preparing for and going round the Ten Mile in Sandy and Jamie's letters, which give a flavour of this extraordinary race as I remember it. I have just taken out one or two.

Sandy wrote on March 1st 1959:

The ten training has started and we have all written out our time tables so we know exactly what we are to do each day; it is great fun making it out so as to build up to a peak with road runs, fell runs, stamina runs and short runs carefully arranged. I started on Friday by simply doing Winder, and was pleased with myself as I did it in 29 minutes from House to House, as it was my first run of training. Today we are going to Kirby Longsdale [sic] which is quite a long way but not as far if we go over the side of Holme Fell.

This year's ten mile entry will be easily a record; there are 32 people going in for it from this House alone. In all there will be easily a hundred. So we (the House) are having trials; these are timed, one to Cautley, one to Danny, from which an order will be made of runners in the house. If I run really badly in those trials I will find myself at the back of a queue of 32 people at the start of the ten itself which virtually means, unless one sprints, being last at Green Hill. So the answer to this is that I must run well in the trials, which is easier said than done.

Jamie wrote a week later on 8 March:

The ten is on the 24th. Please can I have written permission to enter for it, I have had the doc's, and for Sandy's too please sometime next week.

[In the Cautley trials] Groups went off every 5 minutes. We did a 5-minute mile on the first bit, which finished me for the fell run. Took 33.15 to Cautley yesterday, I came about half way up the list. Danny trial - nearly 8 miles - is next week.... Perhaps my age will make up for size and weight. Dear is coming up next week and should be able to see two very exhausted grandchildren flop down Danny hill.. Sandy did very well in the Cautley trial. We (those in authority) are very pleased with him. He came third in the whole house including the guys who came 20th and 5th in last year's race. However, I fear 4 miles may be his distance rather than ten [wrong], but it may not be, one never knows.

On the same day Sandy wrote:

On Friday night we had the doctor's exam and we were all very nervous; and having had various things done to us we had to jump up and down onto a chair 12 times and then have our hearts and breathing tested. But as the doctor says himself half the people that are tested are so nervous of failing that he can't really tell. But I passed and so did Jamie; four of the 32 failed, leaving 28 which is probably an all time record. The whole school has 142 entries on Wednesday, but this will probably boil down to 110 or 115. ...

The first trial was yesterday. It was to Cautley and there was such a wind against us it was a gale all the way from Siberia to Sedbergh; and it came roaring down

the Rawthey valley, so as we ran along the side of the hill it was dead against us. We started at Lupton house in groups of 4 or 6, and had our times taken at the far end and an order worked out with our starting times taken into account. I took 31.28 mins which is very slow had there not been a gale; but to my surprise I was told I was second fastest in the house. We were not supposed to know our places but one of the prefects who did not know that told me. I have come to the real conclusion that 3-4 miles is my best distance for I know that I cannot beat the people I beat yesterday over 10 miles. But there is a Danny trial sometime next week and I will find out if this is correct; but anyhow yesterday's run will put me up the house starting list a bit.

The Sunday following the race Sandy wrote:

On Thursday there was the 10 mile. We had 2 good runners, one who came 3rd last year and another who is on the running team. It snowed before lunch and then we went out to 10 mile lane and saw them after 6 mins. The start as fantastically fast and our 4th runner who was 2nd reserve for the running team fainted at Thrush Gill but after a bit he went on and caught up 20 places. There were 85 runners. Then after everyone had passed us at 10 Mile Lane we went on to Muddy slide and saw the first 10 to get there. Johnston from Hart was 1st there and Scott who was best last year was second. Then we ran back but as we were going across somebody's land a gardener sent us right back so we had to sprint for about a mile and arrived back 2 mins before the finish. Johnston won in 1 hr 15, which was terrific as none thought he had a hope. He is also on the First XV and the First XI, which is a jolly good effort. Our No 2 runner came 5th and our No 1 came 15th.... There was a furious snow storm half way round for about ½ hour. It was a terrific race.

Jamie wrote on the same day:

First of all the Ten. Sandy did A1 splendidly He was the success in the house, only beaten by Moffatt who came 5th. To give you an idea of the speed and standard, I was placed 70th dead in a time of 1.27.3. With that time last year I would have been 52nd, and the year before 15th! Sandy's time would normally make him 3rd or so, and it really was a superb feat of running. It was great to see him up at the front on the stage, pleased as Punch.

The conditions except for Baugh Fell were good and I had an enjoyable day. And not hurrying, because I knew that competing out of training could be bad [I was still recuperating from 8 weeks leg in plaster], I got to Cautley about 90th but by the time I got to Danny I had moved up to 66th, having crossed Baugh Fell 3 ½ mins quicker than I had done in the trial. My lack of training started to tell on the road when my calves turned into lead, and several people overtook me and then there was a final sprint of 7 people together in a group.

Jamie gives a fuller description of the run from memory as follows:

'It is etched in my memory: the excitement of the start, Back Lane crowded with spectators; then out to the side of the fell - all the weight on one foot, and scrambling over walls and gates on the way to Cautley, legs getting more and more tired; and exhaustion after sliding down and clambering up the other side of ghylls; then the steep climb out of Cautley, the Hebblethwaite ghyll slide, the steepest and biggest of all. But after that the course became more peaceful, and one's position became pretty fixed - with less overtaking. Baugh Fell provided a mixture of nice springy grass tracks, and one had a second wind by then. Then came the killer climb out of Danny which knocked

you back again; followed by a long trot back along the road to Sedbergh town with gym shoes banging on the hard tarmac, but you sort of got into a rhythm, like joggers, despite the legs feeling ever more solid and heavy. Then came the final run in up Back Lane and bliss, cheering crowds and the Grubber and the finish in sight. School House boys were accustomed to a long uphill finish to reach the house from any direction after house runs, or indeed any games; so I felt comfortable and in control on the very last lap.'

*

The importance of the Ten Mile was ritually recognized in the Concert which was held the same evening. At this there was much music and celebration, the runners would come onto the platform in order of performance to tumultuous cheers, especially from their houses. And then we would sing the following song, the affirmation of our Sedbergh identity.

TEN MILE SONG - INSERT - and photos

The excitement of the concert is caught by the descriptions of that for 1959 after the race described above. Sandy described it in a letter thus:

The 10 Mile concert was absolutely terrific. All the things in it were good, especially the Toy Symphony with the HM playing a cooker whistle, Mr Ward on a child's drum (which he hit too hard and his drumstick went through the drum on both sides), Mr Foster on a triangle, Mr Bishop who played brilliantly with a bird whistle (it sounded just like 2 chaps in the Crazy Gang who whistled) and Mr Marriott played a baby's rattle and Mr Madge on a policeman's whistle affair. It was very funny. And the masters' quartet was very funny. Jamie played a super solo in the 'Orpheus in the Underworld'; everybody stopped playing completely while he played; it was a very tricky bit with fast runs and high notes. Then all the runners came up in order and they sang the verses and we sang the chorus.

Jamie was more sober: *The concert was fun, everyone very gay; the music immaculate - lacking zip in Pomp and Circ but Jupiter was first rate. Our wind Quintet went off ok too; and 123 people on the stage was a huge squash.*

Walks and explorations

When my housemaster wrote a recommendation for Oxford, he listed my main other outside interests include 'fell climbing'. This accords with my own memory. Much of the pleasure I found in my Sedbergh life, alongside that in the Lake District, was walking up the rivers and over the mountains, very often with a fishing rod, and often with friends. It was a major source of refreshment and interest and since then I have listed 'walking' as one of my two or three hobbies in *Who's Who* etc. Every extra half holiday, on many Sundays and especially during the summer, we could go off in any direction to explore the glorious countryside, and on Sundays could go further with a pack lunch which the school provided.

Although it was such a basic and important activity, I do not seem to have thought it was something to write to my parents about. I do mention a couple of Sundays after I arrived at the school in a letter on 10 October 1955:

Last Sunday another boy and me took pack lunches and walked up to Boar fell wich is about five and a half miles away because there are some tarns there but we got within about half a mile of them but we had to turn back. But it was a nice walk.

And in the same letter I anticipated another walk:

Field day is on next Teusday and that should be good fun if it is a good day. After morning lessons you take a pack lunch out on the fells like on Sunday and you go out until six or if you are in corps you have a battle.

Another long walk was described in a letter of 20 Jan 1957 to my parents.

Last Sunday our dormitory plus a prefect went up Wild Boar fell. It was about 18 miles altogether, but it seemed far further as there were terrible conditions. It rained nearly all the time and when we were slogging up the fell it turned to hail and hurt quite a bit. When we came down we had a lovely tea at the Cross Keyes which is a little lonely inn, about four miles from Sedbergh. But when we had had tea we had to run back 4 and a half miles in the dark in the driving rain. But I think it was worth it.

What was special about the Field Day was that you had a whole day for an expedition, which did not even happen on Sundays when one could only go out after the service, in other words at mid-day.

It was also normal for the assistant house master or others to help make this a special expedition to a further mountain, as in my last field day, as I wrote to my parents on 10 March 1957.

On field-day (my last when I am not in the corps) our dormitory went with mr Boggis to Ingleboro which is one of the 3 highest peaks around here. We were going to Helvelyn but the weather was not very good. All the same I enjoyed myself very much.

[There is a photo of us on this expedition, sitting on a wall, to be inserted]

The walks in autumn were often to places where sea trout and salmon were jumping or assembling to spawn. Thus I described on 19 October 1958

The last few days have been quite nice actually, and we had an extra-half on Friday. In the afternoon it clouded over, and the N.E. wind grew stronger, so that it was pretty cold, and it looked as if it might snow. I went with some friends to a small beck about three miles away where I thought we might see some salmon or sea-trout waiting in the shallow stream to spawn; but unfortunately the water was rather high so we could not see anything. Anyhow we had an enjoyable time all the same.

The walks in the Spring term also had their special pleasures. On 16 March 1959 I wrote: *It is really beginning to feel like spring on nice days. As yet I think only the crocuses and the snowdrops are out (they have been out for a long time) and the countryside is pretty bare. But the birds are more cheerful, and I have even seen an odd trout rising. ... on Friday it was again a nice day and then there was an extra-half. I went with Ian Campbell up a hill about 5 miles away called Boar Fell and followed down the river which later becomes the Rawthey. On it there is a very nice waterfall called Uldale force, quite a long straight drop. The fells were pretty marshy and boggy but it was a lovely day.* [Small map showing Boar Fell, Sedbergh and the walk, with two

points marked 'Where we had that picnic with the Edyes' and 'Where we fished on that rainy day Daddy came over'. INSERT MAP]

It was the summer walks and expeditions that stay in the memory, fusing with river bathes, fishing and rough and tumble ragging up Winder after Chapel on Sunday evenings.

*

I am not sure why I wrote so little about walking and exploring. Perhaps I felt it would not interest my parents. And conversely I do not know why the Bruce Lockhart brothers, and particularly Sandy, wrote so fully and eloquently on the subject. I shall quote a few of Sandy's longer accounts since they convey in a way which nothing that I wrote does, the joys of that glorious countryside.

Here are some of Sandy's longer descriptions; I shall prune them later.

In early March 1957 Sandy wrote home:

Today was a lovely day. I suggested to Melville, Robertson, Watson (my termers) that we should take a pack lunch and go to Hebblethwaite gill and caves. So we went to order lunch, but orders have to be in by 12, and we were five minutes late so they would not give us any. So we went and asked again and every time the answer was no. So we bought some pork luncheon meat and made some sandwiches, and we got booze, cake and two tins of fruit, large packets of crisps and borrowed a rucksack.. But the HM said that as cook had made us our Sunday lunch we had to eat it. But he signed leave to go out from 2 to tea so off we went. We reached Muddy slide and went up the gill and found a dead pigeon with a ring on its leg and took it off and buried the pigeon in perfect condition it must have died of old age. We are going to send the ring in.

We went past the caves and up to the great cliff fault. There were 3 Powell House chaps (18 [year-olds]) who have climbed in Switzerland with a master there doing real rock climbing with ropes and axes. They saw us eating our lunch and shouted from the cliffs on the far side if we had any sandwiches. (There were cliffs on both sides and ours was smaller and we climbed up the back of them). [sketch of gill in profile, showing one side sheer rock, the other half its height and more slanting profile]. So as we had 4 left over we said yes and they came tearing down and across the gill and round to us in a terrific race. Then when they had eaten our home made sandwiches they climbed back up a more difficult bit. So we started climbing up our side and down. It was not dangerous and we did it on our side; if you fell you would only get cuts and bruises but if they fell they would be dead! We went along home. rolling boulders into the Gill on the way. We had a wonderful time. ...

On Thursday it was Field Day. It poured till 8 o'clock, after that it was a lovely day. We (Robertson, Wilding Jones,) went to the Moorcock. First Mr Thornely drove us there by car. It is an inn about 12 miles out on the Hawes Road; it is 4 ½ miles from Baugh Fell. We then climbed right up on to Baugh Fell and across the top to the Trig Point Top (2216') and had lunch by a tarn (jam and marge bun - I had two we took 4 pack lunches and shared them between us, one piece of Christmas cake with icing I pork pie, 6 spam sandwiches and an apple. We saw great amounts of baby grouse on the top of Baugh Fell, 5 of them got up about a yard from us. There were millions of curlew and one seagull with its nest in a tarn.

We then went to Uldale Force, a water fall on the back of Baugh Fell. On our way down we were passing a cliff edge near a gill when about 20 yards away a buzzard flew out of the cliff. We went down to see if it had a nest and about 6 feet below us was a big nest with 2 eggs in it. The bird was absolutely whacking. I remember buzzards in Germany but they did not seem half as big as this, we all thought it was an eagle. We saw it coming back to the nest and as we were about 6 ft away from the nest we ran off quickly because we thought it would attack. One of the house pres (Laycock) was once attacked by a buzzard. We saw it miles high in the sky circling above its nest. We thought it must be an eagle, also when it flew off the nest it looked like an eagle; but everyone says there are no eagles around here so it must have been a buzzard.

We then went to Uldale Force and then to the Cross Keys then back by the road. We drank gallons of booze at the Cross keys and staggered back to Sedbergh and arrived back at School House a 6.20 .We went 12 miles by car and 15 up and down on foot; it was the best Field Day yet.

A second expedition is described in a letter of Sunday 29th June 58?

Yesterday, Saturday, we were going to go round the 3 Peaks but the HM would not let us go. Actually I think he was quite right as it is a lot further than we thought. But Mr Durran offered to take us to Pen y Ghent the furthest of the three. We took pack lunches and went in Mr Durran's car. We stopped on the way at the place on the Dee where we stopped when going to Ingleborough last summer. It was a cave over which the river was flowing and it was covered in fossils. I am not very attached to them but they were fantastic. I found one fossil on a rock as big as my hand. I brought it back in the car; and there were many small ones almost perfect shells. I hope I enclose the last of those I found. Went on to Ribbleshead from where people start the 3 peaks and three cars were there, Mr Mills and the Sedgwick House prefects and Mr Baham [? name - illeg.] and the Evans House prefects, all going round the 3 peaks. They would come back to their cars at 7.30 in the evening as it is 7 miles from the last Peak. Mr Durran left a note on top of Pen-y-Ghent in a bottle on the cairn saying 'strain and struggle might and main, scorn defeat and laugh at pain - then in brackets 'Only 7 miles to the car'. Then on the cars we left For Sale Notices and one Police one.

We had great fun rolling boulders down Pen-y Gent and rock climbing; and Mr Durran took 4 or 5 photos I will get some if they are good. We had a look at some pot holes on the way down and went back in the car and had some orange booze in the Sportsman Inn. It was very good fun indeed.

Finally, in later December 1959, Sandy described an expedition to the Lake District. *What a day yesterday was. Mr Durran offered to take us up Helvellyn and we missed reading prep through having to make our own pack lunches. We started late because Mr Durran had communion after chapel (Church of Scotland), and we went off in the three year old Land Rover he bought last week. It is very nice and just the thing for him. There were five of us and him and room for more in the car. When we arrived at Helvellyn, we ate our pack lunch at the bottom and after climbing about half way we ran into thick cloud with visibility down to about thirty yards. Nearer the top the snow was a foot deep and the visibility nearly nothing.. Mr Durran knew the mountain very well and we went along Striding edge which as I expect you know is not dangerous normally. There are big drops down snow-covered slopes either side. The ridge itself is 2 to 3 yards wide rock covered with slush. We climbed the ridge, about 200 yds, very slowly and then scrambled up to the top.*

Coming back the temperature suddenly dropped and the slush started to freeze. Mr Durran did not know the other way down well enough and we might have got lost; so we went down very, very slowly and had to keep going as it was four o'clock and starting to get dark. I have never been colder in my life - with shorts on and snowing and howling wind and particularly slush and ice. The ridges went on and on and, as the visibility was down to 15 yds, we did not know where the end was. It was getting worse but we came to the end of the ridge and walked down to the car. Mr Durran said he was very ashamed to take us with the chance of the snow freezing but it was a jolly good experience and lucky he knew it so well.

Meanwhile Jamie also described the kind of race against time which I remember so well also. In an undated letter written in September or October 1955, during my first term, he describes how:

Yesterday we had a marvellous time. I went round to Cautley spout by the fells. We had a midday half 1.30 to 5, Straight away we started off up Higher Winder. We missed out Winder's cairn and Higher Winder and came up the Calf. It's jolly tiring and there was a howling wind. [sketch map of fells]. We ran hard down the gentle slope to the crags and then down to the spout. We clambered down the far side, our party then increased by 2 who we met on Calf, and went along the lower crags to slide down the scree. We walked and lingered till we suddenly looked to our Watch keeper who said there was only 55 mins to get back to work.

We ran down by the Cautley beck and decided we had to cross. We had to jump across onto a stone in the middle (about 1 sq foot). You can guess what happened. I lost my balance and fell in ohhhh gosh it was cold. I was absolutely sopped mainly because I was face up to the flow and it came pouring down my shirt. Then realizing we had to go $5\frac{3}{4}$ miles in $\frac{3}{4}$ of an hour, we ran along the side of a fell racing against time in a jolly close race. We came to the road just over Red Bridges it is called - and finding that we had to run our fastest to get back to school 3 miles to go and 40 mins, so we ran back and absolutely fagged got to School House with 10 mins to bath and get into prep.

I was absolutely dead tired and sapped but soon got warmed again. Luckily those who had to get to School got there in time. But next time I'm going to start off earlier.

Two other activities which might be termed 'sports' are recorded by Sandy, and show the diversity of what was open to us. I did a little bird watching I think, but did not engage in either the caving or deer stalking which Sandy describes so vividly that it would be a pity not to include his long descriptions in letters to his parents.

Sedbergh was surrounded by a famous area for caves, where the water had formed deep caverns in the limestone hills. One of these was the Gawthrop caves on the river Dee, which I came to know again many years later. At the start of his first Winter term, in a letter on 21 September 1956, Sandy wrote a description of what sounds like an extremely dangerous visit to the caves.

On Thursday it was field day and I and 5 other chaps (the other 4 chaps who came with me last term and one other who came this term) we went to Gawthrop Caves. We all set off about half past 11 with our pack lunches tied up in our white pullovers. We had lunch at about half past one on the bank of the Dee, consisting of

*6 spam sandwiches
1 bun and margarine
1 pie (meat)*

1 piece of cake (fruit)

1 apple

It was very good - at least there was plenty of it but not wonderful quality. We foled [sic] about on the bank of the Dee for about an hour then we got to the caves.

They are enormous, for the little tunnels stretch for miles. First we went along a very big tunnel for a very long way (about 300 feet). It opened out into a large cavan [= cavern] with a gigantic waterfall coming out of the roof. We had one candel [sic] and 3 torches. Another guy and I had nothing so we went in a line No 2 and me no 5. Then after a bit me and a guy called Melville went up a very very small tunnel. We both had torches (another chap came half way and then turned back). Anyhow we must have crawled on our tummies for about 100 feet or so then we reached the end, but he could not turn round; I turned (because I am smaller than he is) but he got stuck and I was the far side of him as I went first. Then as he tried to turn (and got stuck) my torch suddenly went out, then his went out so we were stuck in the pitch darkness. We shouted for the others to bring a light but the tunnel was too long and they did not hear. Then he banged his torch by mistake on the roof and it went on again; so when we had eventually managed to turn round we crawled back to the others.

The other activity, which interestingly took place within a mile or two of the above, probably in Deepdale, at the top of the Dent valley, is a delightful account of stalking deer. While the caving took place at the start of Sandy's time at Sedbergh, the stalking took place a few weeks before he left the school, as described in a letter of 2 June 1960.

We meant to go deer stalking but couldn't make it because of a leave. But yesterday Lionel, another guy and Beilby, who is the only decent prefect and a splendid chap, went up to try to find them. After about an hour and a half we came to the big valley where they are said to be (only one guy in the house at the moment has seen them). This valley is about one mile across and divides off into two valleys at the top with streams coming down each and meeting. None of us had been there before and it really is the most lovely place around. It is not plain like the Howgills and Winder but heather and rock and streams with lush grass. We sat on the edge of the valley looking down. We could only see part of it because of outcrops and hills all over it. I had my binoculars but we saw nothing. So we went down about 200 yds into the valley and stopped again and I was looking down the valley when suddenly I saw in the middle of the bino three vast brown red sheep lying down just how a sheep doesn't lie down. It was terribly exciting sitting on one side of the valley and everything in complete peace then suddenly there were the deer in the binos. I can't describe how exciting it was.

It took a long time to get down to the stream at the junction; they were about 200 yds above it. We started to go up but after about 30 yds the rock was eroded and it was a flat stream after that. We sat watching them carefully and they had not seen us. But the way we had come down, the wind was behind and one of them suddenly put its head up and seemed to smell us and then the others did and they started walking away up the hill and then they ran.. When they had gone we stood up and about 2 mins later we saw another lot of 9 including 2 lovely stags. The deer are not the park deer but bigger and more majestic. To get to them we had to do a 2 mile detour to come up at them against the wind and over the hill. We did this but they were half a mile up the valley when we crept over the rise; they must have seen us or seen the ones we made run away. There was another herd of 5 at the head of the valley, all up where the streams started. It was lovely watching them.

Today we are going up with pack lunches and binoculars to try to shoot them with the 2 or 3 cameras we have. I think camera shooting them would be just as much fun as killing them with a gun. They were so lovely yesterday, I wouldn't have shot them even with a gun.

It would be nice to think that this early delight in watching animals later fed into Sandy's life as a farmer in Africa, and finally in his career as an extremely successful farmer in Kent.

Individual Pursuits

Winter Sports

SKATING RULES (1945)

3. No boy may go on the ice without leave.
4. When skating is allowed at Lilymere, no boy may go on the ice before a Master arrives. Heads of Houses must take up lists of skaters to the Master in charge. No sticks are to be broken or cut from trees. Bicycles must be left at the bottom of Scots Jeans.

One of my most vivid memories of the Dragon was the skating. Likewise, winter sports, with their excitement, feeling of escaping from the normal restrictions of school, and shared friendship, were very important at Sedbergh, which had the added advantage of having good slopes for sledding or tobogganing and the pleasure of snowball fights and 'snow runs'. It will become clear from the quite detailed accounts which we all wrote to our parents, how important such sports were.

How it might change a life is shown in the book on Sedbergh by W.B. Gallie. He was at the school in the late 1920's and wrote in his book:

"This lake - tarn we called it - was in all about a mile square, but irregularly shaped, with coves and long narrow inlets, some fringed with pines, some backed with the solid mountains behind. I had never skated before, and did not become very proficient, but I learnt to race at quite a high speed from one end of the tarn to the other, to circle the small coves, leaning, bending, feeling my body's glow against the frosty air. It was my first sustained and intensely conscious experience of the joy of my body's life and vigour; the first clear invitation I had felt to the body's pride in its reserves of skill and power. When the frost ended and football and running were resumed, I transferred to them my new-found energy and enthusiasm. The inner feeling-tone of my life - muscular, nervous, emotional - ceased to be one of fatigue and anxiety, and in particular of anxiety of fatigue.... From that time on, for two more years, my life at school ... was an almost entirely happy one.... I knew while living through that fourth transitional year ... and I felt this abundantly confirmed in the two years that followed that "something had happened to me" that there is something in life and the world, which one can either have or not have, something which I had, quite fortuitously as it seemed, bumped up against and might easily have missed." (From "An English School, pp. 17-18).

Something not dissimilar had happened one and a half centuries before on another tarn, this time two miles from my home in the Lake District, where the young William Wordsworth was skating. He described a hugely significant moment as follows:

And in the frosty season, when the sun
Was set, and visible for many a mile
The cottage windows blazed through twilight gloom,
I heeded not their summons: happy time

It was indeed for all of us--for me
 It was a time of rapture! Clear and loud 430
 The village clock tolled six,--I wheeled about,
 Proud and exulting like an untired horse
 That cares not for his home. All shod with steel,
 We hissed along the polished ice in games
 Confederate, imitative of the chase
 And woodland pleasures,--the resounding horn,
 The pack loud chiming, and the hunted hare.
 So through the darkness and the cold we flew,
 And not a voice was idle; with the din
 Smitten, the precipices rang aloud; 440
 The leafless trees and every icy crag
 Tinkled like iron; while far distant hills
 Into the tumult sent an alien sound
 Of melancholy not unnoticed, while the stars
 Eastward were sparkling clear, and in the west
 The orange sky of evening died away.
 Not seldom from the uproar I retired
 Into a silent bay, or sportively
 Glanced sideways, leaving the tumultuous throng,
 To cut across the reflex of a star 450
 That fled, and, flying still before me, gleamed
 Upon the glassy plain; and oftentimes,
 When we had given our bodies to the wind,
 And all the shadowy banks on either side
 Came sweeping through the darkness, spinning still
 The rapid line of motion, then at once
 Have I, reclining back upon my heels,
 Stopped short; yet still the solitary cliffs
 Wheeled by me--even as if the earth had rolled
 With visible motion her diurnal round! 460
 Behind me did they stretch in solemn train,
 Feebler and feebler, and I stood and watched
 Till all was tranquil as a dreamless sleep.

*

The first account, while I was enjoying my last winter at the Dragon, was written in a letter from Jamie to his parents in February 1955.

The snow is still lasting, in fact it has become deeper, I have done a lot of sledging, mainly on Logie's [uncle, Logie Bruce Lockhart] 'Flexible Flyer', a house sledge. There are some wizard runs and it's jolly good fun. It has been freezing hard for some time now, 12 ½ degrees of frost for 2 nights, last night it was 10 and Lilymere is bearing. I could have gone yesterday but didn't really want to seeing there was 3 ins of snow on the ice. It costs 1/6 to go up there on the buses and back again which can be done for 6d less if you catch a town bus. We tried making a skating rink in the yard but the sun thawed it all through the day...

Wizard snowball fights against Sedgwick – both houses produced about 70 people and we ran all over the place slogging each other with snowballs, retreating, attacking and wheeling – all sorts of tactics in formation.

I kept a diary for the Lent Term 1956. Apart from games and sport, the majority of entries are anxiously recording the presence of snow and ice, and the sledging, skating and snowball fighting I was engaged in as follows.

January 1956

Sunday 22: Some boys climbed the fells and found thick ice on a tarn.

Tuesday 24: There was some snow. I went up higher winder in snow 2" on top.

Wednesday 25: Went sledging on house sledge. Although it was a crock and a bit decrepid. It was jolly good fun.

Thursday 26 Jan: I(t) rained hard in the night so that most of the ice melted and so I had to go on a very slippery run.

February 1956

Wednesday 1: Still cold. Snowed in night, a bit of sledging.

Thursday 2: Went skating on Frostrow, rather a lot of holes but quite good fun.

Friday 3: Went skating again some people went on skating pond but Frostrow was very good

Saturday 4: There was snow in the night which turned to rain and it thawed all day so that our hopes for Lilymere absolutely went - skating on Frostrow quite good.

Saturday 11: Snowed one sixth of an inch in night.

Monday 13: Snowed quite a bit.

Friday 17: Extra half I just strolled up Dee about 2 miles. Some boys went skating on Holme Fell tarn. V.G. I hear.

Saturday 18: I went skating on Frostrow it was a terrible surface.

Sunday 19: Sledging on Holme fell tarn. V.G.

Monday 20: Snowed 1 and a half inches in night and day. Went round Straight bridge. Some people were sledging.

Tuesday 21: snowed all day

Rag Ex [i.e. snowballing run] Drifts 4' deep on Western H.

Wednesday 22: Another Rag Ex, Eastern ft.

J. Dayroom v S. Dayroom [the two dayrooms fought each other along the run – as I still remember]. Good fun

Thursday 23: Went sleding. Not bad. Cleared yard

In 1957 it was cold again. In my diary I noted events in February as follows:

Wednesday 13: Snowed on high fells.

Thursday 14: A bit of snow on the higher fells.

Friday 15: A bit of snow on Higher Winder and above.

Saturday 16: Snow when we woke up 1 inch deep. Thawed and snowed in day. Went sledging.

Tuesday 19: Went to Holme Fell tarn to see if it was freezing. Nearly enough ice but Spring [a Lupton boy] went through.

Wednesday 20: Snowed in evening. About half inch.

Thursday 21: Fair amount of snow on ground. House Ex.

Sledging and skating. Went up Holme Fell again in rugger boots. A bit of skating. About 6 people (T.Vignoles) went through.

Saturday 23: Rag Ex [snowballing run] - Jolly cold but good fun.

Snowed quite a bit in day very hard wind.

I summarized these short entries the next day, 24 February, in a letter to my parents as follows.

The weather has got much worse lately. The snow started about a week ago on the higher fells and it slowly came lower until last Saturday (16th) it snowed down here an inch deep. We went sledging which consisted of pulling the sledge out about a mile and then having a snowball fight for about half an hour during which I actually sledged only once. ...

It continued fine on Teusday and as there were rumours that Holme Fell tarn was frozen and bearing I went up there as did about 40 other people. After a steep climb of about a mile we reached the tarn but the ice was only about 2" thick and was melting fast. I went on just round the edge so that I could say that I had been on. Barnes a boy in our house skated across it 3 times in the middle where it was unsafe and only put his foot in at the edge. [SKETCH Small picture of the tarn, with 'safish' and 'unsafe' areas shaded, and arrow of where I skated, dotted line for Barnes, and star 'Where a boy went right in']

On the same day, Sandy wrote to his parents:

On Tuesday some people went skating on Holme Fell, the ice only bore for a bit and then some of them fell in.

I went up to Frost row to try and skate on Friday. We took all our skates and our jeans and our jersies [sic] from home (and it was all quite colourful) but the ice could not bear a stone - so as there were 11 of us in the junior dayroom and 8 in the senior day room, the J day room went up one hill with a marsh at the bottom and the others on the far side. The S day room types came charging up the hill; it was half snowballing half fighting. We tried to drive them down the hill into the bog at the bottom, sometimes they won, sometimes we won. It was wonderful fun [sketch of profile of slope with marsh at bottom, J day room defending the marsh, S Dayroom up the slope].

Yesterday it snowed from 1230 to 3.30 so we all went out sledging. Jamie borrowed someone's really flashy sledge with automatic steering and he decided to play squash so he lent it to me. But another guy said it had been lent to him so I said he was wrong (which he was) but the guy said he was going to take it. J said to the guy to give it to me, so the guy did. It is a super sledge and the sledging place is wonderful.

The following year, the spring of 1958, there was also some cold weather and again both Sandy and I wrote about the winter delights.

I wrote to my parents on 26 January 1958:

I am afraid that our spell of skating seems to have finished, for a while anyway. We never got as far as Lillimere but we had some enjoyable skating on some of the little tarns around here and in the house yard.

We managed to get some skating in the yard by stamping down the snow and carrying bucket after bucket of water from the changing room up some narrow stairs down some steps literally covered with ice and across the road and then swilling down the track. But typically after about five days of frost when we had made the best surface yet it decided to rain and thaw, so bang went our hope of skating.

Sandy seems to have been more adventurous, despite the uncertain prospects, writing home at length on the same day.

Tuesday afternoon I went tobogganing. There were two sledges between the four of us. We did not go on the school run on Frostrow but made many runs on the golf course. It was terrific fun and we went on till about a quarter past five. Then on Tuesday night it froze 26° of frost e.g. = 6° F. It was very cold in bed. But all this frost was wasted because we started [making] the house yard [rink], making banks and rolling on Tuesday afternoon; and on Tuesday night the prefects got a hose and turned it on to the snow - it was a fire hose. The snow just shot up in bumps and the whole thing was wrecked. Luckily after about two minutes of hosing the hose broke down. But on Wednesday night we all threw fire buckets on to it to from the top. This worked well but was not thick enough (23° of Frost). We skated for the first time on Friday and there is now very good floodlighting and a loud speaker which plays dance music. This morning it is unskateable but we all had yesterday skating.

On Thursday we decided to go skating on Holme Fell tarn. The snow was very thick but there was also a thick mist. Me and three others set off very quickly and were the first out. Unfortunately we knew it was on Holme Fell but we did not know where. Anyhow we met another guy, a senior in Hart House, and followed him, but he took the wrong route and went up the steep face of Holme fell and we had to climb about 200 yds on our hands and knees. Eventually we asked this Hart House chap if he knew where he was going - and he said No! Holme Fell tarn is about 2/3 of the way up on the Sedbergh side and we realised we were now going down the far side, so we climbed back up and found the cairn. We then went back down and saw the tarn. We realised that on the way up we passed the tarn by not more than 100 yds but the mist was so thick we could not see it. By the time we arrived the ice was pretty thin and very crowded. Most people left fairly soon and it got better but 2 people went through and it was not terrific.

We went skating on Wednesday on Frost Row. We were the first there and it was very good until half the school came.

The following year, 1959, the *Luptonian* noted that:

Skating has been more popular than rigger this term, chiefly because Lilymere froze sufficiently for the first time for four years. The House took up ice-hockey and many people found it far more difficult than it looked. Porter and Knox were particularly able performers.

I wrote in a letter on 27 January, *I came back to school on Sunday afternoon to immediately start skating on our local little tarn, and on Monday and Tuesday I have been skating on Lilymere.*

Sandy wrote more fully on 8 February:

Yesterday Lilymere was lovely - it was the first day since Tuesday and the surface was very good for ice hockey for it was not too fast, six of us in the senior day room played some senior Powell House chaps. Jamie and the Head of House came along for quarter of an hour and all together we played for about an hour. It was a very good game but we lost 10-8 after having led 8-3. Then on Tuesday the ice was even better so that even a little flick of a hockey stick sent the puck about 100 yards or when we shot a goal or passed hard it went straight into the bank and after having fished it out of the rhododendrons for the fiftieth time we gave it up. All the snow had melted on the top and it had rained as well, and then frozen over again which gave it this lovely surface.

There is evident delight in ice hockey, which I remember both on Lilymere and at the Tarns in the Lake District. Probably this was my favourite game or sport, a sheer delight as one swooped across the glassy surface.

One thing that strikes me is the way in which snow and ice, as at the Dragon, suddenly liberated the school. It was felt to be special, limited, not to be missed, and in both cases we were given extra time to enjoy it. I have never gone skiing or indulged in any winter sports abroad since, though I continued to skate in the Lakes for a few years after leaving school. But I shall not remember one of the soaring experiences of those years.

River bathing

There is a good deal in Jamie's letters, in particular, about swimming as a competitive sport in the School baths. I must have done a little swimming there in order to pass my 'lengths' which were required before one could go river bathing. But I did not enjoy the taste of chlorine, and was not, unlike Jamie, any good at fast swimming. So my pleasure in swimming at Sedbergh was of another kind - namely my first introduction to river bathing. This was a pleasure which I shared with Jamie and Sandy, and we all wrote home to our parents about this.

Sandy gives some lovely accounts of river bathing with the snorkels and flippers which I now remember. He wrote on June 23rd 1957:

It has been wonderfully hot until Saturday; on Sunday I went for a river bathe about twenty of us went. It was boiling hot, both the river and the temperature. I took my stop watch and nearly everyone had goes to try and stay under water the longest. Mr Durran can stay under for 49 seconds; a boy stayed under for 49 seconds as well. That was the record most people do about 23 seconds, J and I can only do about 18 (me about 15) though I don't think there is much point in trying too hard, because I know what happened when I tried too hard in America (I got funny old headaches).

The following year, in late July he wrote:

Today I went for a river bathe in the Lune with 7 other bronzes. It was very hot and we put on many sweaters and ran out there and got very hot and had a lovely bathe. I took my goggles and we could see many fish. We found an old canoe and had great fun. It sank about 3 times and it was great fun all diving from it. It was very very hot indeed.

And in his last summer, when I had left Sedbergh he writes in mid June 1960:

Deer are out, fish hunting is IN! - because it is fantastically hot, even too hot to climb the hills. Saturday was an off day, and Sunday we went bathing and went to our private pool for the day. We took underwater things, masks etc and lo and behold what do you think we saw - fish of 2 ½ to 3 lbs - two sea trout under the rocks and some smaller ones upstream. So long as one keeps under water and comes up behind them they take little notice, so we have made a 3 ft stick with a [double spinner] hook stuck into the end, and wrist strap of elastic like this [sketch]. We will have a guard but if anyone comes we are either fishing for eels, or if the possibility were that one had a fish one could always let go. Am dying to try this out and have great hopes. ... As you can see in one of the photos there is a water's meet, a big salmon pool, 25 yards upstream, but we must learn to walk before we can run.

Jamie comments generally in his introduction to his letters:
'Summer brought outings to swim in Lords Dub and other pools (there was one near the railway viaduct bridge - each house had in theory its own pool). It was a long walk or jog, to get there, carrying swimmers and a towel. Often the water was wrong: too cold or, in warm dry spells, not enough of it. Nettles, prickly grass and sharp rocks were a nuisance, and clegs and horse flies a menace. It was not all it was cracked up to be, but in the right conditions, a slide down waterfalls between rocks on one's backside or diving deep into clear water, hoping to see fish in the pools was great fun.'

My only account in a letter was in my last summer, when I wrote to my parents on 24 July 1959, *After the very hot start yesterday it slowly grew cloudy and almost immediately after a most enjoyable river bathe with mask etc. it began to rain. However it was very warm rain and we did not get really wet as our towels seemed to absorb a lot of water.*

*

Fortunately my pleasure in such swimming is recorded in more detail in a piece which I wrote for the school magazine. It is worth including in full both as a description of some of the happiest moments, alongside skating and fishing, and also to show what could lie behind my one brief remark in a letter.

Having produced two poems for *The Luptonian* in the Spring of 1959, I published another prose piece in the Summer 1959 edition (vol, XII, no.2), while still Treasurer. I was aged about seventeen and a half and taking my 'A' levels that term.

THE LUNE

"I slip, I slide, I gloom, I glance,
Among my skimming swallows;
I make the netted sunbeam dance
Against my sandy shallows."

Anyone who has been on a river-bathe knows the feeling of anticipation as you approach the pool. On the steep walk up Howgill lane the sun blazes down, the tar on the road bubbles, and sticks to your shoes. There is not enough wind to tremble the strands of wool on the fences. The parching dust billows up as you run down the lane to where the glaring white farm-house stands out from the shade. At last, down through the trees, there is a shimmering of water. The heat seems to grow more intense, in contrast to the shouts and splashes from below. You race down the last hill through the thistles and arrive panting on the bank. Here the water sweeps smoothly through the baking black rocks on which brown bodies lie roasting in the sun. Clothes are flung pellmell, and after a few seconds effort dusty gym-shoes are replaced by "flippers."

The sun still streams down but for a second the water looks cold. After a moment's hesitation, however, you slide in. For a split second a sharp pang of both pleasure and pain tingles through the body as the green liquid envelopes you; then you lean back, resting on the soothing air-like current. Goggles and snorkel are adjusted and you glide off across the pool, eyes trying to penetrate its mysteries.

A new fantastic world opens out before you, a world of greens and yellows, greys and blacks. At first you merely fan the water in the shallows with twitching flippers, and like a hawk floating in the sky, you gaze down. On the bottom the broken light glints on the pebbles, then as your shadow moves inch by inch out from the shore the pebbles recede and are lost in green. Soon you seem to be fluttering over the misty Alps, as out of the green chasm below shark-backed rocks pierce upward. In the distance the black rock precipice of the far bank shelves down into an abrupt void.

The mysteries of the hidden valleys are inviting. An arching of the back and you slide down, down between the rocky walls. The green turns to pebbles which swoop up to meet you but after one grab you soar up again to bob out, spluttering a shout of enjoyment to those on the bank. Then down you spiral again to chase the fish which flicker in the gloomy depths.

After a while you decide to try to swim to the top of the pool. Long steady sweeps take you nearly up to the neck of the narrowing gorge. Here where the river froths in eddies you dive down into the black current beneath. Above the white water, crystal-flecked, races, while you lie in the calm beneath. A single stroke and you are somersaulted and swept headlong down, while the rocks flash by. Then you grasp a ledge and your body skids round and comes to rest.

Suddenly you feel strangely tired. A few strokes bring you to the bank, where you flounder awkwardly up the slippery rock. Then you sink back on to the sun-warmed towel, weary limbs spread-eagled, body sucking in the heat. The green bushes seems to close in. Sleep, like the river, overwhelms and envelops, and brings you into yet another mysterious world.'

Swimming in the Manas river in India, or in the Tarns near my Lake District home was equally good but seldom have I enjoyed the extraordinary feeling of weightlessness and whirling waters again with such pleasure.

Fishing

My developing passion for fishing was developed both in the Lake District and at Sedbergh.

As soon as I arrived at the school, my mind was clearly focused on the subject, for on 10 Oct 1955 I wrote home, *This Sunday I think I will probably take a pack lunch out and me myself a rod and fish in the little beck for trout or if the Lune is up try spinning for salmon.*

The following summer I was full of news of my fishing activities, writing on 17 May 1957:

At last I have begun to catch a few fish. I have been fishing three times this week which is pretty good going as I usually have to play cricket. On Tuesday I decided to dry flie for a change in a rapid I caught four of about 6 inches so i decided to try it again on Friday just near the school where it is supposed to be completely fished out and I caught two takeable fish which means they were over 8" which wasn't a bad start as the whole of the rest of the term I only caught 1 small one. So I tried a bit higher up yestarday and I caught about 12 fish only four takeable but they weren't very big the

biggest being just less than half a pound but it has earned me a bit of fame as hardly anyone caught takeable fish around here. Today I am running about 5 miles up the Rawthey where it is not fished hardly at all and I might catch some nice ones.

The autumn was the time for salmon and sea-trout, so on 21 Oct 1956 I wrote home:

On Thursday which was field day we went up the Lune and Barnes who was with me caught a 2 and a half lb sea trout and we went up a small beck and had a fire on which we made toast and it was such good fun that we were planning to do it again today with a sandwich lunch.

On Wednesday 6 November 1957 there was an extra half holiday, so, according to a note in my brown term's event book, 'I went with Bromley, Oliver, Badger. We went to Broad Rain dam and met Christie (Frog) there. Had enlightening conversation about Ma "F" etc. Saw Salmon up to 15 lbs jumping (about 60 in ¼ hour). I took 3 photos. It was cold but sunny.' [I think I may have the photos].

Again, the following summer May and June were the best months for fishing. On 4 May 1958 I wrote: *So far this term I have fished once - I caught 4 fish whose lengths were 10, eight and three quarters, seven and a half and seven inches while I lost one about eleven inches and one about ten inches. They were all on fly and so it seems that, if I have time, the fishing will be quite good.*

Then on 15 June 1958 I wrote that: *I went fishing yesterday. At least it was a kind of fishing which is just suitable for hot summer days. It consists in finding a nice shady bank overhung overhung by trees and overlooking a deep pool. Then you crawl up to the water and drop anything in (i.e. caddis larvae, caterpillar etc) The result of my fishing was 3 plump trout of 10, eight and three quarters and eight and a half ins!*

Autumn returned, and the season for salmon and sea-trout. My efforts here were enormously aided by my friend Alan Barnes, who was not only an excellent fisherman and swimmer, but whose father owned a stretch of the Lune near the school.

I wrote on 2 Nov 1958:

On Friday there was an extra-half and I went fishing for the last day of the salmon season with Barnes, who I have, no doubt, told you about. He has caught about 6 salmon in the last fortnight, on his stretch of the Lune, so when he asked me if I would like to go and play a salmon with him I accepted! His method of catching is slightly - er - irregular! He keeps a look out for the salmon in the water, and when he sees one he casts at it with a largish spoon. It is not actually illegal, but it is pretty effective. He took me to a shallowish pool and started casting into a rapid, after about five minutes his rod bent as if it had got stuck on the bottom (it was a fibre-glass trout rod). We played that salmon for about five minutes before it came off (it was not very large - about 6 lbs). Then he saw a reddish blur which he thought might be a salmon. On the third cast he hooked it. It was quite a big one, and he let me do nearly all the playing. It was foul hooked in the side, and consequently fought very well. It went about 250 yds downstream with me clinging onto the rods following it. It took me 45 mins to land. And when we got it out we put it back! It was a red cock salmon of about 15 lb. But as we were going out to tea we could not be bothered to bring it back! this. But really it was a most enjoyable day.

Waiting for the fishing season to begin was a cause of impatience. Thus I wrote on 22 Feb 1959:

On the other hand the fishing season will be here soon (on the sixteenth of March, four days before the race) so I must start brushing up my tackle. So far when I have been here I have never failed to go out fishing on the first day of the season, and I hope I manage this time. Could you possibly carry out the same arrangement as last year about the fishing licences? I mean that I will buy the Lancashire river board license (15/1) and you buy the Sedbergh one (30/-), for I don't think I would have enough money to buy it

Then, on 16 March 1959 I wrote to my parents:

Yesterday (Sunday) was in fact the first day of the trout season so I duly went out to pay my regards to the new season, and having bought a license from the headmaster (thank you very much for the 30/- - I would have had to be a poacher otherwise - and I met the headmaster while fishing yesterday!). I went off up the Rawthey about 3 miles, as usual I did not catch anything (I have been out on the opening of the season every year since I have been here and never caught a thing!). The water was freezing (esp compared to your lovely warm rivers) and was in highish flood.

*

Alongside the fishing, there was the added pleasure of learning the skill of tying the flies which I would use. This was an optional class taught in the school, with the well-known local fisherman Harvey Askew as our teacher. It was something which Sandy also enjoyed and describes frequently. My own account in letters is as follows:

3 Jan 1956: *By the way I have taken up fly tying and as Steven Grieve came over to stay and he had practiced trying once or twice we were soon hard at work; actually it is not very hard to do provided you have the right materials. Those jungle moorgi and blue jay feathers are super but I am not using them yet as it would be a waste to use them while I am learning, but any more would be extremely useful. Also do you think you could look out for peacocks feathers like this and could you cut of this as the little bits make lovely fuzzy bodies. [Diagram of a peacock feather]. If by any chance you see any feathers (except off chickens) lying about could you send them, as they might be very good ones.*

4 Nov 1956: *Thank you very much for your letter, and also the feathers they all come in very useful as I am taking fly-tying quite seriously.*

25 Oct 1959: *I have taken up fly-tying again and I am busy tying a good supply of sea-trout flies ...*

[I still probably have some of the flies I tied, and certainly some of those I used from this period - I may photograph these later]

*

Fishing was one of the first hobbies in which I set about making a serious study of the best way to achieve my results. So I started to compile statistics and maps which would help me over the months, probably also an activity which filled the winter months with dreams of summer days.

My Lent 1957 diary shows my growing excitement at the approach of the fishing season in early March.

Sunday 3: I walked out to nearly Rawthey Bridge to see what fishing was like. Looks good. Went about 11 miles.

Saturday 9: Went out with Barnes. Had a jolly good time. Went down to river to watch fishing. We saw a celt landed but Mr Barnes caught no Salmon.

Monday 11: Extra half. Went up Rawthey and went to Red Bridge. The weather was lovely. Fish rising well the river in good condition.

Sunday 17: Went fishing for the first time on Rawthey caught 3 fish but water was high the weather was not too bad as it cleared up a bit after chapel.

Thursday 21: Went fishing. Rawthey water still fairly high. Tried pool New bridge with wet fly. Had 1 takeable and 2 not. All with snipe and purple. It was quite cold but fairly sunny.

Friday 22: Went fishing again for an hour. Warmer and fish rising to natural flies. Tried wet flies again, had 3 v. small ones. The water just right.

Sunday 24: Went fishing up Rawthey tried dry-fly and lost about 10 flies. Then went down other side with wet fly. The best part is to fish down side just where current meets pool. Got 6 one takeable.

Monday 25: Extra half - Not nice day. Tried fishing in 4 pools below Red Bridge. Only got 1 - 6 and a half ins. Didn't see many fish.

These diary entries can be compared to the careful account I began to keep from this date of my fishing expeditions in a special notebook. Those for Spring 1957 were as follows:

In 1957 I laid out the main fishing expeditions in the spring.

DATE	Height	Nos. Take	Nos. not	Sizes	Place	Flies (baits)	Not. Flies if any	Comment
17/3/57	7½	0	3	6½, 7, 6½ ins	Pool 5 [2] - [1]	March Brown* = 1 Snipe Purple G. = 1 G. G. Glory* = 1	Blue dun = 6. Not more	Very cold, lost 6 flies
21/3/57	7½	1	2	8½, 7½, 7½ ins	Pool - 2	* Snipe + Purple = 3	Black Nymph - In mouth	Rather cold, missed
22/3/57	7	0	3	6, 5½, 5½ ins	Pool - 2 [1] Pool 5 [2]	* Partridge + Orange = 1 * Snipe + Purple = 2	---	Warmer.
23/3/57	6	1	5	8½, 7½, 6½, 6, 5 ins	Pool 6 [1] Pool 3 [1] Pool 2 [4]	* S + Purple = 5 * Black zulu = 1	(= Blue duns) (Olive?)	Lost 10 flies
25/3/57	5	0	1	6½ ins	4 pools below Red Bridge	* Partridge + Orange = 1	---	Not much took

In that summer I seem to have made twenty-five fishing expeditions, an average of about about two a week, as follows:

1/5/57	4½	Pool on Rawthey + 2 (2) + 3 (1) + 6 (2) + 10 (1)	7 [1]	8, 7½, 6, 6, 6, 5 ins	Greenwells glory* = 5 Black gnift = 1 (only)	Blue Dun (not many)
1/5/57	4	" " " + 3 (4) + 6 (2)	6 [1]	9½, 7½, 6½, 6, 6, 6 ins	Red Upright = 1, Wickham = 1 Greenwells glory* = 4	Black Nymphs; fish rising very pretty, hoped to fish - must be windy and variable. They are not fish. March Brown, Blue Dun, etc. Had 4 salmon pass. More but a bit of rain but Boyd is running.
1/5/57	4	" " below Lords Dub + 3 (1) + 5 (1)	7 [2]	10½, 8½, 7, 6, 6, 5½, 2½ ins	Greenwells glory* = 7	
1/5/57	4	" " just above New Bridge (10)	10 [2]	9, 8½, 6, 7, 6½, 6, 5½, 5, 5, 5	Greenwells glory* = 10	
2/5/57	3	Above Danny bridge opp Clough	4 [1]	5, 6, 5, 7½ ins	Black Spider = 2 Greenwells glory* = 2	A lot of small, easily
3/5/57	3	Above New Br Rocky pools - Clough	2 (0)	6, 6, ins	Gold metal devon.	Got one of 9½ ins to
4/5/57	6	" " " " " "	2 (1)	9, 6. ins	" " "	Rained hard and water
5/5/57	6	" " .. pls. 1, 2, 3.	0 (0)	6 0 ins	" " "	Very cold
2/5/57	5	" " " " "	3 (0)	3, 6, 7½ ins	Dusty grey* = 2 Worm = 1	Very Very Sunny to strike hard to
4/5/57	4	Up Rawthers St M.S. opp.	9 (4)	9¾, 9, 8½, 8½, 7, 6, 5, 5, 4½ (near 7-4)	Greenwells glory* = 9	Very strong downstream otherwise good for
6/5/57	4	" " 2mp. up to bel St M.S.	13 (8)	9¾, 9, 8½, 8½, 8½, 8½, 8½ ins	" " = 13	Very large ones in Dub. Greenwell good.
1/5/57	3½	Hebblethwaite - ½ mile up to	16 (3)	8¾, 7¾, 7½, 7, 6, 7 - 3½ ins	Worm = 16	
1/6/57	2½	Rawthers up to Y with Hebblet	6 (2)	8, 7½, 4½, 4½, 3, 3, 2	Greenwells G [4]	Getting low.
1/6/57	1 3	Above Lords Dub - Jackdaw	2 (2)	9½, 9 ins	Greenwells G [2]	

"DATE"	"PLACE"	"NOS"	"ANY NOTABLE FISH"	"BAIT"	"REMARKS"
23/6/57	Ludge Gill	9 [3]	(7 1/2 - 8) in	Worm	Some quite nice
25/6/57	Lune - above L. Inn	3 [1]	9 1/4 in, 6, 5.	Worm (9 1/4) fly - other	Try U.T. W. W.
26/6/57	Rawthey - riverside	2 [1]	9 3/4, 3 in	" (2)	" "
27/6/57	Lune - L.I. Br just above.	4 [2]	10 1/2", 8 1/4" [Sea Trout]	" (4)	slightly coloured - after c - try spin
29/6/57	Rawthey - Millcrop br	0 [0]	---	Worm, sea trout fly	Not many sea-trout here
30/6/57	Rawthey - Around Rawthey Bridge	9 [4]	8 1/4, 8, 7 3/4, 7 1/2	2 on worm 2 on Carap "Badger"	Quite good. - went w Edgen. lovely country.
7/7/57	Rawthey - Birks	1 [0]	6 3/4	fly	No good - water c
14/7/57	" - Above N. Br	3 [1]	9, 7, 6	worm (in feet current)	Water coloured
21/7/57	" above Cross Keyes	2 [2]	8, 7 1/2	spinner (minnow in fly)	M caught first fish! Sun
22/7/57	" " N Br	---	---	tried Vibro - hook bitten	But had 6 bites -
28/7/58	Lune above Kellington	---	---	spoon - Vibro	Much too bright

1958

In the Spring of 1958 I seem to have gone fishing twice. The basic facts were as follows:

DATE	H/W	N.T.	T.N.	SIZES	PLACE	BAIT	COMMENT
① 15/3/58	4 1/2	0	0	---	Lords Dub - Clough pl.	Wet fly	No good - too cold.
② 16/3/58	4	1	1	8 1/4"	Red Br - Cautly Br.	Caught on March Br (dry).	Plenty of fish good.

I commented on these two expeditions.

1. The season started very cold. Too cold to wade. There is not much moving down the river - I only saw one rise. I had none myself.
2. It was a warmer day. I caught the first one about 5 pools above Red Bridge. It was on a home made March Brown. Large and spidery. I had another takeable (8 1/2") on a smaller March Brown (dry) but it bust the gut. There were hundreds of fish, mostly in the pools, but one or two were in the slower water of the necks of the pools. Dry fly was more effective than wet - quite a few fish rising. There were some nice fish. Most of them were takeable anyway. Dim [nickname of a friend] went to the Lune and saw 15 inch trout. He did not catch anything needless to say.

In a small brown notebook I noted for 1958, some eighteen expeditions before July 13th, again averaging nearly two a week.

FISHING (Summer '58)

April 29 2(t) 4(all) - (fly) - Mid Row - 10ins.
 7 May 5th 3(t) 6(all) - (worm) Up Row - 8 $\frac{1}{2}$ - 5.
May 28th - - (Rawthey) - (Spinner) -
May 22nd 5(t) 10(all) - Blue Quill - Up Rawthey. 9-6
May 24th - - (Lure) - - - (Spinner)
May 28th - - (Lure) - (worm) - 7-8 $\frac{1}{2}$
June 1st 6(t) - Clough - Blue quill $\frac{1}{2}$ - 1 mile.
June 3rd 8(t) - 11(all) - Clough Black quill $\frac{1}{2}$ - 1 $\frac{1}{2}$.
June 7th 6(t) - 12(all) - Cl - Black red quill - 10" - *
 7 June 10th 4(t) - 4(all) - Cl (Mitt) - Gr Quill - $\frac{10}{10}$, $\frac{8\frac{3}{4}}{8\frac{3}{4}}$
June 14th 3(t) - 3(all) - Raw - New Br - (worm)
June 20th 2(t) - 3(all) - Raw - 2 $\frac{1}{2}$ big pl. - 12 $\frac{1}{2}$, 9"
June 25th 3(t) - 3(all) - Cl - Mitt - quill 10"
 6 July 5th - O - 3(all) - spoon - Dee - not very good
 5 July 6th - 4 - 11(all) - worm - Raw (4 \rightarrow) - 7-8 $\frac{1}{2}$ "
 4 July 8th - - - - worm for Sea - in Lure.
 3 $\frac{1}{2}$ July 10 10(t) - 10(all) - worm up Row $1\frac{3}{4}$ - 4 - 9 $\frac{1}{2}$,
 4 July 13 8(t) - 9(all) - worm up Row - 2 $\frac{1}{2}$ - 5 - 8 $\frac{1}{4}$.
 - * = up to Punny bridge.

Against the entry of July 10 I added the note: 'In one pool long thin one opp to lodge house beyond Hebblethwaite. Using 2 hook tackle & spinning reel - cast into pl with no wts - steep sides - very effective.'

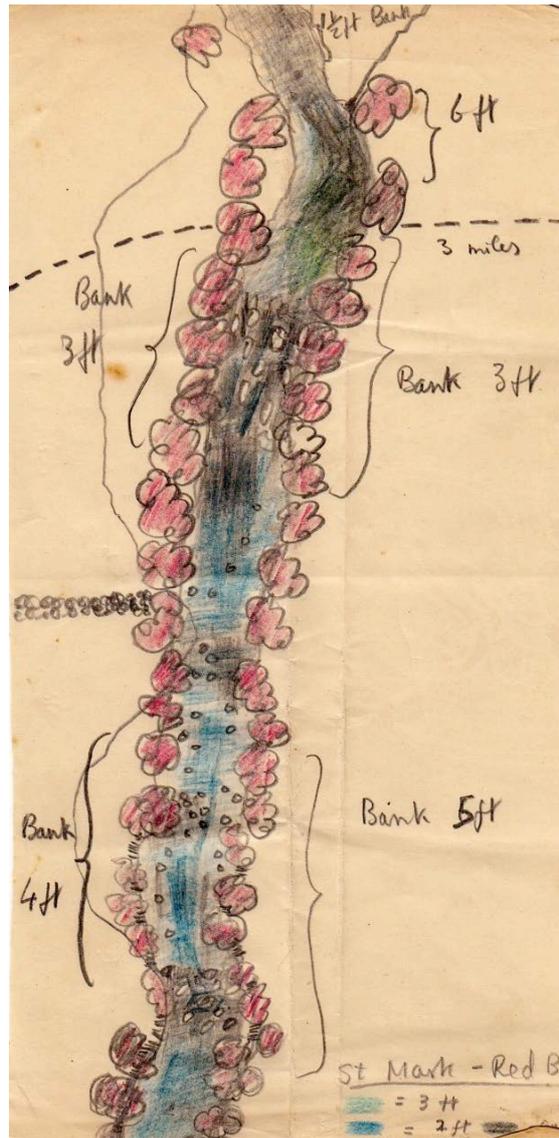
Against the entry for July 13 I wrote: 'You must have at least 2 small or 1 big worm on. To be able to cast at least 15 yds. Best when water is very low and sun is up. Watch out (1) Shadow (ii) Midges & Flies!!'

As well as the statistics, I drew maps. O seem to have drawn maps of each of 21 stretches on the Rawthey as follows:

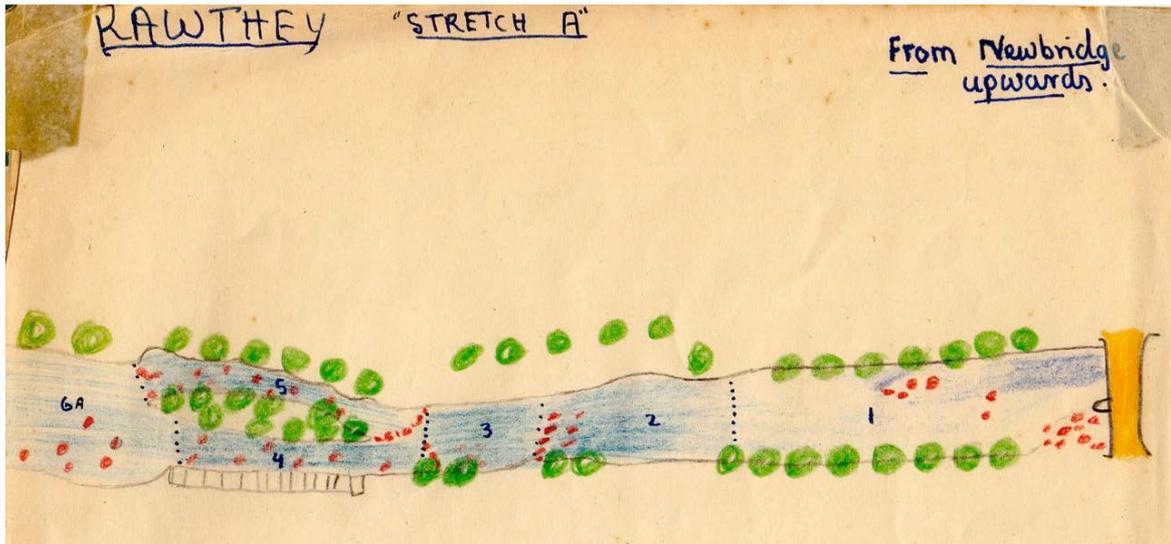
Rawthey

<u>Stretch</u>	<u>From</u>	<u>To</u>
1.	Waters Meet	— Middleton Br
2.	Middleton Br	— Where Beck Joins
3.	Beck	— Ford
4.	Ford	— Bottom Lords Dubpond
5.	Btm Lords Dub pl	— Btm Jackdaw Br pl
6.	Btm Jackdaw br pl	— Btm Dee pl.
7.	—————	— Btm Birks Mill
8.	—————	— A Kay
9.	Milthrop Br	— New Br
10.	New Bridge	— Top Long Bend pl
11.	Top Long Bend pl	— Btm Clough pl.
12.	Btm Cl pl	— Straight br
13.	Str Br	— Hebblethwaite
14.	Hebblethwaite	— to Pub
15.	— Dub	— Crossshaw Beck
16.	Crossshaw Beck	— Thrusygill
17.	Thrusygill	—
18.		— St Mark
19.	St Mark	— Red Br
20.	Red Br	—
21.		— Cawley Br

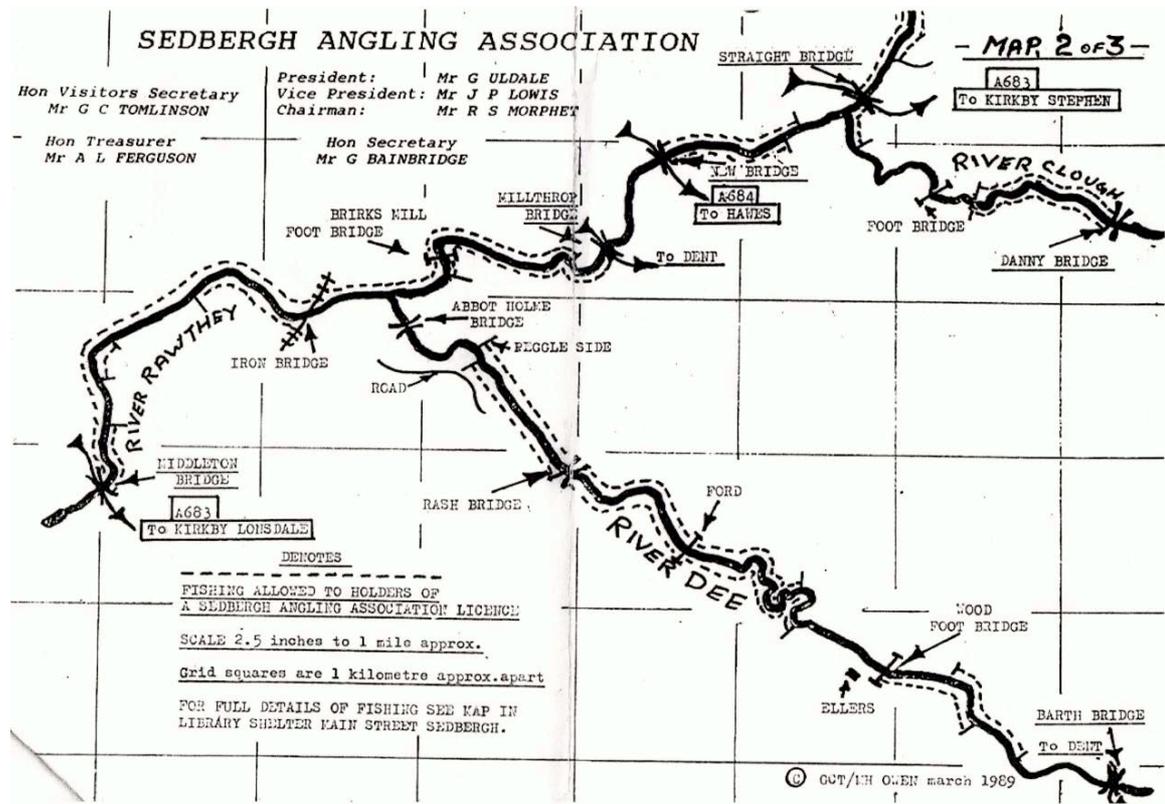
Only three of these survive, of which stretch 19, from St Mark to Red Bridge, I drew as follows:



I also decided to draw three maps of the river from Newbridge upwards, to where the Clough joined the Rawthey. Here is the bottom section (both these maps are in colour, showing the depth of the water in map 19, and the rocks marked in red in 'Stretch A')

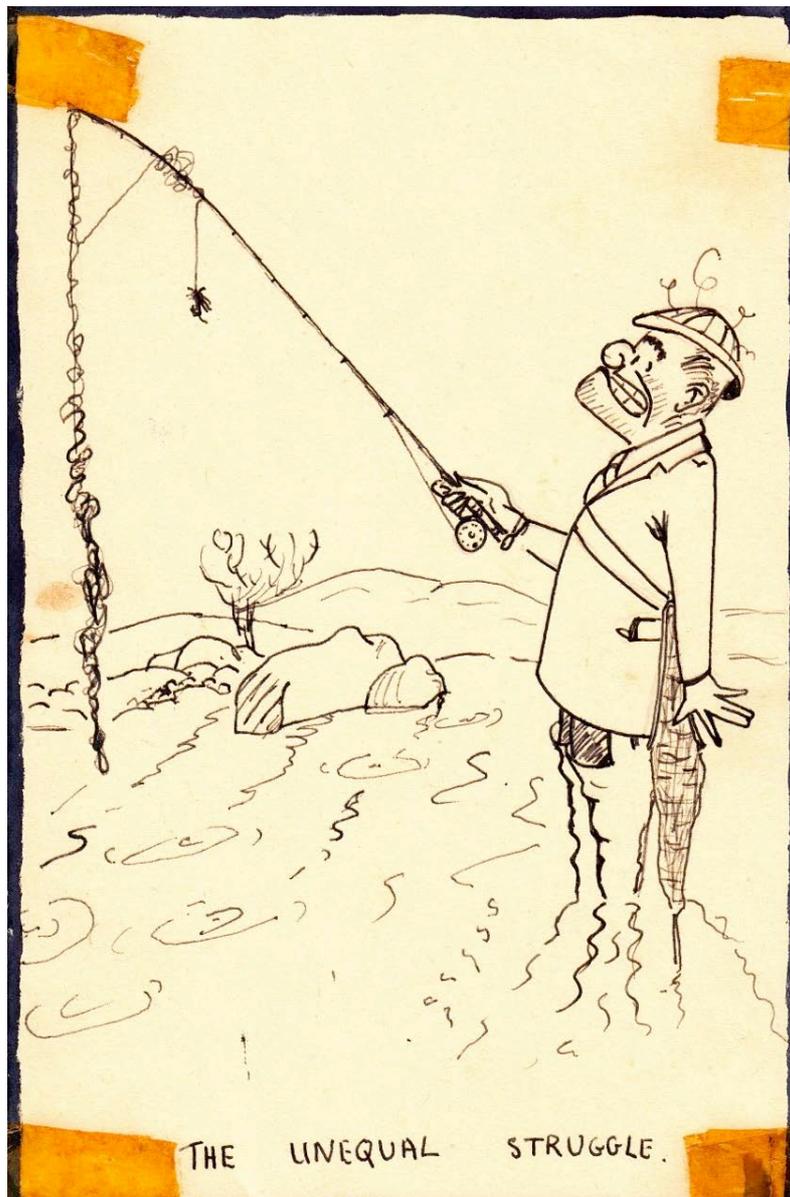


To set this in context, here is one of three maps produced by the Sedbergh Angling Association, which were no doubt issued to me with my fishing licence, of the fishable areas of the Rawthey, Dee, Clough and Lune. This is the middle section, and the stretch from New Bridge to the junction with the Clough, which took me three maps, is at the top right and is well under a mile.



And to console myself in a sport which had many trials and tribulations as well as thrills, I turned to reading. I avidly read fishing books and occasionally, when I saw

amusing cartoons I would copy them. The following is one of five which I kept stuck on with tape on an appropriate wall, having copied it from one of my books.



Fishing

I had started to fish in the canal at Oxford when I first arrived in England. The 'Confessions of a Schoolboy' written when I was about eighteen at school, contains the following. 'We went to live first at Oxford with my grandparents and aunt. The house was too small for us really, but I spent most of my time down fishing in the little canal.' Here I touch on something which may have lain behind my obsession with fishing – and the thing that seems to explain the fact that canal fishing was once the largest outdoor activity of the British and boomed during the Industrial Revolution. Both at Oxford, where there were huge tensions in the household, and throughout my life, fishing was a justified escape. It was a licence to be alone and in control of one's own thoughts and destiny. It was a calming, zen-like, pursuit, especially canal fishing, and I early discovered that it took me away into my own world. If one said one was just going off, adults would be suspicious. But fishing was a permitted form of escape and much of my childhood revolved from then on round it. The end of the account of my first venture is worth noting, since it shows that I had some success – and that at eighteen I had a sense of humour. 'One day much to the surprise of everyone, including myself, I caught a fish. My sister rather disappointed me by not going into ecstasies over the bony, five inch fish which I said I would let her have specially for supper.'

Though I did some fishing in ponds and in the sea and in the river at the Dragon (I remember a terrible occasion when I left a baited hook by the river and discovered a dead bird on the end of the line the next morning), it was when we moved to the Lake District that I became really obsessed by it, about the age of thirteen. I may have done some on my trip to India when I was eleven as going up the rivers and fishing for mahseer was one of the main consolations of my father as a tea planter, but I do not remember that, and only dimly remember fishing in a small pond near the bungalow. But when in Windermere the letters and diaries of my family bear witness to a tremendous rush of enthusiasm. At first I was spinning for coarse fish in Windermere, but when we moved to near Hawkshead in the spring of 1955, just before I went to Sedbergh, where there were becks and tarns nearby, I began to fish for trout in earnest, though my first trout fishing had actually been in Scotland with my father's parents – where there was a trout stream behind the house and where (as the photograph in Dorset Days shows) I caught my first trout.

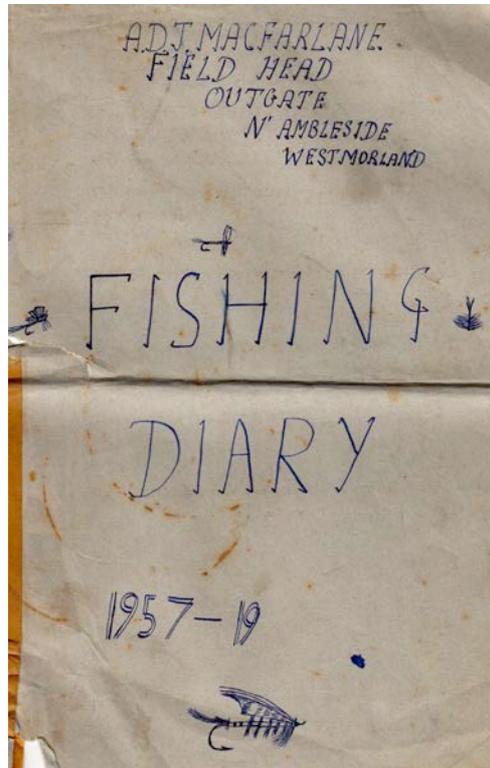
I shall document this further since it was such an important part of my time at Sedbergh. I learnt to tie flies, some of which I still have. Learning to fly fish properly and becoming aware that dry fly fishing was the most effective way to catch trout. The mapping of likely pools in diagrams; the careful statistical account of what I had caught and where was best and what flies I should use; the watching of salmon leaping on the Lune. The first catching of sea trout in the Duddon river. Moments in the evenings when every trout in the pool below the bridge on Black beck seemed to want to take my fly, or when surprisingly large trout tugged on my worm in the rushing waterfalls half a mile below the house as the beck fell down to the Lake, all these bring back vivid memories. I shall try to remember particular moments of ecstasy when a really big fish rose from the depths or when it was a particularly suprising or beautiful or memorable moment. Fishing was a passion and I probably remember that part of my time at

Sedbergh and in the Lakes better than almost anything else of those five years – more than love, music, intellectual excitements. Fish, fish, fish – even my sister had the nickname Fish, for some reason.

One of the highlights was when I went out to Assam to see my parents. Around my seventeenth birthday, we went on a mahseer fishing expedition up the beautiful Manas river which flowed down from the Bhutan hills, as I remember. Here are a few lines of my diary as to what happened. On Sunday 11th January I wrote: ‘Yesterday at last I had success. I fished down a little tributary to Fulgari and on the way I did not catch anything.... [we went down a mile or so on an elephant] when we arrived I could see it was a lovely pool, but my tackle got in such a mess that Mummy and Anne had to go back to meet the others at Fulgari before I had really started to fish. I fished down the side of one rapid and on a Macdonald I caught 2 fish first 7 then 9 lbs and lost a third because my spoon broke. From the back of the elephant and actually fishing we saw 2 Brahmini ducks, 4 buffalo (they are enormous), 1 hog and 1 barker deer (I think) and Mummy saw one doe sambur.’ The account is accompanied by a detailed map of where we fished and what we caught and a photograph. The notes accompanying the map note that ‘1 equals the place where I hooked 7 lb fish on Sunday on a 2” macdonald. It took about 8 minutes to land (on split cane 7 ft trout spinning rod and a borrowed multiplying reel) 2 equals the place where I hooked a 9 lb fish, also on Sunday. It took about 12 mins to land but the tackle was the same as for 1.’ I also caught a 9 and a half pound masheer on the Tuesday ‘It took about 10 minutes to land – I was helped by Mummy and Anne – Mummy hopping around on the bank saying ‘let it go’ ‘let it go’ etc. (Usually when the fish wanted to come in!) I noted that the three fish were of the thick-lipped and golden varieties, the largest I added a note ‘crossed with porpoise’ with a drawing of its long snout. I give these details to show my excitement. These were the biggest fish I would ever catch in my life – something which, of course, I did not know at the time.

The passion was greatest at Sedbergh, but continued for another ten years or so and when I met Sarah, aged 30 or so, I was still fishing and used to delight her parents by catching small trout in their stream near Sedbergh where they lived. And when our own children were growing up we did some fishing, both in the sea and elsewhere. When I went to Nepal to do fieldwork I thought of fishing, but did not have a rod and realized the rivers were too bombed out to contain much. And from the mid-thirties onwards, I fished less and less – just in the Hebrides, both for trout and for some wonderful days mackerel fishing with my father in his lobster boat. Then I learnt to enjoy just watching nature and began to feel repelled by the process of hooking a worm. Now I carefully scoop up worms on the roads and paths and put them safely in the grass. There seems too much death and cruelty in the world to add my own small acts of killing to it. So it is difficult to remember the passion – but it was certainly there.

Passion for Fishing



THE TROUT (after style of G.M.Hopkins) Alan Macfarlane

See its swirling, curling, twisting red-flecked skies
Agile form, rising through the zenith of plunging green,
Sweeping up; up to swirl down, a gnat? Unseen
Except by its red, pointed misty eyes.
Gold through the clear murk of the chessboard shadows it dies
Back into the depths, merging, blending, keen
Eyes search, search in vain for its sinewy shadow, clean
And plump. In the pot-swirling, scum encrusted pool
It lies - disguised.

In the frost-biting, stone and iron winter's wail,
The black, back bent, bludgeoned trees, pale
And harsh, greyly, glower over the steely ice;
Where black, lank, double stretched, a nail
Of a fish, once fat, now hammered into a stale,
Stagnant life, lies gripped in an all-embracing vice.

[I wrote this poem when I was seventeen and it was published in the house magazine at Sedbergh. Although I acknowledged the style of Gerard Manley Hopkins, there is, especially in the second stanza, quite a strong debt to Dylan Thomas, whom I was also keen on at this time.]

*

I had started to fish in the canal at Oxford when I first arrived in England. In the 'Confessions of a Schoolboy' written when I was seventeen, contains the following: 'We went to live first at ford with my grandparents and aunt. The house was too small for us really, but I spent most of my time down fishing in the little canal.' Here I touch on something which may have lain behind my obsession with fishing - and the thing that seems to explain the fact that canal fishing was once the largest outdoor activity of the British and boomed during the Industrial Revolution.

Both at Oxford, where there were tensions in the household, and throughout my life, fishing was a justified escape. It was a licence to be alone and in control of one's own thoughts and destiny. It was a calming, zen-like, pursuit, especially canal fishing, and I early discovered that it took me away into my own world. If one said one was just going off, adults would be suspicious. But fishing was a permitted form of escape and much of my childhood revolved from then on round it. It was also a craft or art, a path or special calling, the kind of special skill which is termed a way (Dao, Tao or Do) in Chinese and Japanese, as in Ju-do, Ken-do, Cha-do etc.

Though I did some fishing in ponds and in the sea and in the river during my years in Dorset, and my first trout fishing had actually been in Scotland with my father's parents when I was about twelve- where there was a trout stream behind the house and where I caught my first trout at the age of eight, it was really when we moved to the Lake District that I became really obsessed by fishing.

From the time when we arrived near Lake Windermere in the winter of 1954, the letters and diaries of my family, bear witness to a tremendous rush of enthusiasm. At first I used a worm and a spinner for coarse fish in Windermere, but when we moved to near Hawkshead in the spring of 1955, just before I went to Sedbergh, where there were becks and tarns nearby, so I began to fish for trout in earnest.

I shall document in the account of Sedbergh my equally keen, if not more passionate interest in fishing at school. Learning to tie flies, some of which I still have [see illustration] Learning to fly fish properly and becoming aware that dry fly fishing was the most effective way to catch trout; the mapping of likely pools around the schools; the careful statistical account of what I had caught and where was best and what flies I should use; the watching of salmon leaping on the Lune, all this I shall recount elsewhere.

One of the highlights was when I went out to Assam to see my parents. Around my seventeenth birthday, we went on a mahseer fishing expedition up the beautiful Manas river which flowed down from the Bhutan hills, as I remember. The excited preparation for that holiday, and the detailed diary of the fishing and natural scenery is given in a later chapter on our trip. I will give these details to show my excitement; these were the biggest fish I would ever catch in my life.

Here I will deal with fishing in the Lakes: the first catching of sea trout in the Duddon river; moments in the evenings when every trout in the pool below the bridge on Black beck seemed to want to take my fly, or when surprisingly large trout tugged on

my worm in the rushing waterfalls half a mile below the house as the beck fell down to the Lake. I remember particular moments of ecstasy when a really big fish rose from the depths or when it was a particularly surprising or beautiful or memorable moment in some wild spot. Fishing was a passion and I probably remember that part of my time at Sedbergh and in the Lakes better than almost anything else of those five years – more than love, music, intellectual excitements. Fish, fish, fish – even my sister and my best friend at Sedbergh had the nickname Fish.

I think that fishing must have meant so much because it focuses several things together. The escape to loneliness, something akin to what Yeats describes in his poem on ‘An Irish Airman Foresees his Death’ or St Exupery memorably captures in *Flight to Arras*. A time to think and sort out in a quiet way the pressures of growing up. Then there is clearly the excitement. Everything is still and in waiting, then the sudden tug, splash, flash of gold beneath the water and the battle is on. Then there was the fact that it took one to so many beautiful places. I would never have spent hours at dawn, in the heat of the day, at sunset and even at night in glorious countryside, watching the changing seasons, noting the minutiae of insect and other life, and entranced by swiftly flowing water which soothes the eyes, if I had not fished.

Then there was the praise and esteem of others – a special treat to cook, eat and perhaps share one’s trout in a school where food was short. Then the sociability, the discussions, the stories told, and especially the sharing with my father who I found it more difficult to relate to as I grew older and more immersed in intellectual things. He was passionate about fishing and later we would go on special fishing holidays to Scotland and share fishing on the Hebrides when he retired to a croft there. We could write to each other about it, and plan and exchange notes. Even my mother, for a while, was very enthusiastic, something I learn from her letters. And

Finally it was an outlet for my dreams and plans. I would spend the barren winters drawing maps, making flies, repairing rods, working out stratagems. Then through the trees and in numerous different streams, lochs and tarns I would pit myself against the foe. The passion was greatest precisely in these five years before going on to Oxford. It took over from electric trains, airguns, toy soldiers and other hobbies and was what I dreamt about, talked about and became most excited about. Later it ebbed over the years. From my mid-thirties onwards I fished less and less – just in the Hebrides where my parents had a croft, both for trout and for some wonderful days mackerel fishing with my father in his lobster boat. Then I learnt to enjoy just watching nature and began to feel repelled by the process of hooking a worm.

*

The epicentre of my fishing was a small stream, or beck as they were called in the Lakes, called Black Beck, which came down from the slopes of Black Crag, and wound through meadows to Esthwaite Water. It was a surprising stream. It seemed, and seems in memory, such a small trickle between stones, especially after dry weather. But it was well covered for most of its length by overhanging trees and the water that oozed from Black Crag must have been rich in nutrients, for over the years I had many adventures with the trout there.

As I recall, the best time was dusk, when I could walk down for an hour, through a winding lane, and arrive at a stone bridge over the beck a few hundred yards away. I used to lean over the bridge and watch quarter pounder trout rising or sliding in under the bridge. One evening something seemed to have called together all the trout into this one pool – only about twenty feet in length and a couple of feet deep. I approached the pool across the thick grass of the neighbouring field and dropped in a worm. Splash – and a tightening of the line, a fine nine inch trout was on the bank. Usually this would frighten away the other remaining few fish. But it did not do so this evening.

As I gently dropped another worm in, another tug and another fish. This must be the last I thought as I dropped the worm in again (lovely striped worms from the dung heap of our neighbour Mr Barr). Another tug and a moment of taught line racing through the water – and another fish. Amazing, but, as I recall, not the last. I seem to remember that I caught half a dozen trout in that one pool – and several of them worth keeping. The mind alone can fill in the darkening landscape, the buzz of insects, the early dew on the grass.

*

It is almost impossible to recapture the excitements, but a few memorable outings are recorded in letters and in the fishing diary I kept at the time.

1956

Fiona to parents 1 August 1956:

In the afternoon it was slightly drizzling but we went to B[lack]. Beck which hadn't flooded then and did some fishing. Alan caught several fish and Stanly caught one and he was just about to conk it one and slithered down a rock into the water He slithered after it only just got away it was quite big. But not as big as the one Alan caught me for supper he only caught one he could keep out but that one was jolly tasty.

Alan to parents 7 August 1956:

I fished in Black Beck the day before it rose and I caught a nice fat quarter pound trout, then a few days later I went to the Brathay where I caught about about 12 small trout on wet fly in a fairly large water but I wish I had fished the day before because I heard that the "Locals" had caught 5 good fish, 3 of them over 1 and a half lbs. I suppose these fish were up from the lake.

Alan to parents 20 August 1956:

I have not fished for the last three days a bit earlier I caught 24, 12, 19 trout in little becks the first and last in Rydal beck that runs in the bottom of Fairfield basin. But they were all small ones the biggest being about 7 and a half inches but as the ones out of Rydal beck were mostly caught on Dry fly it was quite good fun.

I noted the main events of the fishing in the Lakes in my diary as follows:

Name	Incident
------	----------

I annotated the above entries with further details, referring to the numbers beside them, as follows:

3. Fairly Windy (gusts) but warmer. Tried spinning in deep pools below fell - no good. Trout rising quite well on fell. Would take any dry fly. 3 foul hooked. All rather small. I took 6 out so that the rest could grow a bit. Quite nice weather when it stopped raining. The trout were up in the fast water. Not in very good condition yet. Quite a few flies hatching (Brown silverhorns or brown duns?) - all brown. The fish had 2 caddis larva (stone) inside them.

4. It takes about an 1½ [hour] to get to the tarn. It is National Trust, and it is about 30 yards by 100. It looks good and I saw several good rises. Try later on in the season.

5. Caught on Butcher in about 4 ft of water. From Davids boat, had another rise. I only fished about 15 minutes. The Boweness side better - smallish flies 3-8 ft of water - best months April, May, June. Only when there is a wind.

6. There were no fish until about ¾ of a mile above the bridge. Then there were a few. The bottom was rock and so not so many trout as Rydal Beck. Only about 2 or 3 per pool. But there were several above 8 ins.

The new factor in my fishing was my motorbike, so that the summer of 1958 was the first when I could explore further afield, and in particular go to the Duddon River where there were sea trout. Here is my excited account of my first visit to fish in the Duddon.

Alan to parents: 16 Aug 1958

Anyhow I reached the other side and parked at Cockley Bridge (you know, where the Hardknott road goes off. Then I walked about one third of the mile down the stream and started fishing. I was using a silver spoon and I was beginning to be a bit worried that there were no sea-trout when I came to a nice pool. It was about 30 ft long and about 6 ft deep and the strong currant swept under some overhanging trees; at my first cast I felt a terrific tug and out leapt a fat sea-trout. It dashed off for the bank and was nearly under it before I knew what was happening, but I just managed to head it off. I landed it in the pool below after an exciting fight. It was a lovely fat, fresh-run fish which I weighed later and found to be 1 lb 4oz. Then a terrific storm began. The lightning flashed across the sky right overhead, the thunder nearly burst my ear drums! But it did not affect the fish as I went on to catch another sea-trout of 1lb 2 oz under the bridge. ... The next day I went fishing there again, but this time I had no luck, apart from small trout. Then a few days later I went fishing on Windermere with Stephen and we caught a few small perch... I went fishing again yesterday in Satterthwaite about a mile below where we usually picnic, as I had heard there were sea-trout in it, and by some fluke I got two sea-trout of 1lb 4 oz and six and a half oz so now I know another good place - the bike has its results!

*

I was really keen to catch fish and so I spent some time drawing maps of the best stretches of the rivers around Sedbergh school, and over the winters I would analyse what baits and places were best. Here are two of the tables.

Rivers, Becks, and Tarns

Size	Name	Situation	Grade
M.B.	Black Beck.		xx
L.B.	Cursey Beck.	Esthwaite - Windermere	0
S.B.	Glen Mary Beck	Tarns - Coniston	xx
L.B.	Hebblethwaite Gill	Boar Fell - Rawthey	xx
L.B.	Rydal Park Beck	Rydal Park (Rydal \Rightarrow)	0
M.B.	Yewdale Beck	Wetherlam - Coniston	xx
M.B.	Thrush Gill.	- Rawthey	x/
L.B.	Church Beck.	Levers Water - Coniston	-
L.B.	Satterthwaite Beck	Grisedale Hall - Leven	x/
L.B.	Rydal Beck.	Fairfield Basin - Rothay	xxx
M.B.	Scandale Beck.	N ^r " " - Rothay	xx/
L.B.	Langdale Beck	Great Langdale Valley - Elterwater	xx
M.B.	Raise Beck	Kirkstone Pass - Brothers Water.	xx
<u>RIVERS</u>			
S-M.R.	Rawthey ♀	Boar Fell - Lune (\Rightarrow Sedburgh)	xxx
S.R.	Dee	Dent - Rawthey (" ")	xx
S.R.	Clough	- Rawthey (" ")	xx
M.B.R.	Lune (+ Salmon)	Lunesdale	xx
M.R.	Brathay	Elterwater - Windermere	xx
M.R.	Rothay	Rydal lake - Windermere	xx
S.R.	Troutbeck	Troutbeck village - "	xx
S.R.	Gowan	Ings (nr Windermere) - Kent	xx
<u>TARNS</u>			
L.T.	Tarn Howes		x
S.T.	School Knott Tarn	Near Windermere - Kendal Road	x
S.T.	Grisedale Tarn	Nr Grisedale Hall	x
S.T.	High House Tarn	Nr Berwick Fold Nr Hawkshead	xx

0 = Have not tried
 x = Fishable
 xxx = Good fishing
 xx = Worth fishing, not bad
 M = Medium
 S = Small
 ♀ = Have drawing of. - = No fish

DRY FLIES

Greenwells Glory 1.1.0.1.1.5*.3.4.7.10.2.9.13.4.1.1.2.1.
 Olive Dun
 Red Spinner
 Black Gnat 10.*.1.*
 Alder
 Iron Blue
 Rough Olive
 Badger 1.2.2.
 Pale Watery
 Black Spider 1*.2
 March Brown 1.2*
 Red Upright 1.1.
 Wickham 1.
 Dusty grey 2
 SPINNER 4.2.
 WORM. 2.16.9.7.2.4.3.3.4.7.6.12.2.1.1.4.2.1.1.

"WET FLIES"

March Brown
 Snipe and Purple 1.3*.2*.5*.4*.1*
 Butcher
 Greenwell's Glory
 Partridge + Orange 1*.1*
 Black Zulu 1*.1.*

* = Home Tied.
 + = Parachute
 1 = Ordinary shop Hackled.
 0 = " " winged.

There can be no doubt that fishing was a bridge between childhood and my adult life at Oxford as I began to move into the life of an academic. It occurs to me that the similarity between the methods and excitements of fishing and the nature of my academic life are not just metaphorical. In my mind and in explaining the procedure to research students, I often liken the life of a researcher to the process of constructing a fishing net. If the holes in the net are too large, good fish will escape, if they are too small, one will catch too much and the net will probably break. As I cast my net into a likely pool and pull it in, I begin to feel the resisting weight of the struggling fish. Occasionally in my life I have begun to be aware that what I have netted is not just something ordinary, but what seems to me to be an extraordinarily and unexpectedly large fish. One could use the same metaphor in rod-fishing. As the fly or spoon moves through the water there is the tug, the first run, the realization that something really big has been hooked and needs to be played.

Furthermore, the process of preparing to catch fish and to catch ideas is quite similar. In each case, as one gains experience, one improves. At the start of one's career one has little knowledge of where the good ideas or fish lie, so one just goes to the obvious places and tries there, with obvious bait and undeveloped techniques. It is not surprising that there is little outstanding in the results in either field. But as my craft skills increased, I began to catch fish in more obscure places, using previous successes and failures as a guide. I began to sense where the monsters lay, whether a large sea trout or an explanation of part of my life's puzzle about the origins and nature of the modern world. One develops what some scientists call a 'nose', an intuition, something difficult to put into words but which makes the difference between the normal, humdrum, results, and something unexpected and perhaps important.

In fishing, as with research results, one cannot force the issue. The fish (or the ideas) have to decide to take the bait (notice that even Galton used the metaphor of hooking ideas from the subconscious realm) of their own free will. All we can do is to prepare the conditions for success, to work out the strategies and the tactics, prepare the mind and the body as one prepares the tackle and hones one's craft. All this increases the probabilities of success, but there is always the unexpected, the surprise and wonder of which Adam Smith speaks. The suddenly rising fish, the sudden brilliant but unexpected insight, is beyond conscious control - nature favours the prepared mind, but cannot be forced to reveal her secrets.

The hooking of the fish is only the start. Many a good fish or idea has escaped from the hook; the idea goes cold, the proofs do not come, there are snags and interruptions. It is often a long and sometimes painful process wading through the boulders of the mind and playing the fish up to the last moment the ideas may escape and leave only a memory of something gleaming and tremendous that one was in touch with but has slipped back into the pool of the unconscious.

Sometimes, however, after all the planning and craft skills and the skill in playing and landing, there it is laid out, the new book, the new painting, the new creative work. Then there is the final pleasure in both pursuits, namely the sharing. There is the

showing, giving away, launches, reviews, or whatever means by which the work is recognized by others, as there is the giving of the fish to friends and family to share.

These analogies between both the processes and the thrills of fishing and the more sedentary form of fishing which I have engaged in for most of my life, suggest to me something I had not previously thought about, which is that I have moved from one kind of fishing to another. Jesus gave another version of this when he sought to persuade his fishing friends to become 'fishers of men'. I have become a fisher of ideas. The patience and overcoming of boredom, the long waits when nothing happens and cold and pessimism seep into one's soul, but previous successes warm one to go on, have been transmuted into the 'mad pursuit' of academic research. Such research, and particularly creative writing, are in some ways just a continuation of those electric moments of thrill and fulfilment on the banks of the Rawthey, the Duddon, in the Shetlands or in Assam.

Rock and Television

Until I re-read the letters of this period I had forgotten how important the 'pop' revolution of the second half of the 1950's was. Only then did I realize that one of my chief excitements of the period was listening to, discussing, and even attempting to play on my guitar, this new 'pop' music.

The TV show 'Top of the Pops' was important. Our first family television set arrived on 6th August 1957, along with VHF (Very High Frequency) radio. After that every Thursday, when we were at home, we could watch 'Top of the Pops' on BBC 1, which had started to be broadcast on 1st January 1954. When I was at school my mother or sister could update me. There was even a radio version of the programme in India which my mother tried to listen to in order to compare notes with me in my letters.

A second major change was the way in which we could hear recorded music. Records were improving very fast. My first memory of a family gramophone was the one which my parents bought in the summer of 1957 when they were on leave, just before the Television. The need for this device had been pointed out at the start of 1957 by my sister Fiona, then aged twelve, in a letter to my parents. She wrote *I have got a craze on David Whitfield I think he's smashing absolutely wonderful. He sings "My September Love" which I love.... I'm going to save up for a gramophone because Alan wants to get Gilbert and Sullivan" and I want to get "My September Love" and Anne wants "The Toyshop Ballet". Have you got a gramophone in India - if so what records have you got?*

The new gramophone, which we took out onto the lawn, was a wind-up device which played old vinyl records revolving at 78 revolutions per minute ('78's') using a heavy arm holding a needle. The first record, which I remember sent a thrill through me, was Pat Boone's 'Red Sails in the Sunset'. At first we only had a few records as they were expensive and the device was primitive. Another record I remember is mentioned later in the year, with an allusion to dissatisfaction with the first gramophone, when my mother wrote to my father on 27 September 1957 about a trip to Kendal *Our last 'shop' at Kendal produced both her skirt and "Last Train to San Fernando" but the latter was discovered to be scratched or else its her ruddy gramophone - anyway it wont play properly!*

Very soon the extended play (EP) came along, smaller and better quality, playing at 45 revolutions per minute, and around the same time the LP or Long-Playing record at 33 rpm. The relative price of records was also dropping rapidly and reaching a level where we could start to think of making a collection. The gramophones were improving - electric rather than wind-up, with much lighter needles which did not chip away at the vinyl.

I am not sure when tape-recorders became available to us, though they were being used more widely from the 1950's. I remember having my own, and recording the coffee cantata and other music in my bedroom at Field Head.

The context was also changing. In particular the growth of coffee bars or clubs of a sort where teenagers would meet and listen to the top pops played on a juke-box is a

strong memory. This was a later 1950's phenomenon, though I suspect my strongest memories, which attach to the Walnut Coffee Bar, owned by my close friend Martin Buckmaster, date from around 1960 or so. My mother writes on 16th June 1957 suggesting that the Juke Box had not quite arrived,

Staggered back on my ragged feet and ate 2 ice creams in Kendal snack bar which was full of pasty long haired youths listening to the gramophone and tired mothers in unsuitable cottons.

It was not merely that we could now listen to the music on new machines but also that when others or we ourselves played and sang, the sound was much louder and richer. This was due to the electrification of music. There were now microphones and electric guitars, which enormously affected music. It is difficult to think of Elvis, Cliff or Buddy Holly having the same effect in a world without microphones or electric guitars.

I myself seem to have moved to playing in public on a guitar to which was attached an electric amplifier at this time. There is a photograph of me playing such a guitar (in around 1960 I suspect). The change is noted in relation to music playing in the *Luptonian* of Spring 1960 where it is noted that 'The House skiffle group is flourishing as never before ... there was considerable variety of tone in the guitar-playing, which was assisted by the use of an electric amplifier... the sole vocalist (Black), who made very effective use of another amplifier.'

My guitar clearly became an object of importance for me - witness the fact that I dragged it to Assam. Above all I found that it liberated me. As with acting, sport, fishing, it combined the mind and the body and allowed me to behave in freer ways. I could shout, weep, be ridiculous or tender while singing. It was a musical release equivalent to yard football, ice hockey or my motor-bike.

*

A first recorded sighting of the new world is in a letter from my sister Fiona to my mother on 11 Jan 1957. She wrote to India saying *Do tell me what "Rock about the Clock" is like. There are lots of Rocking tunes but I think the one in it is "1 o'clock 2 o'clock 3 o'clock ROCK!" There is a Teddy Boy in Hawkshead. He wears black shiny trousers which get higher at the bottom with elastic and bright green socks and a sort of old-fashioned hair. I've seen him twice!* This links the new rock with the new fashions more widely. Even in remotest Hawkshead the battle had commenced.

I then wrote the following day, 12th January, to my parents as follows, showing we were already comparing notes on the radio programme 'Top Twenty' and that 'Singing the Blues' had come on the scene. *I wonder what your "Top Twenty" are now, did they ever include "Green Door" and "A house with love in it". By the way Fiona is a budding David Whitfield fan so be careful what you say about him! By the way I have just heard another good tune called "Singing the Blues" I wonder if you have heard it.*

The pop songs which began to haunt our lives, and the way in which they were brought to us through various rankings, the television 'Top of the Pops', and the 'Pick of the Pops' broadcast from 1955 onwards on the Light Programme of the BBC (which

gave rise to the 'Top Twenty' are mentioned a number of times. At the bottom of a letter my mother wrote to me on 20th May 1957 from the Lakes there is added:

Top Twenty

- (1) Heart (2) Butterfly (3) Young love (4) Singin' the Blues (5) True Love (6) Banana Boat (7) Look homeward Angel (8) Mangos, papyas (9) Don't forbid me (1) Mary Anne (11) Rock-a-billy (12) Knee deep in the blues (13) 99 ways (14) I'll find you (15) Chapel of the Roses (16) Adoration Waltz (17) Cumberland Gap (18) The Wisdom of a fool (19) All (20) Good Companions

I'm not sure what 'Heart' is - perhaps Heartbreak Hotel, and certainly Cumberland Gap was Lonnie Donegan. And there are some other rock and blues in there.

A couple of weeks earlier the importance of the radio 'Pick of the Pops' in family life is mentioned, in an item of my mother's memorandum book on 6th May. She mentioned among the memories she was storing up to take back to Assam 'the white mice and David Whitfield, ... the Pick of the Pops and the murder stories...'

In my copy of the Sedbergh school Brown Book for Winter 1957 I have only written in only one item. It is as follows.

Top Twenty

- 1st Alone
- 2nd Special Anjel
- 3rd Mary's boy child [Harry Belafonte]
- 4th Tammy [Kathy Kay]
- 5th Diana [Paul Anka]
- 6th Wake up little Susie [King Brothers]
- 7th I love you baby [Paul Anka]
- 8th Forgotten dreams [Mr Jo "Piano" Henderson]
- 9th Ma he's making eyes at me
- 10th Kisses sweeter than wine
- 11 April love (Pat Boone)
- 12 Remember your mine [Pat Boone]
- 13 He's got the whole world in his hand [Laurie London]
- 14 Let me be loved
- 15 An affair to remember
- 16 Be my gal
- 17 Puttin on the style (Lonnie Donegan)
- 18 That'll be the day (Buddy Holly)
- 19 Man on fire [Franky Vaughan]
- 20 Island in the sun

The artists in square brackets are in the original. There is a good deal of the older type of song, but also 'Wake up little Susie' and Lonnie Donegan and Buddy Holly for the trendy ones among us.

My mother continued to keep me informed and show her interest, noting on 18th January 1958 (presumably in relation to 'Pick of the Pops' which was later than the 6.30 pm. 'Top of the Pops'), *I might stay up for Top Twenty to-night - we had Elvis Presley*

on Telly last night and I predict his new song "Be nice to me" will rocket to the top - its frightful! When she returned to India she continued to send me lists of top hits from the Indian hit parade, for example on 14th February 1958 writing that:

"Wake up little Suzy" still at the top here, with "April Love" second and "With you on my mind" (Nat King Cole and my favourite) third. Tommy Steele, Paul Anka and Co. don't seem to have registered here. Later in the year she wrote on 25th July, "Are you Sincere" is still at the top of Hit Parade here, with "Twilight time" second. What do you think of Laurie London's latest effort? I've got no particular favourite at the moment, rather like Frank Sinatra singing "Tell her you love her", the usual drippy choice.

*

On 19th October 1958 my mother asked from Assam, *How's the guitar? I like the Tom Dooley boys latest.* She then gave me news, heard from my grandmother, of an event which would greatly enrich my musical life in the Lake District where, up to now, I had played on my own. On 16th November she wrote:

You and the boy-next-door will get on well as he is very musical apparently and plays several things, you might join the Kendal musical society which gives very good weekly concerts I believe. So typical that you are the only one we never had taught the piano! Between you you should start a local skiffle group, call yourselves the Hawkshead Hotspots or Wordsworth Wide Boys, and make lots of money playing at the local hops. I wish I could bring home a couple of the local drummers, they'd make the place hum.

The 'boy-next-door' was Martin Buckmaster, who was indeed an enthusiastic drummer, played the piano a little, and a very sociable young man whose parents had bought the other part of our semi-detached farmhouse.

My musical circle was expanded around this same time when I came to know Steve Darbishire whose father was a doctor in Coniston. Steve was a couple of years older and an excellent musician, pianist, guitarist and singer. He had already been part of a group, the 'Yum Yum's', which had recorded a single, and he played Ray Charles, especially 'Blueberry Hill' and Fats Waller in a wonderful way. I remember one session with him and Martin in which I suddenly felt the uplift of playing with a professional - and a burning desire to form the very group which my mother suggested - though whether the Wordsworth Wide Boys was a better name than the Yum Yum's, I am not sure!

Certainly, three weeks before she returned from Assam, my mother anticipated the jam sessions with great longing. She wrote on 24th November 1959 *How I'm looking forward to log fires and Telly and skiffle sessions - and trying not to think about chilblains.* And skiffle there was, for example at the first party which my sisters and I had ever given, my diary recorded that on 6th January there was 'Skiffle - low lights - broken glasses.' Then on the 16th I returned to school, my mother wrote to my father of her exhaustion *getting Alan off clean with cakes, guitars and darned socks was quite an effort.*

*

I don't think I ever went to any pop concerts, but I did, with others, see films of my heroes and watch them on television. One account of my reactions to a film of Elvis towards the end of my time at Sedbergh shows a little of my reactions. I wrote on 5th September 1959 from the Lakes to my parents.

This evening I am going to celebrate my exam results by going to see a film which I have wanted to see for a very long time "King Creole" - with that "hep" "Cat" Elvis Presley. We have the record at school and it is really quite "cool" (I will give you an explanation of any of these words which you don't when you come back.) Also I believe that the audiences in these rock'n roll films are equally worth watching. I am continuing after seeing the film! I was surprised not to find the cinema particularly full. The actual film was mainly a series of interludes of Elvis singing some rock n' roll number with a rather imbecile grin on his face and jerking backwards and forwards in a most odd fashion; alternatively one would come to the type of scene where Elvis was surrounded by a gang of thugs and was beating them all up. Despite this however I enjoyed the film very much indeed - especially the music. Although I felt it to be most non-u' I could not restrain my feet from tapping! The Ambleside audience were most lethargic however, not even one little scream or sob did I hear!

The revolution had come, and it is explored more fully in my account of the the skiffle group I formed at Sedbergh during this period and the school's reaction to Lonnie Donegan, Chris Barber, Elvis and others.

Television

Of course one of the great propelling forces behind the rock revolution was television, as will be seen below. I remember the early impact of television in the earlier 1950's, in particular the televising of the Coronation in 1953. But while 'the box' as it was often called began to spread in the middle 1950's, it was still a luxury. David Kynaston's chronicle has, I think, aptly titled the book of this period 1957-9 as *Out of the box*, as this was precisely when television became a dominant feature of our lives, spreading new culture, joining us through shared experiences of sports and giving us something to talk about in our letters.

From the following entries it is clear that until August 1957 we did not have our own set, but went to watch on special occasions in our neighbours homes. It also seems that the only reference I make to television in my letters from Sedbergh School was to watching it on an away match - which seems to confirm my view that we did not watch it in the school.

I shall give an annotated set of extracts to show some features of the development of television in our lives.

1956

4 Feb 1956: Saw Television in Bells House

[My grandfather's diary for several years recorded watching television as something special, equivalent to going to the cinema or a special walk. The Bells were a family who lived about 100 yards below our house. He was a postman. Interesting that a

postman could afford this luxury before my retired Lt. Colonel grandfather and my tea-planting father.]

Letter from Fiona, c. 2nd April

Granny and Granpa and Anne and I went to the Wrights to watch the boat race on T.V. It was very excited and at one time I thought Oxford would win.

[The Wrights owned the other half of the long house at Field Head for the first three years from 1955. We often watched television there. I think they were a retired couple. The Boat Race, cheering for Oxford as we did, was a favourite communal television watching, recorded a number of times, and discussed with our parents in Assam.]

6 March

Saw Horse racing on Bells Television

[My grandmother was a very keen horse racing follower. Sport seems to have been the main kind of programme which attracted us to visit our neighbours to watch the box. Note that in these first entries my grandfather always calls it a Television. From the next entry, in May of this year, it tends to become known as T.V.]

5 May 1956 Field Head

Wright invites us in to see Cup Final on T.V. which Manchester City won

[Another sporting event. It was a sign of neighbourliness and friendship to invite people in for these occasions.]

21 July 1956

Saw big race won by Ribo on T.V.

20 Aug 1956 Fiona to parents

We mucked about and then at 8 we went to Grange Hotel to have a dinner. First Bill Alan Morton and us three watched T.V and then we had dinner (which was lovely Turkey Ect) then we watched T.V some more and saw an abstract out of "The Cruel Sea' then we went back to P.

20 Aug 1956 Alan to parents

.... and we watched television for a bit at Grange Hotel before we went into dinner there

[This was at my uncle Roberts wedding in Cartmel. It was clearly an important part of the celebrations that we could watch T.V. at the hotel and both of us comment on it.]

13 Oct 1956

Went to Wrights to see "Horse of the Year" on T.V.

Sunday 21 Oct

Saw detective play and Bolshoi ballet "Swan Lake" on Wrights T.V.

[This is the first mention of a cultural evening; ballet worked particularly well on T.V.]

1957

25 April

Saw Dressage on Wrights TV

[Horses again]

28 April

Saw Badminton Horse Trials on TV at Wrights

4 May 1957

Saw Cup Final on Wrights T.V. Aston villa 2 Man U 1

[The first mention of football]

17 May 1957

Went with Iris and Violet to Kendal Music Festival - Anne there. Looked at R.Hadwin and Son 29/31 Finkle St and at Whitesides 49 Stramongate re. Television

[My father was not yet home on leave, but we were obviously scouting out to see the best offers on television sets]

6 Aug 1957

Mac installs T.V. and V.H.F.

[A red letter day. I still remember the excitement - our own television at last, after many years of waiting - and very high frequency radio which delighted the older generation.

The TV took pride of place in the left-hand corner of the drawing room, as I recall.]

27 Sept 1957 Iris to Alan

We had the whole of the opera "Salome" on T.V. last night, well sung but very gruesome. We're getting professional tennis every evening which is nice and the polish athletics were good except that they cut us off two vital events before the end! ... Got the girls off yesterday, split second timing so that we could see "Champion" first! [Champion the Wonder Horse]

[Now that we had our own television, we could watch more widely - an opera and sports, and also a children's programme. Children's television was extremely important and I remember that my younger sister Anne tended to be glued to the screen.]

26 Oct 1957 Iris to Alan

... we had the Tommy Steele story on T.V. the other day, didn't realise he was quite so ghastly with a great mop of greasy curls and a smile like a crocodile. I seem to miss all the best programmes getting supper, I had to leave "Il Travatore" half way the other night, which broke my heart. Shall we have high tea in the holidays?

[The first reference to pop music, in the year when things really took off. My mother's disapproval of the Teddy Boy look is interesting. Also interesting is the clash between English meal times and the 'best' television. I wonder whether television did, in fact, alter meal times in our or other families? Of course later it became possible to have a set in the kitchen as well.]

2 Nov 1957 Iris to Alan

We got back in time for "6.5 Special", "Wells Fargo" etc etc. Now I have a raging headache which isn't surprising but enjoyed the wrestling we saw on I.T.V. everybody else loathes it!

[The "6.5. special" is described on Wikipedia as being launched in February 1957. "It was the BBC's first attempt at a rock and roll programme, an innovation and much imitated, even today. It was called *Six-Five Special* because of the time it was broadcast - it went out live at five past six on Saturday evening. It began immediately after the

abolition of the Toddlers' Truce, which had seen television close between 6 and 7 pm so children could be put to bed." Wells Fargo was a definite favourite – a western which I loved. My mother, usually with pacifist and Buddhist leanings, was typically contrary in rather enjoying the wrestling.]

17 November 1957 Iris to Mac

Actually the fire is a minor irritation as Mummy pulls her large chair well forward and watching T.V. we freeze!

[I wonder how many households fought over this kind of matter; having a television set brought new problems.]

17 Nov 1957

William Rhodes James diary, Field Head

Knappetts and Mortons come to see T.V. English Family Robinson

[Now the roles were reversed – we could invite the neighbours in.]

1958

23 Feb 1958

Mrs Knappett and her daughter come to see T.V.

[Mrs Knappett lived about 15 minutes away – a recent widow. Her daughter Rachel was a well-known authoress, among other books being "Pullet on the Midden"]

Iris to children 22 March 1958 Assam

We envy you all the sport you will be seeing on T.V. all of you, Boat Race etc. To-day is the Grand National and we hope to hear it through we are going out to dinner.

[What we watched, and particularly the big sporting events, became a source of shared imagination between India and England, and both diminished and increased the cultural divide.]

6 Apr 1958 Alan to parents

We saw "The Great Adventure" on T.V. this afternoon - the Swedish film about an otter cub. I think Mummy saw it in February, anyhow it was a good film. I am now trying to sort out my thoughts from "Take it from here"... The boat race was a bit disappointing wasn't it - Cambridge won - if you have not heard.

["Take it from here" was, in fact, a very long-running radio series with Jimmy Edwards and others, which had started in 1948.]

11 Apr 1958 Fiona to parents

We did watch Oxford and Cambridge Boat Race on 'Telly'. Mr and Mrs Elliot came and watched it too. You know the winner so I shan't dwell on that. Easter Night I saw Dickie Valentine on Telly. He was rather nice, but Granny kept saying how out of tune he was so I was put off. Actually I didn't watch the whole thing as I was making supper and had to keep rushing back to the kitchen... Most days I bring supper through to the drawing room, as you can't drag them away, but we do try and arrange it so as to get it between something somebody wants to watch. Mrs Knappett comes in lots to watch. I like her to come as she must get unbearably loansome up there all by herself. She likes to watch the programme, but mainly I guess its for company's sake. Sometimes I go up and see her, when Taking Juno for a walk, she is always gardening, being her only joy

now. Rachael the lady who wrote the book came, we went we lunch and they came here, I thought she was frighttfully nice, very friendly and killingly funny! She was super at mimicking things and we were all in fits about the Iris and her kids and all... I saw Frankie Vaughan on Television. He was getting the 'Personality of the Year' award by the Varaity Club. He was smashing needless to say. Also there was Alec Guinness getting 'Film Start of the Year' and his oscar which had been flown from America specially. Have you heard. Together with the producer he and the film 'The bridge on the River Kuai' (bring back any memories? Of a windy day in London?!) have got 7 oscars which decided to go for a walk. It is quite something... [This is full of interest. Television is called 'Telly' for the first time. The clash between the young admirer of Dickie Valentine and my grandmother is a tiny part of the generational struggle. The problem of preparing food and watching the box comes out again. There is the fact that the family were glued to the box is evident. The fact that sharing watching was a way to help a lonely widow is well observed.]

15 Oct 1958

Television taken for repair

22 Oct 1958

Television returned.

Owen comes to see England v Russia soccer

26 Nov 1958

Field Head England v Wales soccer on T.V.

1959

30 March Iris to her parents [from Assam]

but recovered sufficiently to listen to the Boat Race which was most satisfactory. I expect you saw it on T.V.

12 October 1959 Grandpa to Alan

Sir Walter Scott's "Red Gauntlet" has just started on T.V. it promises to be very good - I must read the book.

[The start of the trend whereby people's reading was led by what they watched had started.]

Alan to father 25 October 1959

When we were on a match the other day we watched for a while the T.V. and saw the England and Wales, v Scotland and Ireland, match. It was very exciting, and though the latter lost it was a close thing...

27 December 1959 Iris to Mac

... Annie just flings shoes, orange peel and T.V. times around in a steady stream

[The only reference to the guide to the programmes - the T.V. times, which I think we got from quite early on]

1960

9 Jan 1960 Iris to Mac

This is the next evening, it's awfully difficult to concentrate against the Telly, we had 3 bouts of wrestling yesterday and then a thriller which was fatal. An I.T.V. aerial has now joined the other 2!

[Wrestling again for my mother, and the sprouting of aerials. The diversification beyond B.B.C. had occurred.]

12 May 1960 Iris to Alan in Norway

Daddy is re-painting the drawing room and of course doing it beautifully now he's started (I was all for painting round the pictures and only the bits of the bookcases that showed!). This means we have to watch T.V. perched on poongi boxes [Burmese lacquer boxes] with our feet among the Staffordshire cows, but at least the T.V. is still there which is the main thing.

[Rooms could be turned upside down, but the 'T.V. is still there...']

1 August - Alan summer diary of trip to Formby

Having wandered around happily for a time we came back and looked at the 'family photographs' and then had supper and watched T.V. for a while. Although I often caught Gill's eye we sat (or rather she lay) at different sides of the room.

[The only reference to what would later become more common in my life - watching television with a girl-friend]

RELATIONSHIPS AND EMOTIONS

Relationships and emotions

A central feature of the period between childhood and adulthood is about adjusting and negotiating relationships. So I need to write a reflective piece on the other aspects of school and home life to do with social relations. There would be the friendships, enmities, the loves and the hates, the gangs and the solitary moments. There was the fagging, prefects, hierarchy, beating and discipline. There was the food, the cold, the baths, the loneliness and the dormitory life at school. Again this can be seen in terms of progress from Hell through Purgatory to Heaven.

There were the studies with their pin-ups and privilege, the tuck and tuck shops, the sick bays and libraries and masters. There were the responsibilities (editor of school magazine etc.) and the learning of manners and sociality, of trust, of wit and repartee, of self-preservation and all that side of things. There were the crushes and the repressed sexuality, the fighting and the bullying and so on. All of this is at the core of the boarding school experience.

Alongside the school, there were the holidays. Here my relations with the rest of my family, my predominantly absent mother and father and my grand-parents influenced me hugely. There were my sisters and especially Fiona as friends and sometimes rivals. There was Richard the bachelor uncle who took me to Iwerne and with whom I discussed books and music. There was Robert, getting engaged and married and settled into his career. Then there were my special friends, boys like Stephen Grieve, and girls (esp. Gillian Lister), and dances and social life.

So there is a whole social world of emotions and conflicting thoughts which I was having to sort out, a whole middle-class upbringing which the Manzi Fe crowd, as one might say, indulged in around the Lake District scene. The garden, the walks to the Tarns, skating and swimming, the arrival of the gramophone, of television, of cars, my first motorbike, my first beat, and the end of all this was my growing up.

This is probably where my mother's (and my?) letters and a few bits of my general writing, plus memories and photographs, will be most important. It is something which very easily vanishes, leaving only the few stranded items of formal education – the reports and essays. But without this dimension the rest does not make sense and, as I can see from watching Lily, this is the most important part of that period. More time and thought is spent on social relationships than on anything else.

Important people in my life

In Dorset Days I write about the important people in my life – parents, grandparents, sisters and others. To a large extent the central core of my family continued as before, but there were also differences. My uncle Robert became much less important after he married, which was in my first year at Sedbergh. I only saw him now for a few days a year and then with Angela. His enthusiasm and inspiration as he pursued his very successful career, first as a writer and clerk in the House of Commons, and later in international affairs and as a Member of Parliament, were a background factor. But we no longer played together which had been such a central part of the effervescence of Dorset holidays.

In the holidays, it was my uncle Richard who now spent more time with me, often coming on holiday for a week or two from his school-mastering job at Haileybury. On one occasion he took me for a holiday to Wastewater, and we often went for long walks together. He was also an officer at the religious camp at Iwerne Minster where I would go a couple of times a year. He was also an aspiring writer, like my mother, and we would discuss the writer's craft and he was always encouraging. Like Robert he had studied history at Oxford, and this probably imperceptibly shaped both my move into history and later to Oxford.

My grandparents remained as important as in the previous period. They were older, of course, but still only in their sixties and very energetic and supportive, loving and lively. So they were and continued to be proto-parents. Of the fifteen holidays during the Sedbergh years I suppose two thirds were spent with my grandparents, though with breaks at Iwerne or with friends. I remember them both, 'Granny' and 'Nutty', with great affection. My grandfather was still gardening keenly, doing the pools, wearing old clothes, and interested in books and poetry, an archetypal courteous, mild, self-effacing English gentleman. Even when he dressed up for the annual British Legion parades in his Lt. Colonel's medals he did not seem at all daunting.

My grandmother was always full of plans, highly capable and energetic, and supportive of our social whirl, parties, the purchase of a motorbike, picnics and expeditions, the frequent arrival of friends. Though she had a serious operation and the relationship with my sister Fiona was sometimes stormy, she was an excellent proto mother. The fact that I had been looked after by her, on and off, through all of my life gave me stability and continuity which the continued departures of my parents, twice again during these years, made especially necessary.

My relationship to my parents obviously changed. I was closest to my father at this stage through a shared interest in sport and fishing and I remember him as strong and supportive, but also showing signs of bewilderment at my academic development which was moving beyond his experience, having left school quite early.

My mother, even at a distance, continued to be the strongest influence on me, through her visits and through her letters. Around my sixteenth year, the time of our visit to Assam, she suddenly noticed that I was no longer the little boy of whom she had mildly despaired, with few friends, small and not very academic. Instead she began to communicate with me in a new way. This coincided with her own finding a sort of role in India as a teacher, learning Assamese, doing some archaeology, and starting to write seriously. So from about 1958 to the time I went to London to study in October 1966, when this narrative will end, about ten years, we became as it were pen friends, discussing philosophy, poetry, literature, and history. We started in a fairly lopsided fashion, with my mother well ahead of me in experience and knowledge, but gradually became more equal and quite intense. The end coincided with her return from India, my marriage, and the start of a new training in anthropology.

In some ways my two sisters became more important during this period. They were no longer away for periods in India (except on our joint holiday) and their school holidays coincided with mine. We formed part of 'the gang' in the Lakes and went to events together and shared an interest in pop music, walking, friends and even some

aspects of books and films. Fiona's letters show that she was prepared to be critical of me and stand up for herself and also that I was part of her world, but not too central or dominant. We mostly remained friends and her energy and intelligence gave me stimulus. The easy friendship with a slightly younger girl no doubt helped me to form easy friendships with girls later in my life. Anne was younger and I only remember that her interests were already diverging from those of Fiona and myself.

More distant relatives, Billy and Julia, Aunts of various kinds, mainly lived either in southern England or Scotland, so I saw less of them. We certainly spent some time with Pat and Alan and Alan and Jean in Scotland, but I think less than when I was at the Dragon. Other family links, for example to the Mermagens, began to fade.

The neighbours at that time stand out in my mind more clearly than at the Dragon and many of them were important to my parents and grandparents. For example the Manzi-Fe's, wealthy in a big house half a mile away, with a son of my age at Stow, feature quite large and somewhat dominated us. Mrs Knappet and her author daughter Rachel were very frequent visitors and I particularly remember holding my first party - which I shall analyze in detail - at their house.

Other important neighbours were those who lived in the other half of our semi-detached farmhouse. I don't remember the Wrights much, but the Buckmasters, who arrived when I was about sixteen, were more memorable. The father was, to us, an old buffer, though with a certain glamour as he was rumoured to be the legendary Second World War hero or spy of the same name. The mother, as I recall, was scatty - I now recall her name as Beryl. Their son Martin was a large, amiable boy who brought me my first semi-serious girlfriend. He was part of the gang and with his drums, a car from early on, and other assets such as a coffee bar (The Walnut Coffee Bar in Ambleside) at the end of my time in Field Head was important.

There seem to have been few frictions at this time with our neighbours sharing the house, or with the Owens who had sold us the house and moved to a long bungalow next door. On the farm there was a local farming family called Barr, whom we saw a good deal of - their sons, Stanley, Billy, Pip and perhaps another - were companions and we went out rabbiting together, they helped in our garden and came to watch our television. At my wedding, it was the Barr's horse and cart which drove us down to the church.

Opposite the drive was a small house. Perhaps this is where the Bells lived in the early part of our time at Field Head - they are frequently mentioned as having a television before we got one, he was a retired postman. Later a Mr Haslam lived there, a sort of recluse who is described with mild horror by my mother, but who also taught my sister a little Latin.

In the big house on the bend before our house a retired churchman, Canon Bradley lived with his wife. In a later volume I tell the tale of his beautiful granddaughter. Further away in Elterwater was my friend Stephen Grieve, who had been at the Dragon with me. Freddie Holdsworth who ran the bookshop in Ambleside, though about seven years older than us, was a fringe member of the group as he was regarded as an 'intellectual'. Anne Johnson, a somewhat flirtatious but, as I remember, friendly blond

had a holiday cottage in Outgate and was a serious member of our gang and she would often bring up a nice, dark-haired friend, who became a close friend.

There was also a fellow-Luptonian, though a couple of years older, Mike Doogan, whose father took me back to school and ran the Outward Bound centre at Brathay. Mike's dinner jacket remained a feature of my life and my first real adolescent party, which I shall describe, was at his house. I also remember Steve Darbishire, already a successful musician with his 'Yum Yum' band, and our envy with his own studio apartment. He was reputed to have cut a figure in Paris and played Fats Waller to my delight - and particularly sang and played 'Blue Moon'. Once when we played together with Martin on the drums I had a sense of what real pop music bands might be like and had dreams of forming one. But it never came to anything. [Have just re-met Steve in the Lakes, where he is a successful painter]. There was also Simon Manby, a heartthrob of my sister, and Edward Ackland, another friend of Fiona's (his father a local MP?).

Others I remember were the grocer John Wright, who delivered groceries every week and held my grandfather in high esteem for his military career. [His shop is still there in Hawkshead, though now it mainly sells vegetables, jams etc.] There were various shopkeepers, bank managers, doctors and dentists, but none of them figure greatly in my patterns of friendship.

Others may emerge from the shadows as I investigate my records further. Yet it seems to be rather a small inner circle of family and friends, perhaps a dozen or so at the most, and a similar number at the most at school. A dozen neighbours at most were also important. There were also a few schoolmasters, officers at Iwerne and others.

The precise range of my inner circle is rather nicely revealed by a list of those I decided I should pray for at the end of my time at Sedbergh. I was on a religious retreat in York and we were being instructed in the art of prayer. So I drew up a list of those to pray for on 31 August 1960. This is the list, moving to a certain extent from the closest to further outwards.

Organization of Prayer over the week - including Supplication for:

Friends School. Ian, Geoffrey, David, Fred, Charles, Stewart, Nicky A, Alan B. Weedy Savory, Watto. Heber - Clive Bodd, those at Iwerne.

Home: David, Martin, Anne J and H. Michael, Gill, Jacky, Jo, Mike Doo[gan]. Jill, Steve, Simon their parents.

Family: Granny, Grandpa, Mummy, Daddy, Fiona, Anne, Aunt Pat, Uncles Alan, Jean. Richard, Robert, Billy cousins etc.

It is interesting that I placed my grandparents before my parents in the list, and there were more friends at school than in the other categories. I think that Nicky A was probably a residual friend from the Dragon - Nicky Adamson.

So I moved through five years surrounded by perhaps about fifty people who counted seriously in my life and left a strong trace on me. This seems small to me, but was perhaps not unusual. Much of one's life was lived alone - in the mind and work,

reading, fishing and listening to music. Friendships were strong and deep, but quite selective.

[see the one photograph of my Lupton days in the school archive - climbing Ingleborough. A good selection of the above school friends are there...]

My grandparents

The Sedbergh years are when my grandparents come into focus in my memory. I remember them better now, just as I remember most things more clearly from about the age of twelve. My grandmother remains in my mind as very tolerant and supportive, full of zest and a love of life which continued until her death. She was highly intelligent, manipulative, energetic and full of plans. I think she was harder with my sisters, especially Fiona, whose tough character matched her own. But in my case, she liked boy and after a succession of three sons, one of whom had only recently really left home, I must have been almost like a youngest son - perhaps the Monty who had died young to her great grief. She lent me money, allowed my friends to invade the house, sorted out my school things, and arranged my holidays, always with great efficiency and flexibility.

As my mother frequently reported in her letters to my grandparent - and I don't think she was just being flattering - we seemed very happy at home. I do indeed remember the holidays in the Lake District as mostly delightful. My grandmother was an excellent cook and never stinted us on food. Meals were large social occasions and the smell of marmalade making or roasting chickens are still in the back of my mind. My grandfather was still gardening, though at less of a pace, so we had masses of fruit - raspberries, strawberries, apples and plums, and a large variety of vegetables. With a farm next door, I am sure we were never short of eggs, milk and meat. Occasionally I even caught a fish that was large enough to eat.

The house was solid and snug and we all had our private spaces. My grandmother let me turn my little oak-timbered room into whatever I liked. She did not complain when I put planks on bricks along the walls and piled tomato boxes on them. In these I accumulated papers, the start of my filing system which is the basis of this account. I suspect that she rather approved - she was a great hoarder of paper and oddments, and I probably partly learnt this from her.

My grandmother encouraged all my interests, fishing, walking, skiffle and other things. She was the person who found me my first motorbike and never put up any objections to this potentially dangerous activity. She even encouraged my love life. She had been a notable magnet for handsome men in her youth - beautiful, vivacious and something of a flirt - and she loved parties and company. So when I was starting to search for girl friends she did not stand in my way. Indeed she extolled the beauty of the 'sweetly pretty' Annette Gribbon, the daughter of a friend near Blackpool. Annette and I had a brief and chaste but pleasant flirtation which is documented in my diaries and letters. It was with Annette that I first danced cheek to cheek - at a party where my grandmother was keeping a beady eye on us and no doubt also enjoying the fun in a vicarious way.

My grandparents were aging and there are signs of this in the letters. Although they must have been in their sixties, this seemed old to us at the time and my grandmother had a serious operation. My mother worried that Juno our boxer was dragging my grandfather out each day on long walks, though it is clear that this actually gave a purpose to his life.

I remember my grandfather with great affection. I have his watch from this period – which he lost on a walk and we found much later. He was always gentle, considerate, helpful, interested in poetry, wrote to me often. A solid, dependable and kindly figure who was also very fond of my sisters. There is a nice portrait of him by my uncle Robert in a paper article on ‘My Hero’ which I may insert. Occasionally my grandmother would bully him and he could lose his temper. But mostly their relationship was mellow and loving and a good pattern for us. The relationship, as I shall show elsewhere, to my parents was also very good and there was deep trust and inter-dependence.

My grandparents’ love of company meant that the house always seemed to be buzzing, expanding and contracting as uncles, especially Richard who spent part of a number of holidays with us – or Robert and Angela came to stay. Many neighbours came to visit us, especially the Knappets and Manzi-Fe’s, both living ten minutes away. Special occasions like birthdays and Christmas were usually celebrated with great gusto and I shall give some accounts of Christmas at Field Head later.

The enormous support and continuity of my grandparents, who had looked after me intermittently since I was an infant, and particularly in Dorset when my parents were away, did much to offset the absence of my parents. My mother was clearly deeply grateful to them for all they did and repaid a little of their kindness in my grandmother’s last years.

Friendship

At the Dragon I had a number of good friends, but friendship fluctuated and I never pursued it very deeply until near the end of my time at the school when, by chance, I moved to near where Stephen Grieve lived and we visited each other’s home, fished together etc. This was the first friendship of the kind that would become more important at Sedbergh.

At Sedbergh I wrote an essay on the meaning of friendship which would be worth considering in this context. I learnt the art of opening up my inner being to another person of my own age, long talks and exchanges of views as I explain in my essay. I began to spend parts of my holidays, as well as the terms, with my best friends and we remained in touch for some years after leaving school. I remember three friends in particular (though I have an interesting list of my inner friends, for whom I would pray, in my last year - to be inserted).

Throughout my time I was a friend with Alan Barnes, and my letters describe going fishing with him, going out to lunch with him and so on. He was a tall, highly athletic, mischievous boy, full of zest and enthusiasm. A record-breaking swimmer, an excellent runner, a very good fisherman, he was a perfect companion with whom to explore the

Sedbergh countryside. His parents were rich Lancashire mill-owners or some such, and Alan had been at the nearby prep school of Cressbrook.

I remember his famous pranks - the goldfish in the new lights in the Library, the fertilizer on the cricket pitch before a major visit, painting graffiti on the nuclear submarines within the Scottish base. I remember Alan trying to coach me in running and sharing his father's salmon stretch on the Lune. He was one of several close friends from the northern mill-towns; David Porter was another, with whom I kept in touch.

My two closest friends were Geoffrey Bromley and Ian Campbell. Both of them were friends throughout my time at Sedbergh, but we became really close friends in the last two years. Geoffrey's father was, I think, a doctor in Suffolk, and they had a boat at Aldborough, where I spent a rather boring week waiting to sail. Geoffrey came to stay with me in the lakes.

Geoffrey and I kept in touch after we left the school and I think he was quite a religious boy and may have become a clergyman. I felt a certain sympathy for him because his older brother had been a keen fisherman - "Teeth" Bromley as I recall - but had been drowned at the school in an accident. I seem to remember Geoffrey had a deep attachment to Nivea cream and was a largish round-faced boy.

My closest friend was Ian Campbell, and I am pretty sure it was Ian I was writing about in my essay on friendship. He came a term before me, I think, and was always just ahead of me. We were both quite good at rigger and other games, without taking them too seriously. We liked the same music and culture. He was interested in discussing life - religion, politics, and girls. So we grew close and I went to stay with him in Newcastle where his father was in industry. Ian was a scientist and later went to Canada, and there were plans that I should join him there and go to University there - before I got into Oxford.

Ian was a fellow Scot and wore a kilt, as I did, a very sane, sensitive and interesting boy as I recall. He ended as Head of House and I was second-in-command and we were the two School Prefects from Lupton. I got to know him really well when, aged seventeen, in the summer of 1959 we went together for a three week hitch-hiking holiday round Europe, following Wordsworth's tour. I remember enjoying his company very much and it being a tension-free holiday. My mother's fears that I was reclusive and would never make friends were not born out.

Another set of friends was those I made in the holidays. The chief of these was probably David Manzi-Fe, who lived just up the road, and was the same age as me and at Stowe public school. I am in touch with him now and find that we spent a lot of time together. I was also still close to Stephen Grieve, my major fishing companion, who had gone to Glenalmond but dropped out at the end - a brilliant young scientist at the Dragon.

There were a number of others, for example Martin Buckmaster who moved into the house next to ours in my last two years and who was very obliging - and introduced me to my second girl friend, Gill Lister. Then there were others - Mike Boddington, Steve Darbishire (who I am about to meet again), Simon Manby, and a number of girls

such as Anne Johnson who were not romantic attachments, but part of the gang in which my sister Fiona was another member.

The role of animals in our life

When I wrote about my Dragon years I was reminded of how important animals were for a growing child – the horses that surrounded us, the chickens which were an obsession of my grandmother, the small pets we kept. The period at Sedbergh saw a change in my relationship with animals. On the one hand certain categories became less important. We no longer kept chickens and ducks, the white mice and hamsters which gave us so much pleasure faded away after the first year at Field Head. We spent less time at point to points and gymkhanas, though there was some of this. While my sisters and especially Anne had a phase of riding holidays, I lost all interest in riding horses and there was no such opportunity at Sedbergh.

Hunting, particularly the annual Drunken Duck fox hunt and other hunts increased in importance and particularly I became obsessed with fishing and the attendant observation of river life. But apart for the time when I visited Assam and through the detailed description of animals in Assam (this was the time of my mother's book *Bird God Hill*), animals became less important. The age of reading books which bridged the gap between humans and animals, especially *Mowgli*, the *Meeting Pool*, *Beatrix Potter*, various fairy tales, was past and my reading and teaching was now about humour. Talking animals, animal adventures, that whole imaginary world was a childish thing – now was the new world of detectives, adventures, pop music, grown-up films.

The one way in which our lives became more animal centred was the acquisition of our first dog. Boxers were very popular for some reason in the mid 1950's and this may have influenced my parents to acquire their first large dog in England – they had long had dogs in Assam. The boxer puppy, a female called Juno, came to us in the last year at the Dragon and we kept her right through the Sedbergh years – I am not sure where she went, to be replaced by various smaller black and white collies, Poochie, Tansy (and others?) through my Oxford years.

Judged by my grandfather's diaries as well as my mother's letters, much of our life revolved around Juno. The walks my grandparents took to exercise her took them all over the nearby fells as it did me. There are some graphic accounts [see 'Walking the Dog'] of these and especially of the problems of trying to train her not to chase sheep. The worries about Juno and her 'heat', attacks on sheep, my mother's anxiety that she was too much for my ageing grandparents fill the letters. Attempts were made to settle her elsewhere, but they seem to have failed, as did the one attempt to breed from her.

Yet the accounts tend to give a rather over-negative picture. The photographs and even a little film, give a reminder of the enormous pleasure we all derived from a large creature who was in many respects as much a part of the family as the rest of us. Unlike the farmers (and I should write a bit about Barr's Farm, the Hawkshead Show and the ubiquity of farm animals) we treated Juno as a person. She slept on a bed, ate alongside us, was absorbed into our activities. It was like having a much younger sibling – intelligent, playful, always ready for a mock battle, loyal, loving and never dull.

This long and close association with a dog meant that for the rest of life I have felt easy with dogs, though after a brief period with a dog for our daughter Asti, we have never had one again.

My mother's obsession with animals, her explicit replacement of her young children with monkeys, deer and other animals, enhanced an imaginative life for me. On our golden trip to Assam when I was having my seventeenth birthday, I was again immersed in that wonderful teeming world of animals from which I had moved as a child. It is worth noting that several of my first published literary efforts were about animals – trout, a sheep dog and so on.

Walking the dog

My parents had always kept dogs in Assam and my grandparents had been surrounded by dogs for many years in India. So it probably seemed absolutely natural and almost inevitable that as soon as they had their own house they would buy a dog. The house at Field Head was bought over the summer of 1955 and before the purchase was even completed my grandfather noted in his diary on 21st June 'Mac and Iris came with their latest acquisition a Boxer puppy.' She was still a puppy when on 12 September my grandfather mentions 'Mac Iris and children come to tea after inoculating their puppy'.

Boxer's were one of the most popular dogs of that period, as evidenced in the book which my sister received as one of her Christmas presents that year, as noted by my grandfather in his diary: 'Fiona got book "The Popular Boxer".'

It was one thing to have a large dog like the black labrador my father had in Assam where there was a huge garden, acres of tea garden and forest, servants to help look after the animals. To keep a large and strong female dog like Juno in the midst of a sheep-farming district in the Lakes was another matter. The entries in diaries and letters show the worry this single animal generated – but also the pleasure.

We were all enormously fond of Juno and it must be remembered that it was when she was in trouble or causing difficulties that records of her existence tend to be made. The everyday delight of long walks and playing with her in the garden, the way she wound herself into knots of pleasure when one returned home, her enthusiasm and childlike joy are easy to overlook. But in this account we get a graphic account of the way in which an animal can be so central to a middle-class English household.

Some aspects of Juno's impact on us are not revealed. My parents and grandparents were hard up, yet there is no mention of the enormous amounts of food which Juno consumed, the vets and kennel bills, the dog licences and other expenses. What is also implicit is the degree to which as growing children we depended so much on having a pet such as this. The one piece of evidence which suggests this directly is in a letter from my sister on 27 November 1955 to my parents. *Juno is a bit mine isn't she? Alan and Anne say not as I have Candy I can't have Juno, and I shall really and truly die if I have no animal, so I will have to find a animal if Juno isn't mine.* The fact that she was given the previously mentioned book on the popular boxer suggests that it was agreed that Juno was, indeed, to a certain extent, hers – though we really shared her. Fiona's commitment to the dog is shown later in that she was the only one of us children to

record trying to stop her chasing sheep – and Fiona later kept a succession of dogs, clearly enjoying their company.

Juno's central place in our lives is shown in a letter written by my sister Fiona the day before Christmas 1956 to my parents.

Juno is very well indeed and is absolutely sweet... Alan has got her a 3d bar of Aaro (spelling!!) which I know she'll enjoy. At the moment she is lying in front of the fire (electrical) in our room keeping Annie company coz she's in bed with a kind of flu only she's ok now so she is going to get up tomorrow so is Alan who also had it Granny and I didn't get it!! ...

The main pleasure we received from Juno was taking her for walks. Somehow just going for a walk in itself did not seem entirely justifiable, but taking this energetic dog out over the beautiful fells was usually a delight.

All of us took Juno out, though my grandfather did the bulk of the expeditions, often going out for three or four miles twice a day in all weathers to give her exercise. His diaries are filled with many more references to taking Juno out on walks than to any other type of information. Let me just take the first full month after my parents had returned to India, when Juno was just becoming a grown dog, namely November 1955. On the 1st, 'Violet goes for long walk with Juno'; on the 9th 'Violet and I took Juno for a walk'; on the 10th 'Took Juno for walk to Tarn Hows' [a walk of about four to five miles]; 27th 'Went for walk with Anne and Juno to High Hall'.

I remember many walks, particularly across the back fields to 'Juniper Hill' as we called it, overlooking the Drunken Duck tarn, a walk of about two miles, with Juno snuffling and racing around. I also went on longer walks with her, often to Tarn Hows, as on 7th January 1956 with my uncle: 'Richard and Alan go to Tarn Hows with Juno'. A longer walk was described in my letter of 7th August 1956

On Saturday the girls and I decided to walk out to Grizedale Tarn (which is about a mile beyond the other end of Esthwaite) but Fiona forgot the Map and we took the wrong road and searched for hours in the woods for it and altogether walked about 10 miles and Juno (who is very fit) was tired out.

On 7th April I wrote to my parents

On the Monday after Fiona's birthday the girls and I took a sandwich lunch up to the tarns but as there were so many people we took it up on top of the hill on the other side of the tarns and there we ate our lunch with a beautiful view of the Tarns on one side and Coniston Old Man on the other, it was really wonderful. Juno is in very fine fettle as you can possibly see in the photoes we have been taking her out for at least 3 miles a day...

A particularly long walk is noted on 14th September 1959 in my grandfather's diary when, with a school friend, 'Alan and Geoffrey climb Coniston Old Man and Weatherlam with Juno'. From Field Head this would be a round walk of twenty miles with two quite high peaks.

My sister Fiona was a tremendous walker. She describes one of her mammoth walks, following the traditional New Years hunt which took place every year at the Drunken Duck. In a letter to my parents on 2nd January 1957, when she was still twelve, she describes how

Yesterday it was the Drunken Duck hunt. We got up at 8 o'clock and made nose-bags. Then Alan and Anne and I and Juno (of course) and we set off to get to the summit of Black Crag. It was a wetish muggy day and it was awful misty and we didn't get up to the top till quarter to 10. We couldn't see anything so we went down when we arrived down at the bottom we found that the Huntsman had decided to hunt down in the fields till the mist cleared up when we did get to the bottom. The Huntsmen decided to go up!! We met, Richard (Granny Grandpa were down by the Duck!). As we had just come down neither Alan or Anne wanted to go up so they de-bunked home while Juno Richard and I rushed up B. Craig after the hounds! Finally we joined up with the Huntsman. And we set off to find the hounds which we had lost by then!! We walked all over B. Crag looking for them and finally set off over the Skeleth-Coniston Rd and over some fells. We went up a steep hill. Sat on the top then we had to go down a precepice!! It was awful speshially with the wuff!! I dislodged a big stone. It hit Richard on the back but didn't hurt him. We finally came back at 2.30 from the Tarns (we walked round to it by the hills).

Since it gives a strong sense of the kind of walks we both went on, here is another extract from a letter a few days later on 11th January from Fiona to my parents.

I have just come back form my walk. I went to Outgate to post a parcel for Granny then I went on along the main road to Ambleside till I came to those piles of gravel and the AA box. I then went through the fields and through a wood (where Juno put up a cock pheasant there are lots around) I then came to the road which goes to the Duck and I went along there till I got to the Drunken Duck tarn and I then went through the field home.

My mother also took Juno for walks, and she describes one such and the beauties of the Lakes countryside round her house in some memoranda on 3rd May 1957.

'Slowly the spell of an English spring is beginning to work on me, and such a lovely spring ... The oaks are turning a lovely pinky gold, chestnuts in flower, bluebells in the hedgerows and the cuckoo calling. I take Juno for a walk after lunch and lie in the soft grass and stare down at the fat white houses in the fat green fields and the cobalt blue hills behind and the lakes and cows and the trembling shiny larches and feel it is almost too good, too picturesque and studied.'

As well as ordinary walks, we would go for expeditions specifically to try to catch rabbits or hares, though I know for certain that it was the last thing I wanted Juno to be successful at. Thus on 7th April 1956 my grandfather notes 'Girls and Alan go rabbiting with Juno', or on 18th May 1957 'Took Juno hare hunting near Tarns'. The kind of event, and my relief that Juno was unable to catch a rabbit, are shown in my letter of 7th April 1956, referring to a rabbiting expedition with the sons of the farming family who lived next door.

... today Granny was told by the Bar's that they were going out in the afternoon rabbiting with their little brown spaniel Judy so Granny said we would be ready to take Juno out at 2 but it was a Sunday dinner and we only started at ten minutes to two so we hadn't much chance of starting then. We set out at last over the fields at the back and we hadn't gone far when Judy started yelping and we found a rabbit in a stone wall but it must have escaped out of the other side as we went round. About 10 yards further on Juno lay down so I thought that she was trying to copy Judy but when we looked in the wall we saw a rabbit crouching with his ears right back, but I'm glad to say that she got away as well, but after the walk Juno was absolutely tired out.

Another pleasure was to incorporate Juno into our games in the back garden. This was something which my younger sister Anne, who was mad on horses and horse-jumping, was particularly keen on. She did not have a horse of her own, but could pretend that this large brown animal, almost like a young horse, was being trained for jumping competitions. Anne would set up complicated jumping arenas and try to train Juno to perform. The first mention is in a letter from Fiona to my parents in late 1955, referring to the extraordinary collapse of the Queen's horse in the Grand National. *Wasn't it a shame about the Queen's horse Devon Loch.... Of course afterwards Anne, Juno and I played lots of horsey games about ESB (winner), Devon Loch....*

There was limited success, as my sister described to my mother in a letter of 10th April 1956: *Annie, Alan and I, have put up that course of jumping again and Annie is trying to make Juno jump without much succsex (sp!).* Such events were part of the texture of life which my mother fondly recalled in a set of memoranda she wrote under 3rd May 1957: 'Juno being jumped over the padder net, the girls in their jodhpurs.' On 20th April 1958 my grandfather noted that 'Anne is trying to make Juno jump'.

These were among the many happy memories, some of which have been caught on a short piece of film of Juno playing with us, along with photographs of walks with Juno. Another memory was the annual show at Hawkshead. Among the contests was one for which we could enter Juno. My sister Fiona gives an amusing account of this occasion in a letter of 7th September 1956.

Hawkshead Show was smashing. We went at about 1030 we walked down Alan went through the fields and Granny and Anne and I and Juno went by road with the hope we would catch a bus but we didn't. There were tons of people there. Juno went a wee bit scatty at all the dogs cats tortuses Ect. She didn't get anything only the judge gave everyone a shilling who didn't win or anything. So I got a shilling anyway. Juno was quite good only when we had to walk up and down she tried to go and have a chat with the other Boxers. After the showing the dog cat Ect!! we went round and Granny Anne and Alan (and Stanley) went on the grandstands while I took Juno for a walk round. We had a look in the flower show tent where she nearly pulled the tent down!! and ran between everyone's legs. So I took her back we watched the showing of cows ect. Flicka won the half bred Arab filly the funny thing was she was the only entry. Still she did look lovely. All brushed up....In the end Alan Juno and I went home. And fed Juno and tied her to the Arga and we went fishing but we only caught small ones.

Alongside this, however, were the difficulties. The greatest of these, which it is strange that my parents did not foresee, was the fact that it was impossible to stop Juno chasing sheep, as well as other animals, though as far as I know she never killed any. But especially in the lambing season this was a serious offence and it says much for the forbearance of neighbouring farmers, and perhaps their respect for a retired Lt. Colonel, that they never demanded that Juno be put down.

The sheep chasing started early in 1956. On 18th January my grandfather noted 'Caught Juno chasing sheep', and a week later, less dangerously, 'Juno found sheep caught in thicket. We let it loose.' Then on 3rd March 'Juno chased sheep but Stanley came to rescue' [Stanley was the son of the neighbouring farmer]. There are a number of other references of a similar kind throughout the diary, though some suggests that it was more playfulness than any desire actually to hurt the sheep. Thus on 30th March 1958 I wrote to my parents that Juno *has also got into bad habits again and she has starting chasing sheep again. In fact we have just had a telephone call from Mr Warrenner saying that he has turned her off his fields as she was playing with his lambs.*

Yet the worry continued and was one of the main reasons why my mother began, as we shall see, to try to find somewhere to send her away. So on 24th January 1960, some four and a half years after we moved to the house, she wrote

Juno is really the chief headache as they have let her go back to all her bad habits, and hardly a day goes by without her chasing sheep. This morning Anne and I took her for a walk to the Tarns and she disappeared up a hillside and we finally came back without her - so Fiona dashed off and I thought we'd lost her too. I simply must find a home for her - but who will take her? Anyway I'll see what I can do.

The one account of a serious attempt to stop Juno's habit is given in a letter from Fiona, written on 11th January 1957 and showing that she was indeed trying to take responsibility for the dog which she hoped would be hers.

Juno is much better with me at least she has been for about 4 days. Before that Alan and Grandpa both told me how she had been chasing sheep so went with her and tied her up near some sheep I went away and when I came back she was shivering with fright and she didn't even look at the sheep but when she did I smacked her hard with her lead. I hated doing but she had to learn. For about 1 hr followed the sheep with Juno on the lead smacking her. Then I LET HER OFF AND SHE DIDN'T CHASE THEM. Alan wouldn't believe me coz whenever he or anyone else takes her out she does chase them. So now when I take her out she comes the minute I call and she heels and sit immediately. I don't even put her on the lead on the main road because she heels all the time. But I am still teaching her because I want everyone to have complete control - coz what about school?

It may have worked with Fiona, but as she noted, what would happen when she went back to school? The outcome is noted in a diary entry less than a month later on 8th February: 'Juno attacks sheep when out with Violet'.

It was not only sheep that were a problem. On 29 Nov 1956 my grandfather noted 'Juno damages chicken of Mrs Shuttleworth'. On 7 January 1957 Fiona wrote to my parents about another incident.

Alan is in a bate with me. Coz just when he and I arrive back we met Lassie and Bob and Pip and Alan with their ginger kitten. I told Alan to let Juno off to play with Lassie. By mistake I put the kitten down (Tigger its called) and Juno rushed at it. Poor little thing was almost killed. But it managed to run through a fence. Juno rushed round to the gate where that was a whole pile of muck. Alan tore after her and ran right through the muck (he had his wellies on luckily!). But he got mad with me!!! Not that I care!

On 27 March 1960 my mother wrote in despair, shortly before my father returned. *Juno went over next door and half killed one of the little daschunds, I'm really feeling a bit desperate about her, she's completely out of control. Perhaps you'll be able to knock some sense into her.*

The real difficulty was that she was a very big, powerful, and playful dog, which would do what most dogs would do – explore, chase, hunt. The sort of chaos that ensued is shown in a letter from my mother on 20th May 1957 to my father.

The day before I went in to Ambleside to meet Anne at the dentist, foolishly took Juno and arrived home feeling as if a steam-roller had been over me. I tried to leave her in the waiting room while the dentist saw us but she made such a thundering noise that I had to let her in, she sprang at Anne in the chair, knocking the dentist and his assistant off balance - obviously thought Anne needed rescuing from some dreadful fate and had to be lifted off bodily! Then I went on to Fairfield and she obviously got Fiona's scent as she refused to leave, when the Fish appeared there was chaos with Piggys and Jane Ents. being knocked screaming in all directions! Poor Juno, I finally had to drag her away on her stomach.

A lesser problem, but one which occurred frequently, was that when Juno went on heat special measures had to be taken and the house could become surrounded by amorous suitors. There are quite frequent references in my grandfather's diaries to this event, for example on 6th February 1956 'Juno goes on heat', which seems to have lasted for quite a time for only on 26th did he write 'Juno's heat time over'.

It was clearly something that my mother was worried about, realizing the complications it caused. Thus she wrote to my grandparents on 13 October 1958

So glad Juno is better and hope her heat isn't going to be a nuisance, I should keep her shut up for the three dangerous days and the rest of the time confine her exercise to romps in the back fields and not risk being pulled over on the lead. You can get an injection to give a bitch if there is an accident, which almost ensures there will be no puppies.

And then three weeks later on 1st November, *hope Juno is safely through her heat without too many serenading sheep dogs outside the windows!*

This problem may have been one of the factors which aborted an attempt to send Juno away to a friend in 1959, my mother reporting on 10th July *Pam seems quite happy with Juno still, though she has just sent her away over her heat as all the gentlemen of the village were hammering on the back door and scuffing up chunks of her lawn.*

One partial solution which was tried was to mate Juno. Why my parents wanted baby boxers I am not sure, but we may have put pressure on them. So there are several rather coy references to this in letters to me and my grand-parents. On 20th April 1958 she wrote to me *I wonder if Juno's marriage has taken place yet?! And two weeks later on 4th May to my grandparents, Any matrimonial plans for Juno, or have you decided to leave it?*

Clearly the mating took place but was not successful. There was probably some kind of non-refundable payment for this, which led to some bad feelings, made more complicated by the fact that the owner of the male boxer was one of my school-masters at Sedbergh (from memory Mr. MacDougall). This lay behind my mother's comment to my grandmother on 2nd July *A pity about Juno in a way, but don't write too rude a letter to Alan's master!*

Apart from these difficulties, as well as quite frequent references to the cut paws, skin diseases and other ailments which caused worry and expense, there was generally the strain it caused on my aging grand-father who, in my mother's view, was over zealous in taking the dog for long walks – though from memory, I know that Juno now gave him one of his main purposes in life and, on balance, must have been a very positive force in his life.

When my grandfather was left on his own, my mother off on one of her trips or in hospital, Juno was sometimes put in kennels. But more radical solutions were also envisaged.

The one serious attempt to send her away to a tea-planter friend in the south of England reveals a great deal of why my mother felt Juno had become too much of a burden for my aging grand-parents, but also her ambivalence about getting rid of a pet which we had probably, grown out of but were still attached to.

On 6th March 1959 my mother wrote from India to my grandparents.

There will be other odds and ends of expenses by then and Juno. Pam Shaw is quite anxious to have her so I suggest Alan takes her down when he goes to Iwerne. It will mean going to Winchester which is rather out of his way, but better than entrusting her to RPCA. I feel so sad to think of her in kennels, specially after her life spent under the gold eiderdown, but realise the difficulties. Anyway when the children come back they can bring her home and look after, but I hope Daddy won't drive them out on three hour walks morning and afternoon because it really isn't necessary. When we had charge of her we sometimes didn't take her for a walk for a week on end and she stayed perfectly fit and amenable, with a good smack to put her in her place occasionally.

Two weeks later she wrote again on 23 March about Pam

She is a large strapping creature and has two large strapping sons so if they can't manage Juno nobody can, anyway she says she will be quite honest about it and if Juno is beyond her she will arrange to have her put down... tell Richard not to paint too gloomy a picture of Juno when he hands her over! I'm sure she will be quite

manageable with real firmness which Pam will give her, being a fairly managing sort of person.

A week later on 30th she wrote again

I wrote to Pamela saying Richard would bring Juno on 9th but it seems that isn't now the case, so perhaps you'd arrange it between you, I'm sure there'll be no difficulty in her putting Alan up... I hope Alan won't find her too much of a handful on the train but I think its the best way. It'll be a relief when its all fixed and finished with.

On 14th April my grandfather notes 'Mrs Shaw writes that Juno is a great success and is having a good time at East Meon.' Then comes the account of the problems of too much attention from neighbouring dogs while Juno was on heat.

Clearly, unless it was just a temporary arrangement, it was not a success, for in my summer plans for August, I noted in a letter to my parents: *Thursday morning - fish and I go down South- Juno is dropped at Kennel* [Fish was the nickname of my sister Fiona] and on 4th August my grandfather noted 'Mrs Shaw arrives with Juno'.

My mother then wrote on 10th August to my grandparents, suggesting that despite this failure she would be looking for another home.

I wonder how Juno is, and hope she isn't causing too much friction, it all depends on Daddy really, and whether he will insist on wearing himself out taking her for walks, which she doesn't need. We will pay for her food if you let us know what it is. I hope she will get by until I come home, when I'll made an out and out effort to find her another home.

Finally on 26 Aug she wrote again that *I'm so glad Juno is settling down at last, do hope you'll continue to be strict with her and not let Daddy tire himself out.*

It is clear that my grandfather, especially, was deeply attached to Juno and my memories of them are inseperable. This was part of the problem - he took his responsibilities to take her for walks too seriously. And when Juno was away he believed she was grieving for him. Thus, in a letter on 30 March 1958 I described how *Juno has come back from the kennels, she looks a trifle thin - Grandpa attributed to her pining at his absence, but Mrs Knappit (who came to dinner last night) said that it was because Juno had had a bit of her foot cut off.*

The fact that Juno slept on a bed with an eiderdown over her, was constantly coddled by the family, given Christmas presents, and many other small treats shows something about our attitude to her. While the farm dogs next door were treated as working animals - kept outside, often wet and cold, tied in barns - Juno was a typical middle class pet, almost another child. She was always there in the background and just as my days in our Dorset home were suffused with memories of ubiquitous chickens, so my life at Field Head is inseparably bound up with the powerful, loving, rumbustious youngest member of our family - the popular, or to our neighbours not so popular, boxer, Juno.

ROMANTIC LOVE

In search of love

A strong theme throughout my Dragon, Sedbergh and Oxford days is love. Elsewhere I attempt to explain a little about my search for divine love – ultimately unsuccessful. The striving for that love, which so much echoes our human love was not entirely distinct from human love. The two were interfused in some of my favourite poets of the time, Donne, Herbert, Wordsworth and G.M.Hopkins. All was part of a wider search for reciprocated love, the finding of a true soul mate.

I suppose that everyone searches for love. The love that often surrounds us in our infancy ebbs away and we try to find a replacement. This must be a theme for Wordsworth, whose mother died when he was eight and father a couple of years later, and who found a surrogate mother in Anne Tyson in Hawkshead. It was something which was also very important for me for not entirely different reasons – my mother leaving me again and again from the age of under seven to go to India.

It has long struck me as an anthropologist that something about the social structure and socialization patterns of England has made romantic love particularly important. As I have written in several places, including half the book ‘Marriage and Love in England’, there is some powerful need for something to be present which ‘defects of loneliness controls’, as Donne puts it.

This general condition, the urgency to find love, was brought to particular intensity in my life by a combination of two things. Firstly the personality and needs of my mother – an intensely loving, yet in some ways damaged, person, who poured love upon my father, me, my sisters, animals, and anyone else within reach. So, for a few years, until I was nearly seven, I had enough love surrounding me. Then, as it seemed, it was suddenly withdrawn to a great distance when she went to India one night in true Kipling-esque fashion.

Although I knew that she still loved me, and my grandparents gave me great love and attention, I still felt that sudden loneliness, the absence of the other. This was obviously exacerbated when I went to boarding schools for ten years, where I was away from all family love and among strangers. All this happened to Wordsworth, but more tragically, for his mother died when he was eight and he was almost immediately sent off to boarding school at Hawkshead.

Like so many English for a thousand years, sent away from home as servants, apprentices, pages or to school, I found myself a single transacting individual in a moral market economy, on my own, having to fight my own battles. My mother recognized that this was both necessary but painful. The solution I think I always searched for was to find a love as strong as that infant love of my mother, but transformed into an equal and mature love.

At first there were hints of a reciprocated love in crushes on other little boys at the Dragon and on bigger or smaller boys at Sedbergh. This had something of the feeling of the total, overwhelming, stars in the eyes, emotion. Yet, in the end, it was only a partial solution to the void – as were the increasing number of really deep friendships I began to form.

In the absence of a permanent and multi-level relationship of a physical, social, spiritual and 'total' kind, impossible as I saw it before or outside marriage, for a while the solution to the emptiness was to dream and plan for the final discovery of 'the other one'.

Between the ages of about twelve and twenty-five I pursued my love in an idealized way, somewhat in the ancient western tradition of courtly love, where the ideal love was always unattainable. This yearning gave special resonance to many of the things I read, whether some of the great moments in Shakespeare, the romantic poets, Yeats, the story of Heloise and Abelard, Love and Death, as well as films, pop music and much else.

What is perhaps strange is that having experienced a shock of an early loss of the object of my love with my mother's departure, and the repeated shocks of her subsequent departures every few years just as I was building up love and trust again, I did not lose faith in the possibility of the attainment of love, becoming cynical or hardened.

I somehow remained hopeful, trusting, searching, and quite confident that 'Some day my princes would come'. As with everything else I felt that if I worked hard enough, waited, applied my mind and spirit, I would one day find the person who would fill that aching gap - my fair Rosamond, Eloise, Maid Marian or Lady of the Lake. It was like fishing - if one planned, thought, honed one's skill and kept trying, one day the fair one, as in Yeats' 'Song of Wandering Angus' would be hooked.

The story of the finding of that special person finally when I was nearly thirty belongs to a later part of the story and only occurred after a false dawn. Yet throughout these years as strong as any growth of imagination, of intellect, of the body or anything else, is my constant search for deep love - mixed up for a long time with sexual urges, but something deeper and stronger. Many of my most intense memories through the years are to do with encounters with potential partners and will be described as they occur.

The theme which above all differentiates English (and hence American) culture from many others in the world is that the deep love between two human beings is often the basis for marriage and a companionate existence. The drawing together of two magnets in this way is strange and lies behind much of the power of various forms of the culture I experienced, most obviously folk and pop culture.

Love

How did we learn about the peculiar western concept of love? There seem to be a number of possible sources, models and templates which I shall list here and then explore in more detail later.

There were films which we saw, often romantic comedies, including Brigitte Bardot and some sexual pin-ups. Plays, both at Sedbergh and pantomimes and such-like at Field Head are another source. Pop idols and music, television soaps, comics and newspapers, paintings perhaps, all these would have given us clues as to what was love -

and perhaps particularly advertisements where much is potentially made desirable by playing the love and romance card.

A large area would be my more serious reading at school, including poetry, plays, essays and other suggested books. This was particularly important given my interest in literature (where I won the 6th form literature prize in my last term). Here my essays and notes should give me an unusual source, for example my analysis of love in Shakespeare, Keats and so on.

Actual people, especially my parents (a very strong model) and my grandparents and other people I knew personally would set up standards and models of what companionate love was like.

I wonder if we had any formal instruction on romance and love; I certainly don't remember any civics or other talks on this. I suspect that the only area where sex and love were touched on was under religion, in divinity lessons, in sermons, in the instruction at Iwerne Minster.

I shall look at my New Year's Resolutions, my poetry, letters from friends, to see if there is anything there.

Should my one or two crushes on older and younger boys go here? Do I have any paintings, drawings of girls and women ?

Analyse the songs I sang about love - e.g. 'I tell the tale...' and pop songs, which I learnt, as well as folk-song etc.

It is worth going into this really seriously because:

- a. romantic love is such a strange feature of English culture
- b. I have written a book about this
- c. It is particularly important in the period of my life from Sedbergh to Oxford and marriage
- d. The attitudes to these subjects were in such rapid flux in this period - marriage and love going through a revolution from Edwardian to 'Swinging Sixties' morality etc.
- e. My mother's writings are particularly rich on this subject - especially her letters to my father.

All this is preparation for what is even larger topic in the six years at Oxford which is the real period of romantic exploration, finally leading into my first marriage with Gill. In some ways, as the enchantment of my childhood diminished in other ways it was funnelled into the search for the soul-mate, with overtones of King Arthur etc.

What effects did class have on this - e.g. Carol Grieve and snobbery etc.

How did I differentiate different kinds of love - for Jesus, for friends, for family, animals, girls etc. Were there confusions and clashes?

Early girl friends

What I enjoyed about writing the account of the Dragon years was the investigation of the anthropology and sociology of the formation of character – of hopes, dreams, friendship and loneliness. The combination of wider conditions and particular people filled me with determination, self-confidence, resilience, curiosity, trust and other characteristics. The way in which the formal and informal life, the games and the learning, as well as my home life are the themes of that section.

The account of the Sedbergh-Lakes years is different. My character was fairly fixed by this time, so it was my mind and my imagination which were developing faster in this period. This is the theme of Wordsworth's *Prelude*; the growth of imagination and sensibility, and like me Wordsworth tried to understand this through memory and retrospective reconstruction. What my letters and particularly my essays and notes should allow me to do is to examine the growth of my mind and imagination, how I learnt. I should find out what I learnt, my prejudices, blinkers, attempts at new explorations.

There is one area of my personality or character which was developing at this point and which overlaps with the changes in my body which is particularly significant to me now. This was the growth of my interest in finding a mate or replacement for my mother as the central emotional partner for my life. I do not recall that at the Dragon or perhaps even in the first couple of years at Sedbergh I felt any particularly strong romantic yearnings for a perfect 'other' who would share my life. I had crushes on little boys and little girls and felt some sort of sensual attraction to them. I had a lot of contacts with females out of school- my mother, grandmother and sisters were the strongest influences on my life.

Yet I was not yet on what later, I suppose, I would assimilate to the adventurous mixture of love, adventure and romance – Arthur and Guinevere, Lancelot and his lady, Eloise and Abelard, Romeo and Juliet and many other where, after hot pursuit and the overcoming of great obstacles, I would find the 'soul mate', the 'marriage of true minds', the 'apple blossom maid'. It was from about sixteen or so that I started to fall in love a little more seriously with girls and took my first small steps towards sexual and spiritual consummation.

My first proper girl friend was Annette Gribbon, the 'sweetly pretty' girl recommended by my grandmother. I have come across a diary which brought back this slight affair, early dancing cheek to cheek, a forced attempt to fall in love. Yet she was never rally more than a very sweet friend and we drifted apart. Then when Martin Buckmaster moved in next door I fell more seriously, but for a much younger girl. Martin was in love with Jacky, perhaps seventeen, and her younger sister Jill, about fifteen was around and I found very attractive. She was a tough, pretty and intelligent girl and I pursued her for some time to no real avail. Later I formed a platonic friendship with her younger sister Jo.

Perhaps I kissed one or two others, but do not remember that either at Sedbergh or the Lakes up to the age of 18 I had had any seriously successful relationships with members of the opposite sex. I just hung about with the gang where there were several

pretty girls who became friends – but not more. It was later, when at Oxford, that my love life becomes an important part of my development.

When at Sedbergh, perhaps when I went to Carlisle for my operation or returning home, as our train waited across the platform a girls' school was on the train waiting. I remember seeing a girl there who ravished my sight – and she waves to me! For some years after her face was in my mind, as the face of the little girl whom I had met at a summer camp when we were about eight – (Pat?) had been for some years. So I dreamt of missing the girl of my life.

Likewise for a few years, I wondered if again I might meet the little girl which whom I had shared a summer holiday in the Lakes. This powerful and delightful dalliance – entirely innocent and correct – had some elements of the Lolita theme (though the ages were not so disparate, she must have been about 15 and I was about 23). I shall look for traces of this powerful attraction when I come to Oxford and I only mention it now as a side of my search which was always present – the search for innocence, for playfulness, for purity, and the fair damsel. Hence my immediate attraction to Laurie Lee, Llewellyn Powys, Yeats and so on. I shall return to this later.

Young Love and the Party Scene

This is clearly a central topic in the period between thirteen and eighteen both for my sisters and me. As recounted in the *Dragon Years*, I had already had 'girl friends' from the age of about seven in my kindergarten. But there had been no physical contact and it remained platonic. My normal interest in my sister's different anatomy was not pronounced. And I was only on the edge of puberty, ejaculating only once I think before I went to Sedbergh. My only serious 'crushes' were on two other little boys, both in my own year, at the *Dragon*, one of whom at least, I remember kissing once. My interest in pretty chorus girls or obtaining pin-ups for the Prefect's study, which mildly amused and shocked my mother, were fairly low key.

So I went to Sedbergh with an unbroken voice, but on the edge of the age of sexual excitement. Sedbergh itself gave us very little guidance or preparation for the encounter with GIRLS! It was an all boys boarding-school where we were encouraged not to think of girls or sex. As yet there were not even debates, let alone dances, with Casterton, the girls school down the valley. We were not allowed to go into town or to meet girls.

The girl servants in the other half of the house were strictly off-bounds. It was only at the very end of my time at Lupton that my friend Ian Campbell (who, today, I first re-established contact with after 50 years), as Head of House, told me that he had been approached by a representative of these girls to see whether the prefects would like to continue the nightly assignations which had been the practice of the previous set of prefects. To my mixed regret and profound relief (as a devout Christian), Ian, without consulting us, had said that we were not interested.

The general absence of any training in how to socially engage with girls at the school is an interesting and recurring theme in the editorials of *The Luptonian* and one of the very few where there was quite sharp criticism of the practices of the school. Let me quote two of these editorials.

In the Summer 1959 issue, when I was already the Treasurer and involved in the magazine, the editorial asks what sort of man gets to the top. Is it 'the sort of man who is admired for his straightness and integrity. He is a good games player who can win or lose with equal equanimity.' The Sedbergh type is thus, but the person who gets to the top is someone who combines this with 'polish'. Such polish is not provided by the Sedbergh education where a typical boy, it is implied, is different. 'See him fumbling through light conversation of a cocktail party, desperately aware of his social inferiority. His clumsy good nature and well-meaning but misplaced remarks make him shunned when any delicate problem arises at the office. Directors tolerate him for his basic sterling qualities but he has not the polish to make a good industrialist.'

This editorial lamented our lack of training in sophisticated social techniques in general and as a drawback for our careers. In an editorial in Spring 1957 the question of inter-action with girls is addressed more directly. The article starts by contrasting the active policy to encourage jazz, dancing and such things at Rossall and Rugby to the absence of such things at Sedbergh. With mock irony, it wonders whether such dancing could be introduced at Sedbergh. 'There is talk of 'a dance against Ca*ste*ton' (is that how one puts it?) - 'quite absurd. To begin with no one knows how to dance or to behave themselves in social circles ... well, er - anyway, most of them get quite enough in the holidays. Isn't the object of the public school education the forming of a gentlemanly character?'

Then a picture is painted of a Sedberghian at a dance. 'The date is 12th January, and the scene is a Charity Ball. Sedberghian, after sitting-out the first two hours, constantly refusing refreshment ("Oh, no thanks, nothing stronger than cider for me"), approaches C*st*rton pupil in the same plight on the other side of the floor. "ErHumI - I can't dance but I'll have a jolly good shot, if you would like to try this one?" Nervous laughter. They dance. They dance? Sedberghian, staring intently at his feet - What's your name? - whoops! - was that your toe?" More nervous laughter. The music stops and Sedberghian departs, leaving his partner bemused in the middle of the floor."

The editorial ends by concluding that 'It's all very well being taught to be "chaps," but it's a bit rough having to relearn the art of being sociable during the four months of the year in which we are allowed to enjoy a natural life...'

By some strange coincidence, and perhaps drawing on his own experience, one of the two editors who wrote this was D.W.Philp. Precisely on 15th January 1957 Dave Philp, head-boy of Lupton, and a friend of his, Mike Doogan, had organized a dance at Brathay Hall in the Lakes to which myself (aged just 15) and my sister Fiona (aged nearly 13) had been asked. It was, as I recall, my first adult dance and bore a number of the characteristics which Philp describes in this article! I shall describe it shortly in more detail, but it bears out the editorial in my memory.

It is true that there was a tiny amount of organized dance training. I do not remember anything like the weekly dances over the winter described in *Dragon Days* - perhaps too much of boys dancing as girls would have been embarrassing at this age. But the *Luptonian* for winter 1958 notes in the Term Notes that 'L.H.B.D.C. [Lupton House Ballroom Dancing Club] has once more come to the help of those who fear the

floor. A few more cheery Cha Cha enthusiasts have been launched on to the social bandwagon. The Charleston has also appeared on the agenda ...'

In my last Winter Term, 1959, the dancing began to become livelier and there was even talk that perhaps the housemaster's wife might find some female partners for us. As Editor of the *Luptonian* by this time, I may have contributed to this account.

As well as skiffle, it states 'there is the L.H.B.D. Orchestra, which is being kept in reserve for the time when the L.H.B.D.C. considers itself proficient enough to dance to its accompaniment. So far they have been "Around the World" [a particular song of the time]' at least sixty times, but they have not yet managed to do anything else. This latter club has really flourished this term, and there are even rumours that Mrs. Marriot and a band of fair Amazons may risk their toes and provide partners for which we are very grateful. [Interesting that we were so grateful even for the rumours!] Dashing Luptonians, mostly in badly fitting kilts (or other array) [I still wore an increasingly small kilt at this time] have this term penetrated the mysteries of the Waltz, Quick-step, Samba, Gay Gordons, Eightsome, Dashing White Sergeant, Petronella, St. Bernard and Valeta.' [Many of the same dances as I had learnt five years earlier at the Dragon.]

In the studies we were allowed to put up pin-ups, as we had been able to do in our last year as Prefects at the Dragon. The Spring 1959 *Luptonian* mentions 'Study decorations have varied a great deal this term. As the poll stands at the moment Brigitte leads 17-6 over Jayne.' Brigitte was, of course, our favourite sex symbol, Brigitte Bardot, whom we were even allowed to see in a film at Sedbergh, and Jayne was, I suspect Jayne Mansfield, another well-endowed lady. And I remember the delight of the skiffle concert at a school fete day when admiring gown girls came to swoon over us. But there was certainly very little advice or practice in encountering girls. So we were largely on our own.

My situation, however, was redeemed by some factors which many other boys may have been without. One was the attitude of my parents and grandparents. My research into the social life of my ancestors in the last days of the Raj in Burma and India through my mother's diaries show that in the years from 16-18 she lived in a whirl of dances and flirtation. Even after some years of marriage, my grandmother had also enjoyed the same excitements of numerous dances, gossip and flirtations in the winter retreats of the Raj. They were therefore well aware of the needs and pleasures of youth and, apart from some anxieties over my sisters, especially Fiona, were broadly encouraging of our desire to meet girls and have a gay social life.

A second factor was the fact that I had younger sisters, particularly in the case of Fiona, two years younger than me, who had attractive school friends and who were, in terms of sexual and social development, roughly at my age. Fiona's vivacious character, which is even now remembered some fifty years later, made the home buzz.

The fact that during the last two years of my time at Sedbergh the other half of the house was the home of the Buckmasters, who had a son, Martin, about my age, a lively, car-driving, friendly young man who played music and liked giving parties, meant that our house as a whole became a kind of club or social centre for a certain group of middle-class kids in that part of the Lakes.

The Lakes at that time was just starting to be a serious mass tourist area and also a retirement zone. So on top of the much larger population of local farmers, tradesmen and others, there was a thin layer of children of professionals (Steve Darbishire son of a doctor), widows (Stephen Grieve), people with second homes from the industrial north (Anne Johnson, the Listers), retired businessmen and army types (the Manzi Fe's and my grandparents). We formed into a sort of 'gang' and particularly in the last year, when I was turning into an eighteen-year-old, we partied – helped by the rising affluence which meant that we could afford transport – cars, motorbikes and scooters.

The final element in the cocktail was the specific rise of youth or 'pop' culture in the second half of the 1950's. The Dragon years were still overshadowed by the austerity and drabness of the war. Only from about 1954 do I note a lifting of the spirits. A combination of increasing wealth – allowing more food, drink, better housing, and a rapid development of electronic technology – television, gramophones, tape-recorders, electric guitars, gave the tremendous burst of energy from the United States by way of jazz and folk and rock a peculiar force. It burst around us and added to a start of the youth rebellion or revolution which is usually associated with the swinging 60's. It really all started, at least in my memory, from about 1958.

It shall deal with the musical revolution separately, the skiffle, Elvis, Bill Haley and the rest. Yet no account of the atmosphere of love, romance, partying and excitement would be at all comprehensible without noting the way in which pop music – and the new dances such as 'jiving', which went with it (and which Fiona taught me), loosened inhibitions.

Of course the situation, in a way, was only returning to that which my grandparents and parents had known before the war in far-off India and Burma – plenty of food and drinks, gramophones and music. Yet it was now much more widespread through British society. And the degree of parental control through the old chaperoning system had completely broken down. We certainly felt we were living through a revolution, that something seismic was shifting, that a new age was being born.

Unfortunately only a few scraps of the change remain recorded in my papers and memories. But the dimensions are rather nicely gate-posted or marked at the start and end by two events which have remained particularly strongly in my memory, lying three years apart. The change between the two is not only the result of the fact that on the first, on 15th January 1957, I was just 15 and the second, on 6th January 1960 I was eighteen and hence much older, my sister being respectively 12 and 15 (with her birthday in April). Rather, these years are a world apart, for the world saw the flooding of our consciousness by American rock music and the rapid spread of TV culture. To my mind, the shift between about 1957-1962, was equivalent to that which I have seen occurring between 2005 and 2010 in youth culture with the spread of mobile phones, iPods, the WWW, Facebook and so on.

The Doogan dance was, to my remembrance, the first serious teenage dance my sister and I had been to. Mike Doogan would not normally have been a school friend, being about two years older than me, and hence was about to leave Lupton. But his father was head of the Outward Bound centre at Brathay, about four miles away from our home. Hence my family had negotiated that I would be taken back and forth to school in the Doogan's car with my school trunk. So it was not altogether surprising that

when Mike organized a dance for Tuesday 15th January 1957 I should be invited, aged just 15. The account of the invitation is in a letter from me on 12th January 1957 as follows: 'On Thursday [10th Jan.] we went in to Kendal to do some shopping and we saw Doogan and a friend of his who is staying the holidays with him (he is going to be our next head of house). And then after lunch Doogan rang up and asked me to come over on Teusday to a dance lasting from 6-10 o'clock. I am going by the 4.50 bus and I am going to spend the night there as I can't get back at that time.'

What was more surprising was the invitation to my sister, then only twelve and three quarters. I suspect that at the last moment, Mike and his friend, found that they were short of girls. This seems to be implied by my sister's account of the invitation process, which shows that it was at the last minute that she was invited, and that the party was co-organized by the head of Lupton House, the very Dave Philp who probably wrote the account of a fictional dance for the *Luptonian* editorial which I have quoted.

Fiona wrote on Sunday 13th January, 'Dave Philp rang Alan up (he is 18 and head of house) and told him to bring me to the Dance he and Dugan are going to give on Tuesday. I wish I needn't GO!' But it was an order, so my sister was duly prepared. On the Monday, 'went to Ambleside to have my hair cut - awfully short. I got a knew [sic] dress I am going to it tomorrow and at 4.30 I am going to the party.' On the day of the party she wrote 'Rose. I went to Ambleside and got my knew dress and in the afternoon we went to the dance. I LUV Dave! We met Julie Bruce. Remember.'

Whether the Dave she fell for was the Dave Philp, five years older than her, I don't remember. But it appears that she enjoyed herself. My grandfather noted in his diary on 15 Jan 'Alan and Fiona go to Doogan's party'. My own diary records for that date 'Went to D's dance. Quite good fun. Went with Fiona.' That is all, but it seems to indicate it went well.

My own memory over fifty years later is that the dance was held in a long, hut-like, building, perhaps one of the training centres for Brathay. There were chairs along the walls on either side where a few boys and girls sat in embarrassed groups. There were still a few decorations from Christmas and the music and lighting was quite staid. I think I was wearing my kilt and certainly some very 'sensible' black laceless shoes - like slippers and very shiny.

I remember finally suggesting to Fiona that we danced - and we duly danced some kind of fox-trot or shuffle of the kind I had been taught at the Dragon, and perhaps a waltz. I do not remember other girls but still feel a slight sense of embarrassment at having to dance with my sister. Perhaps it was more lively than I remember, but it seemed, in the light of later parties, very formal, old-fashioned, and illustrating - and perhaps giving actual experience - for the social frustrations described in the *Luptonian*.

After this not altogether propitious start, we must have been to other parties and dances in the ensuing couple of years. Indeed we had been to an earlier one when my uncle Robert got married on 20th August in 1956, but we did not participate in the dancing which was for older guests. I wrote in my letter to my parents, 'It was a very good supper and after this we went back to Cartmell to watch the dancing and after that

we drove back...' while my sister wrote in her 'then we went back to P. Close and watched the older ones dancing then we came home Anne was sick.'

On 2nd November 1957 my mother recounted of 'an exhausting day tramping Kendal in search of Fiona's wardrobe - a party frock this time', so a party was clearly in the offing. And on 2nd April 1959 my grandfather's diary notes 'Fiona dentist and dance at Giggleswick Jane Entwhistle'. I remember 'Jane Ent' as a close friend, but whether the party had anything to do with the public school at Giggleswick I do not know.

A missed opportunity came when I went to stay with my school friend Ian Campbell in 1958. On 4th May I wrote to my parents, 'Newcastle was as bad as Bournemouth for being crowded. But there was one great advantage over the Lake District and that was the considerably larger number of eligible females who thronged the streets and no doubt were present at the numerous public (and private) dances which my friend (who unfortunately does not know many of the girls) told me of.'

To this my mother replied in her characteristic way, showing the same mixture of surprise and resignation that she had shown when I had noticed pretty chorus girls at a much earlier age than she had expected. (The reference to eligible females in Assam refers to the fact that I would be going out there at the end of 1958 for a holiday.)

Also glad to hear you enjoyed Newcastle, though I was surprised you were interested in the females - like most mothers I imagine my children to stick at a mental age of about twelve - though when you think of it I was only a year older than you are now when I met Daddy! I'm afraid we can't offer you any eligible females out here, all middle-aged planters wives and madly dull, but we have a tennis court!

Yet there is surprisingly little in either the papers or my memories for the period between Doogan's dance and the explosion of partying in the winter holiday 1959/60. Whether there was little socializing, which seems unlikely, or the events, parties with Anne Johnson and Anne Hogg, the Boddingtons and others, were rather genteel and low level so I have forgotten them, I do not know. Of course in the main party season of 1958/9 over Christmas and my seventeenth birthday my sisters and I were in Assam on holiday - and there may be some reflections on girls there when I come to write up that experience. I do vaguely recall some much younger, but pretty girls, at the club.

Yet as I reached my formal adulthood, my eighteenth birthday, with Martin Buckmaster now living next door, with a motorbike of my own (which I had been riding since August 1958), with my friends increasingly owning cars, there was a sudden explosion of activity. In some ways this was my coming of age - my first serious kiss, my first intimate 'cheek to cheek' dancing, the first party I hosted, the explosion into another world. Thanks to my mother's letters, some of the excitements of teenagers are captured even fifty years later. Here is an account of those sparkling days - made all the more happy by the return of my mother.

*

My mother returned from two and a half years away from England, having left us as gawky sub-teenagers, to find us much changed. She was thrown into a very different world as she describes below in her letters. I returned from school three days later

on 17th December, three days before my 18th birthday. It had been a particularly stressful term and my mother described in her letter of 27 December how

Alan is tired and a little depressed after an exhausting term, he says he didn't go well in his exams and the chances of him getting to either Oxford or Cambridge are 1 in 12 apparently, because of the "bulge". I shall go over and see Mr Marriott next term. Alan is to be a school prefect next term which is very good, but he still seems to have endless exams in front of him poor darling.

Yet tiredness was not to stand in the way of social excitement and in the front of my 1960 diary I note:

Dates of dances:

- i) 19th - Jill's - 4
- ii) 23rd - Davids 2 1/2
- iii) 28th - Robertson's 2
- iv) Pony Club(?) (Crossed out)

[I imagine the numbers refer to the duration of the parties]

The first party was clearly near Windermere, so was possibly one of Fiona's school friends. Certainly David's was David Manzi-Fe, who lived a quarter of a mile up the road. The Robertson's were my uncle Robert's parents-in-law in Cartmel. These dances and what surrounded them is partially described in a letter just after Christmas on 27th December to my father which is worth quoting since it captures the hectic atmosphere and the first preparations for our own dance.

Darling one -

I just can't remember if its more or less than a week since I wrote darling - but as you can imagine life has been ONE MAD RUSH - and I'm trying to write this to the Telly as it is. ... So much has happened in the last ten days (or is it ten weeks?) that I can't possibly write it all down at the moment, specially as we're still in the middle of it. Until the children go back to school you must expect hectic scrawls I'm afraid, they go early (January 15th) so we shall have very little let-up... They've been to 2 dances so far and have another to-morrow. I wish you could see Fiona in her new pink and silver party dress, with her hair brushed and a little make up she looks a picture and comes bursting in at 2 a.m. to tell me of the latest gorgeous chap who danced with her all evening, Alan is very smooth on the dance floor these days and mad keen so they're both enjoying the social whirl - they have 4 more yet and I fear I shall be a nervous wreck. The first dance Alan went to on his motor bike, there was a hurricane blowing and it was raining in torrents (it's done little else since I arrived) and he had miles to go, nearly to Windermere, you can imagine my relief when I heard the put-put of his little engine. Fiona came back in a taxi, I made her go in the bus after fearful groans and "Honestly I can't's" - She has no idea of economy she says at frequent intervals "Mummy all you've talked about since you came back is money"! Don't know how to impress our situation on her, the only hope is that she'll pick up a rich boy friend pretty quick! The other dance was the Manzi Fe's, which was most unsuitably un-teenagish - bottles of champagne and everyone disappearing in couples into cars. I don't know how one is supposed to look after one's young these days! ... It was a nice Christmas and I didn't get as worn out as usual, yesterday I had a quiet day cleaning up nut-shells and tangerine peel and at tea time the

*Boddingtons (boy and girl) arrived at tea time and we had a noisy evening of gramophones and Telly. The boy is now Fiona's pet hate, he is a bit of a goof I must say, but then so are all the 18 year old boys I've met. Fiona's chief love is Mike Doogan's friend, an M.P's son who is an instructor at Braithie. [Richard Acland?] Mike is going "steady" with a friend of hers at school, they're all so ridiculously **young** and they know everything its quite funny, only a bit worrying too. They look on me as a prehistoric relic who knows nothing about men at all, in fact would hardly recognise one if I saw one!*

The long absence of my mother and our rapid growing up meant that there was a lot of adjustment on all sides.

A day later on the 28th we went to Cartmel and the Robertson's party. My mother briefly describes this in a letter of 1st January to my father.

They all 3 went to a dance at Angela's parents but found it a bit dull and all got their feet well trodden on. Annie has to be driven out of the house with a horsewhip but quite enjoyed it.

Clearly it was the old-fashioned waltz and foxtrot kind of dance, and all of us had lost our skills in such dancing by then.

Things heated up even more after the New Year. On the 1st I note in my diary 'Dance (Martin's)? - Tennis Club at Greenock - not bad - the drive back with Jacky etc good fun.' Jacky was probably Jacky Lister, Martin's girl-friend. The following day was one of the turning points in my romantic life, enigmatically described in my diary on 2nd as following. 'Dance - Piggy. Quite good fun - a terrible drive over on my mo-bike. Mike on top form. My *first* kiss - Jill (to repay Mike - I danced quite a bit with Jill as there were no other pretty girls really). My mother described the event in her letter of 5th January to my father:

On Saturday they went over to Piggy's, Fiona in a bus, Alan hiccupping off into the night on his motorbike. I hated the idea of him making such a long journey at night and actually he had an eventful journey getting lost in the Duddon Valley and his lights failing on steep hills - glad I didn't know.

The following day we were off again, as described in my diary on 3rd. 'Dance - Louise's. We went again with Martin. Consisted mostly of odd games (slave market etc) - Sally Atkinson the only decent girl but 5' 8" and nabbed off by Simon Manby.' Simon Manby, I suspect, not only had the height (I was five foot six), but was also, as I remember, very handsome - one of my sister's targets. [Simon was part of our gang, the son of various artists and became a distinguished sculptor. See his website at www.simonmanby.com and email at info@simonmanby.com]

The result of all this was that as the day of our own party approached, we were getting into a state of feverish exhaustion described in a letter from my mother on 5th January.

*The three of them have just had a frightful row, and Fiona stamped out without any lurch saying **everyone** always picks on **her**!! I think they've had too many*

excitements and late nights, 4 dances running till yesterday when I shovelled them into bed at 10. Fiona always meets some gorgeous man and goes about in a dream and we all tease her - poor darling, luckily she doesn't brood and always comes up smiling.

The culmination of all of this, and one of the enduring memories of my late teens, was the first real dance party which my sisters and I had given. In her letter of 27th December my mother had noted that,

the next Thing being our dance on 6th. They (or rather A and F) are in a state of wild excitement about it and sit around making lists with lots of question marks next to most of the names - we're approaching the 30 mark as they collect a few more "smashing" types each time they go out.

On 1st January, in a panicky letter about money to my father, my mother wrote:

Could you please cable some money quickly darling and I'll try and pacify them for another week or so. Terribly sorry about this but I'm trying to be economical but Christmas has been the blot, and Alan's suit and F's party dress ... once this ruddy party is over I hope not to have to spend anything more... Our "do" is on the 6th so think of us! Everybody is busily writing lists of what they want to eat, shrimp patties, mushroom flans etc! They'll be lucky! Its all a bit of a nightmare for me, but I try not to damp their enthusiasm and I suppose we shall scramble through somehow. Trying to entertain all those people and not spend anything is my chief problem.

Four days later on 5th she wrote about last minute preparations.

My darling, Just a short hectic letter to let you know we're all well and still sane. Our preparations haven't quite reached fever pitch, that'll come to-morrow and I have a tiny bottle of brandy by me to meet all the ghastly crises that are bound to arise. It's very complicated as we have to carry all our stuffed eggs and cellotape up to the Knappetts and Mummy keeps sending down messages for the long lace tablecloth in the bottom trunk in the shed! We're having sausage rolls, mushroom patties, sausage rolls, chippolata sausages, cheese straws, salmon mould and sardine rolls plus various jellies and my plaster of paris meringues. We've made it all except the sausage rolls which I've ordered, they only real complications are Mummy with all her bright and impractical ideas, Mrs K's cats which take fright and disappear every time strangers appear, and Fiona who is so terrified we shall shame her in front of her friends that Mummy and I think we shall have to crawl about on our hands and knees with periscopes! ... We've absolutely lost count of whose coming to the dance and can't imagine where they'll park their cars, never mind I'll write and tell you all about it, we shall have some laughs I don't doubt.

The party itself was held at the house of our friend and neighbour Mrs Knappett, who was away over Christmas and in whose house my grandparents were staying. This was about ten minutes walk from our house, and without any transport (my father was in India), the logistics were particularly difficult. But the party occurred, as my grandfather noted in his diary of 6th January. 'Dance at High Grassings'.

I gave a slightly longer account of the proceedings in my diary of 6th January. 'OUR

DANCE. Absolutely hectic. Ian and Fred, Dave and Alan all came. Skiffle - low lights - broken glasses. Annette etc all contributed. The first time I have danced cheek to cheek for over an hour - wonderful - it went pretty well - despite various things - stopped about 2.30 - v. enjoyable.'

Ian was my friend Ian Campbell from Sedbergh, who, in my memory, is locked in an interminable kiss with one of the girls, Fred is probably the Ambleside book-seller Fred Holdsworth. Dave is probably David Manzi-Fe and Alan is my friend Alan Barnes from Sedbergh. Annette was my first 'real' girl friend, Annette Gribbon, who was the daughter of a friend of my grandparents. She clearly stayed another day but nothing progressed, for I noted the next day. 'Saw Annette again - but was unable to see her alone - they went home - we spent the day eating up the eats etc.' My attraction to Annette and her looks are described in a letter a week later from my mother to my father on 16th January describing my feelings.

He has quite fallen for Annette Gribbon (the grand-daughter of Dorothy Black, the writer - click?). She is a ravishing platinum blond so I fear he'll have a lot of competition, and I'm afraid the happy days of fobbing him off with Daddy's old corduroys are coming to an end. I suppose they had to soon.

The fullest account of the actual party, written in a letter from my mother on 7th January, a day after the event, catches something of the spirit and also what we drank and other details.

My darling,

*Blissful peace, we're sitting in front of the fire eating left-over sausage rolls and the relief is terrific - after 2 hours sleep and 4 extra people in the house I'm pretty tired but it's a jolly nice sort of tiredness. Alan, Anne and I have slumped out Fiona is up at David's painting the cellar for a "dive"! Her energy is fantastic, they weren't in bed till 4 a.m. and have been dashing about all day, I'll write you a long letter about it in detail, but just wanted to let you know the party was a success - at least I imagine so by the noise and the hour it broke up - 3 a.m. and only then because Mummy kept going in and glaring at the clock apparently! I walked home at midnight, as I was dead beat, had been dashing backwards and forwards all day with salmon moulds, the first lot of guests arrived at mid-day and they continued to dribble in till 9 when the party officially started. I don't think it cost too much, I put a 10/- bottle of whisky into cider for a hot punch and a 6/- bottle of wine into cider for the cup, and there were some soft drinks and that was all. The eats looked wonderful when they were spread out, but very little was eaten so we've had stuffed eggs for every meal since. Two of Alan's friends were due, and then another two suddenly turned up, but luckily the Buckmasters filled the gap, they're wonderful value. Martin spent the day ferrying everybody about. There were about 30 people and Fiona had the whale of a time being fought over by the 2 best looking boys, Alan got off with the prettiest girl so **they** both enjoyed it, though there were odd awkward-looking figures looming when I peered round the door at intervals - daren't let myself be seen! I hope that would be their last party but they've just been invited out again to-morrow. All the young men Fiona meets have their own cars and yachts and are altogether out of our class, most of them are nice boys, but one of the 15-year old girls we offered a punch to said she never drank anything but gin actually! The part I hate is the driving, thank goodness they aren't going out to-night as there is thick fog and frost, it's awful cold.*

So the big event was over, though not the end of the parties, for two days later I noted in my Diary on 8th January. 'Then an odd "Record" hop at Anne Johnson's. Vivien Morton and I spent the evening watching the others all kissing each other (Anne Hogg).'

I returned to Sedbergh, a man who had given his first party, kissed his first girl-friend, danced cheek-to-cheek with the sweetly pretty (as my grandmother described her) Annette and clutching her hair-brush (she had presumably left it by mistake) to sniff to bring back that happy evening. I was a man at last!

Through the rest of that year there must have been further parties, though I do not note them. This is partly because I was away at school until April and then, having won a place at Oxford, I left school and soon went for a month to Norway to work. On my return I worked again, in a bakery in Windermere.

By this time my attention had switched from Annette, no doubt snaffled by another though I did write to her for a while. I was now courting Jill Lister, the younger sister of my friend Martin Buckmaster's girlfriend Jacky. I have a photo of what must have been a party that spring, which shows most of the gang sitting together in Martin Buckmaster's house. [insert PHOTO] I am next to Gill, and that picture, blown up, accompanied me to Norway. The photograph itself shows a good deal of parties at the time - the way that two of the couples the girl was sitting on the boy's knee, the closeness of us all, the friendliness of it all.

Anyway, later in the summer I decided to go down to my last recorded party, held by the Lister's at their house in Formby. The frustrations of a relationship with Gill Lister which never really came to anything (partly because she was probably about 15 and I was 18), is shown in my account of that visit, which again shows traces of that social gaucheness, quivering expectation, and romantic quest which I associate with this phase of my life.

In a few pages headed 'Diary of a Summer Holidays', the sole events described have to do with the ride down to see Gill, with my friend Martin in pursuit of her older sister.

'This is to be read by me - and me alone - so if your name is *not* Alan Macfarlane *please* don't read this.

I expect you will be reading this in the distant future - if so I wonder if you remember the name Gill Lister? You will after you have read this - 'cos most of it - or as far as I know now (Aug 1st) the beginning will be mostly to do with her.

After perhaps the longest nine weeks of my life - first working in Norway and then in Watson's Cafe, the time at last arrived when I would see Gill again. Martin and I decided to go down to Formby where the Listers were having a garden fete in their grounds. After considerable meanderings through Formby and Southport by way of a very pleasant Chinese restaurant, I found myself standing outside the entrance of the "trees" feeling very scared. I had just decided to go in when I saw Gill standing inside the gate. Having waited for her to go for a bit, I decided I would have to go in. I had been wondering what would be the right meeting. But when it came to the point I leapt rather awkwardly over several flower beds and kissed her. She was obviously embarrassed and turned her head at the last moment.

Then began a most frustrating afternoon. At first it was alright as we went in to the garage where there was a film show of the German passion play (I can never remember its name). Gill was meant to be Usher but anyhow we sat together behind tubby (Mrs Lister) and after a few minutes I plucked up enough courage to even hold her hand! But there was a large and loquacious lady behind us, so I kept having to discuss the film! But after that we just wandered around with a friend of Gill's (Elizabeth) keeping close by and I almost contemplated going home when at last the girls went away at 6.0 o'clock.

Then with Jacky we sat and listened to gramophone records in the sitting room. Gill sat on the edge of the chair and we reminisced. She didn't seem to be at [all] put out when even the vicar came in! Although she refused to kiss me 'till she came back from London. At about 7.0 I went with Jo and Gill and looked around the new (and old) houses across the road where they were building on their grandfather's land. Having wandered around happily for a time we came back and looked at the 'family photographs' and then had supper and watched T.V. for a while. Although I often caught Gill's eye we sat (or rather she lay) at different sides of the room. And under Cassie's eagle eye I didn't even kiss her good bye - but I was relieved to see her standing waving as I went off! What a journey back too. We arrived home - Martin on the back of my bike (the police had stopped Martin because of his lights) at 3.0.'

More reflections, perhaps, later... But what is clear is how very innocent we were in those days and how much I still had to learn when I left for Oxford in September 1960, some fifty years ago.

First love: Spring and Summer 1960

I had kissed a girl at a party in January, and written to her a few times during my last term at Sedbergh. But when I left the single-sex boarding school I was extremely innocent. My first girl-friend Gill was thus an important element of that summer before Oxford, and a prelude to the two most meaningful relationships I had as an undergraduate at University. I remember her very vaguely, mainly from some photographs, but these memories are given clarity by the discovery of an account of our relationship I wrote at the time, and some letters from Gill. Here is the account, probably when I went to Norway and was missing her.

Gill (for private consumption)

So at the beginning of the Easter holidays I was again on the lookout for a real girlfriend. I had considerably more confidence and I did not find it difficult to secure a girl for the evening at the two dances I went to at the beginning of the holidays. The first girl, the wicketkeeper of Cheltenham Ladies Colleges 1st XI, was quite pleasant, but I could show no enthusiasm for her. The same at the next dance where I had the chance of going off with quite a pleasant girl called Jacky. So I was still free when we decided to give our dance on the 12th of April.

Much sweat was shed trying to pick the guests and I remember that both my sister and myself repeatedly asked Martin whether he really thought that Gill, his girlfriend (or rather adored one-sided) Jacky's sister was old enough to enjoy herself and whether she wouldn't be left out of things. He seemed confident that she could look after herself so we invited her as one of the fifteen or so guests. Among the others I had my eyes on Anne Hogg hoping that perhaps she might feel more inclined to accept my advances than the last time I had seen her.

Preparations were easily completed by about 7.30 and we prepared to meet the guests. The dance-cum record party was to take place in Martin's front room, where we had two

gramophones and carefully organised lighting with just a sofa and two chairs in the room and the carpet still down, and to extend into M's bedroom where the food was and also piano, couch (bed) and another gram.

Naturally we were nervous before the guests came and I was annoyed when I was forced through lack of anybody else to go to meet the guests. Anne H & J and David were among the first to arrive - the Hogg wearing jeans and a blue sweater I think. I thought I was off to a good start when Anne H. stayed down with me by the garage and implored me to "protect" her for the evening from 2 ex-boyfriends Mike Boddington and Simon Mambi (who I was afraid would get her for the evening). I assured her that I would most willingly look after her - thanking my lucky stars for this lead and anticipating a pleasant evening.

A bit later a car which I recognised to be the Listers drew up and I met the two sisters at the gate. Jacky was just a bit ahead and they both looked nervous. I said "hullo Jacky, Hullo Gill" and Gill looked surprised - perhaps even worried. Anyhow I lead them up to the house - I don't think I really gave Gill another glance - I was too preoccupied with Anne H. (I never stop cursing myself now).

Anyhow the dance took a time to get going - in fact there wasn't much dancing. Jacky and I had a long talk and I danced with her several times - she was obviously scared of Martin. But she was very sweet and I wished that I could have her; for by this time I was beginning to realize that perhaps the Hogg was not so anxious for me to be her partner after all. This slow realization spoilt the first half of the dance for me and by 10.0 I was thoroughly fed up. I had danced with Gill once and though she was a clumsy dancer I thought she was rather sweet.

My plan for her however was to palm her off onto a friend who was at his first dance and hence rather awkward and embarrassed. During the time I was chasing Anne several times I saw the two sitting together making awkward conversation. However my eyes were on Anne.

She however fluttered around and paired off with David M-Fé and so I sat down miserably by the wall on the floor, watching them and cursing. I think it was Martin who stirred me and said "go and dance with Gill" - so I did. We got chatting - and I asked her to look after Stephen - to which she didn't reply. Then after 2 or 3 dances I sat down next to her on the sofa by the fire. Slowly the other couples drifted into Martin's room until we alone were left talking by the firelight, and putting piles of records on.

She was wearing jeans - with tights underneath - I could tell because we didn't have shoes on. They were tartan jeans and clothes were one of the things we discussed as well as her school etc - nothing particularly [sic] romantic. At last Fiona beseeched me to go into the other room and so we felt we better leave. I had been sitting most of the time comfortably with my arm around her shoulder and indeed she had sat on my knee for a bit - the first girl! Just before we went in to the others Gill turned to me by the gramophone - her back to it and said lifting her face up "thank you Alan". I was surprised but pleased - took the hint and kissed her on the cheek.

We spent the rest of the evening listening to records, having photos taken and eating in the other room. Although the kiss I had had from her had not thrilled me wildly I think I was beginning to get keen on Gill as I spent the rest of the evening sitting near her on the fender by the fire.

But her mood seemed to change the moment we came into the room and she only smiled a few times at me. She looked slightly tired and worried. So I was a bit discouraged. I think it was either the effect of having Jacky there or she was worried about whether I really liked her.

At about 2 o'clock the party broke up and we set out to look for Mike Bodd & Anne J who had mysteriously disappeared. We found (In pen below: Just before we went we had a pillow fight - one against Jacky & Gill - they loved it) after a pleasant walk (about 6 of us - Gill was cheering up by now) in the tree house - much embarrassment - under the stars.

Then it was time to take the Listers home. I wasn't going to go, feeling slightly tired or something, but Gill begged me too - I didn't know why at the time) - so I did. We sang songs on the way back - (Gill, Fiona & Jacky in the back; me & Martin in the front). When we reached there we had some coffee had a chat for half an hour - Gill didn't say much she was

either tired or thought I was flirting with Jacky and then got to bed at about 4.0. And that was my introduction to Gill. Perhaps not love at first sight. But rosy glow at least.



Friday

Martin Fiona and I went over in the afternoon to see the Listers. I think they were deliberately trying to hide from us - at least they had told us they were going out but in reality they were messing about in the field behind Rawfell. However we met them by accident (?) and chatted for a bit. Then Gill betted me that I couldn't climb the crag behind their house in 25 mins so I did. Gill wearing gumboots was very quiet and wouldn't come herself. So I scaled the peak by myself and Martin plodded up after. Then after a cup of tea we all went for a drive in Martin's car. The four girls waving and giggling up on the back. Nothing really very romantic.

Saturday [12 April]

Although we saw the family again at Wittington it was just a friends meeting - I went round the stalls etc with Gill once - but I felt strangely self-conscious and in the end buried myself in a book. But at least I was more at ease with them than Martin was.

Sunday [13 April]

This was perhaps the first day when I really fell almost in love with Gill. It was a bank holiday (Easter) and a glorious day. About 2.0 Martin rung up and found that the family were in for the afternoon. So me and Martin set off to see them. When we arrived at Rawfell we learnt from the housekeeper that they had set off a few minutes earlier to climb the Pikes so we scooted after them. Naturally there were a lot of people in various coloured jerseys and so we kept thinking that we saw them just ahead of us. We had walked for about ten minutes and crossed a stone wall and a patch of loose stone before we finally saw them - climbing slowly ahead. Martin was already puffing and blowing so I scouted on ahead and suddenly pounced on them as they were there - Jo in a yellow zip-up jacket and very short grey shirt with a tiny bottle of orange juice slung around her neck - Jacky wearing jeans and her white jersey I think while Gill was wearing her tartan jeans (slightly too large for her) and blue jersey and a little red woollen cap or bobble. I think now I will break the sequence of events with an attempt to describe something of her looks.

She is not particularly tall - about 5 ft and of medium to slim build. Not surprisingly at her age - only 14 - her figure is not fully developed. But the outlines are there and give promise of a nice figure - perhaps more on the plump side than skinny? (or rather just right) Her dark brown to black hair curls over a largish forehead and frames a broad and oval face - strikingly wide at the mouth level and with a firm and determined chin. The hair falls to her shoulders

and stands fairly high on the head. The mouth is small and firm and suggests a hint of a passionate yet humorous nature. The eyes are a soft and lovely grey – direct yet amused and promises life and a desire to enjoy everything to its full. The brows and lashes are not heavy but expressive. It is a sincere, thoughtful not particularly beautiful but for me at least a bewitching face. [End of account].

Clearly Gill went back to school a week or so after the party, and I wrote to her there. This is part of her reply.

Acton Reynald Salop 27:4:60

My Dearest Alan,

Please don't think me too eager replying so soon, but unless I write today, I won't be able to write before you go away.

I can't thank you enough for the lovely letter, not meaning to flatter you, but it was the nicest I have received. It was so nice and different. As if I would show your letter to anyone else, it is my own affair (that sounds horrid).

I also find that I think of Tuesday [the party], and the day on the mountain. I remember all the odd things. My "heart of ice" as you call it, is red hot, and so don't be silly. I wish you wouldn't call me so young, I know I am, but I hope I have a mind of my own.

At first I was afraid you were only being nice to me because I was so young, (I've used it now), but I do hope I am wrong. At the moment, and ever since Tuesday, I have felt I wanted to be nice to everyone, and I feel all wonderful. Don't think me mad. Although you probably do. I can never say what I mean on paper. I still like Robin, but not much, he is more of a friend, not that I don't think your my friend. At least I hope you are. I do wish I could see you to explain what I mean, but that is impossible. I shall live on memories.

I think being married to a clergyman would be nice, whats wrong with it, that I should think of horror. [I had obviously spoken of my religious enthusiasm.] Anyway most girls marry for love, and it's the person himself that matters not his 'vocation' (is that the right word.) I shall marry for love, not money, if I marry at all.

I hope you have a wonderful time in Norway, and find someone worthy of you. I hope you'll remember me once or twice. I never forget people, I am like an elephant. That makes me conceited, but I don't mean to be. I do want a photo of you, and I am sure any would do you credit. I will send you one of me, but you'll be the one to be put up for life. I do want to see you.

All this letter seems to be is about me, and flattering you. But I do miss you. You will properly [sic] think me too young, but I'm not. I hope.

This is a mad letter, but unlike you I cannot say what I mean on paper. ...

You will properly change your mind when you've read this letter. Reading it through, it doesn't sound like me, but I feel all queer, and can't write letters.

I am thinking of you, and did not forget Sunday night. But I do hope I am not stopping you enjoying yourself. (Again I am conceited). I won't forget you, or those wonderful days. [asterisk and Thursday, (Friday), (Saturday), Sunday, Tuesday written in below by Alan].

I am sorry this is such a terrible letter, but I can't write.

All my love,

Gill xxxxx

P.S. I do want a photo, and to continue to write to you.

I then went to Norway in early May and the next letter (an air letter) is postmarked 18 May, Bergen, and sent from Acton Reynald School.

My Dearest Alan,

I can't thank you enough for the little seals, they are absolutely adorable. [I note in my piece on Norway that I had sent a present to Gill. I now remember the little seals, with their real seal-

fur.] OF course I won't scorn them. (Is that a lie?) I shan't tell you what I've called them, très private! Thank you also for the lovely, long letter, I am afraid this won't be quite as long. Jacky is going to London next hols, so the rest of us will be in the Lakes. I can hardly wait to see you, and it's not a crush!

I had a glorious birthday [presumably Gills' 15th birthday] ...I do envy you in Norway, but then your plans for next hols, sound marvellous, do you play tennis? Perhaps not!!

You mustn't dream of buying me a book, the seals are a glorious present. I will have them on my desk during the English Exam, and then I know I shall pass (At least I hope I will.)

I have never been fishing before, so it will be a new experience. I shall properly sink the boat, or at least capsize it. You will have to come and ride Polly in return, Martin is now like a professional Jockey (Bar Size). ...

I think your job sounds fun, but it would be funny if you were sea-sick (aren't I horrid). I haven't an idea what I am going to do when I leave school, I suppose I might go to a finishing school in Switzerland, just to finish me off completely.

I will put your mind at rest, though you shouldn't have to wonder, by saying of course I love you, and I thank you again for darling seals. I am sorry I haven't got a photo at the moment. Am thinking of you always. All my love, Gill xxx

The next letter was written on ordinary paper, to the Lakes I imagine, and would have arrived just after I returned from Norway.

Acton Reynald Salop 11 June 60

My Dearest Alan,

Thank you very much indeed for your wonderful letter. I hope (though I know you did) that you had a marvellous time in Norway, and a safe return. How many Norwiegen [sic] girls are you writing too. [sic]

I do wish you could have returned before I returned to my 'nunnery', but that couldn't be helped. Unfortunately it was Daddy's last night, on the day of Martin's party, so we didn't go.

What on earth made you think I liked Stephen what-ever-his-name-is? As for Robin at the moment. (Let's change the subject). ...

I am very sorry you were seasick; I didn't really want you to be, honestly!!am I forgiven. I can hardly wait till next summer. I can give you a rough idea of when we will be in the Lakes. But it is properly untrue.

We won't be there on about the 20th of August to the 1st of September. As there is a Tennis Tournament on at Hightown (I hate tennis tournaments) and we always play. Please write soon, All my love, Gill, xxxxx

The final letter from Gill is from school and dated 27 June.

My Dearest Alan,

Thank you very much indeed for your wonderful letter. Of course I didn't take offence about the note, I should have written before.

I would love to play tennis, but I am afraid I am hopeless, you would have to do all the work. To finish answering your questions, I am also going to London with Jacky, from the 1st July to the 23rd. We are hoping to see Ben Hur, and a few other shows. It should be great fun. We will all be in the lakes soon after that.

You seem to have got a pretty bad impression of me, but what else can you expect when a whole lot of Girls get together!! The things you hear. ...

Your boat sounds wonderful. What sort is it!! Last time I went in a boat, I was pushing it off, and forgot to jump. My friend went on rowing, and I want for a swim. It was most uncomfortable.

Reading this through, it is just uninteresting paragraphs, but there is just nothing to say. I can hardly wait to see you next hols, and you must come and visit us. Whenever you like, you will always be welcome!

I am afraid there isn't a Tunnel of L---!! In our fairground, but do you like the Cyclone (a Big dipper).

Is your job in Windermere, in a cake shop. I thought I heard it was. Do you make cakes. It must be marvellous to watch you, if you do!! ...

Have you heard the record "Angela Jones", I bought it at half-term, and I think it is heavenly. [The song is on Youtube - a very sickly ballad about first love at school...]

Longing to see you. You will have to watch your step, there is a nice farm worker here!

All my love, Gilly xxxxxxx

As well as the description and the letters quoted above there are a short letter from Josephine, Gill's younger sister, aged about 11 or 12 I suppose at this time, to whom I wrote for a while when the relationship with Gill cooled. There is also a very friendly letter from their mother, to whom I had written to thank her for our visit to Formby. There are also a number of photographs.

Clearly things were still serious by the middle of the summer, as the following account I wrote on 1 August indicates.

This is to be read by me - and me alone - so if your name is not Alan Macfarlane please don't read this.

I expect you will be reading this in the distant future - if so I wonder if you remember the name Gill Lister? You will after you have read this - 'cos most of it - or as far as I know now (Aug 1st) the beginning will be mostly to do with her.

After perhaps the longest nine weeks of my life - first working in Norway and then in Watson's Cafe, the time at last arrived when I would see Gill again. Martin and I decided to go down to Formby where the Listers were having a garden fete in their grounds. After considerable meanderings through Formby and Southport by way of a very pleasant Chinese restaurant, I found myself standing outside the entrance of the "trees" feeling very scared. I had just decided to go in when I saw Gill standing inside the gate. Having waited for her to go for a bit, I decided I would have to go in. I had been wondering what would be the right meeting. But when it came to the point I leapt rather awkwardly over several flower beds and kissed her. She was obviously embarrassed and turned her head at the last moment.

Then began a most frustrating afternoon. At first it was alright as we went in to the garage where there was a film show of the German passion play (I can never remember its name). Gill was meant to be Usher but anyhow we sat together behind tubby (Mrs Lister) and after a few minutes I plucked up enough courage to even hold her hand! But there was a large and loquacious lady behind us, so I kept having to discuss the film! But after that we just wandered around with a friend of Gill's (Elizabeth) keeping close by and I almost contemplated going home when at last the girls went away at 6.0 o'clock.

Then with Jacky we sat and listened to gramophone records in the sitting room. Gill sat on the edge of the chair and we reminisced. She didn't seem to be at [all] put out when even the vicar came in! Although she refused to kiss me 'till she came back from London. At about 7.0 I went with Jo and Gill and looked around the new (and old) houses across the road where they were building on their grandfather's land. Having wandered around happily for a time we came back and looked at the 'family photographs' and then had supper and watched T.V. for a while.

Although I often caught Gill's eye we sat (or rather she lay) at different sides of the room. And under Cassie's eagle eye I didn't even kiss her good bye - but I was relieved to see her standing waving as I went off! What a journey back too. We arrived home - Martin on the back of my bike (the police had stopped Martin because of his lights) at 3.0.

The last document I now have is a Christmas card, presumably Christmas 1960 (I may find more) addressed to Alan and Fiona, with Christmas Greetings from Jane, Gill and Jo, from Formby. It would appear that the relationship had cooled to the extent that in a letter to my mother written on 30 December, I wrote:

Tomorrow I have a group of friends coming up from Manchester to camp in a hostel in the Langdale valley and they have asked me over - unfortunately it is also the one day the Listers will be up. (Unfortunately in that I might have to meet Gill!)

Thus ended a rather gentle and meaningful calf love, never proceeding beyond the odd tentative kiss and smile, yet introducing me to a world of romance which I clearly yearned for and was to develop as a central theme in my three years as an undergraduate at Oxford. All attempts to trace 'Gill' have so far been in vain. I hope if she ever reads this she will get in touch.

SPIRIT AND SOUL

Spirit

'Spirit' spans formal religion, that is to say my religious beliefs and rituals, communion, church attendance, the evangelical boy's camps at Iwerne where I went with my uncle Richard, through divinity and theology as I learnt it at Sedbergh, through to the much wider area of spirituality in general. This latter category includes such things as my growing love of nature in the Lakes and Sedbergh (with Wordsworth as a companion) and outwards to poetry, certain kinds of literature (Shakespeare etc) and the whole realm of inspiration in general.

There is a great deal here in my letters and other materials on spirituality in general and my life's interest in a world that lies parallel to ours - magic, meaning, children's literature, the search for something beyond this material world. There is a great deal about the struggles of the soul, my attempts to be a good Christian, the fight against what I perceived to be the temptations (especially of the flesh), puritanism and reactions to it (cf. Norman Douglas). It will be interesting to see what I write on this, for instance in a number of letters, the Trevelyan prize, in my letters and diaries. There will, no doubt, be material in my mother's letters, and perhaps something from Richard's papers - and perhaps autobiography.

At the heart of it all, as I discover from my mother's autobiographical novel 'Going Back' there is a constant tussle to try to reconcile Christianity and everyday life. Whether there was as yet an objection to Christianity which I felt from Oxford days, namely that it was just a western obsession and cruelly condemned those of other faiths, I do not know. Nor do I know whether I felt the sadness which I felt at Oxford that my early beliefs were vanishing. But I do sense that there was a very Wordsworthian strand to it all.

This spans out into my philosophy of life more generally, the questions about the meaning of life, its purpose, origins, patterns etc. The questions I ask in Letters to Lily, and have asked throughout my life, the interest in trying to hold together the post-Cartesian split, the sense that childhood's magic was fading, that the separations and disenchantments of life were stripping the world of meaning, all this should be implicit and occasionally explicit in the traces that have remained of this period. It was probably the first time I became aware of it. At the Dragon I don't think I really thought about such existential questions. And indeed it was in that same period of life that Wordsworth's great wrestling with such things happened.

My life's quest to re-unite the magical and the practical, all that should be evidenced here in bits and pieces which may now make more sense and a pattern appear, as Wordsworth found in writing *The Prelude*. And my mother's writings at that time and her interest in mysticism, poetry, Buddhism and the wrestling with purpose and pain must have had a considerable effect as well. All this then overlaps with those formal ways which I used through my mature life to try to answer those questions which we had discussed heatedly as schoolboys.

Much of the above is concerned with the pursuit of an integrated truth and the challenge which scientific and other rationality posed to this - to which the Romantic movement was a reaction, not just in Wordsworth, but also in Blake, Coleridge, Keats,

and later in Tennyson, Arnold, Manley Hopkins and my beloved W.B. Yeats. So poetry is central.

There is also, however, two other areas which one might suitably address under 'spirit', that is art and music. There is quite a bit in the school reports on my artistic progress, and I wrote several essays on painting, architecture, the renaissance and other such things. In my visit to the Louvre on the French tour I commented candidly on the fact that I felt that, compared to music or poetry, I was artistically dead. I have some of my paintings, and I have enough to show that this is not absolutely so. But I did realize that whereas music and poetry could give me a sense of ecstasy and lead me into other realms, painting and buildings could please but not amaze.

So I shall here devote some attention to my musical development. I don't remember learning to play an instrument at the Dragon, though I have dwelt on the delights of Gilbert and Sullivan. At some point (?Sedbergh) I procured a mouth organ and later a guitar - about which more soon. I continued to sing at Sedbergh, both in quartets (though this was called off according to my letters) and in larger choirs. I sang in the Messiah and it may have been here that I first encountered the composer who would mean more to me than all others - Handel. I also sang in Elijah and the Creation by Haydn. So I enjoyed singing, though I was not particularly good at it. Singing, however, required that one learnt to sight-read, and I did learn a rough approximation of this skill, though I was too lazy to become really good at it.

As regards playing an instrument, I seem to remember some piano lessons at some stage, but I showed no gift or enthusiasm for this. What I did become extremely enthusiastic about was the guitar. My letters and accounts give a sense of my enthusiasm, especially after I discovered the pleasures of playing in a 'skiffle' group, which rehearsed in the satisfyingly remote and echoing fives courts across the road from Lupton House. Here with washboard and tea-chest double base, I performed my first concerts to my (if not others) delight. This was when I learnt the joys of not only Lonnie Donegan and other skiffle, but also blues music (I learnt to play some blues and talk of Big Bill Broonzy, and remember going wild over Christ Barber and others), and also pop music. I mention going to films of Elvis Presley and give quite an amusing account of how ridiculous he looked, but how wonderful the music was. So I entered the joy of making music with others, but also of impersonating Elvis and my other great favourite, Buddy Holly. My parent's obvious enthusiasm for this pop music, which they and my sisters and friends sung along to gamely, added to the pleasure. And I had a few friends who were really good - like Steve Darbishire who played and sang Ray Charles wonderfully and had even made a recording. Or Wood who played Jelly Roll Morton piano on an army camp to my amazement.

My uncle Richard was learning the clarinet at this time and so much of my holidays was penetrated by the sound of his efforts, in particular Mozart's haunting clarinet concerto. I used to argue fiercely with Richard about whether pop music was better than classical. I remember him playing me pop classics when I was first at Sedbergh and they meant nothing to me. In that strange way that suddenly things give pleasure, like adult foods or books, I suddenly began to enjoy classical music when I was fifteen or sixteen - I particularly remember being moved by Dvorak's New World Symphony (and an essay I wrote describes my attempt to persuade a friend of its beauty). Handel and others were also growing on me and from then onwards I began to

collect music. I had a tape recorder and began to be able to record my own music – much better than the scratchy 78 vinyl gramophone we bought when I was about 15 and its two first records, including ‘Red Sails in the Sunset’. On the tape recorder I remember recording Bach’s ‘Coffee Cantata’ which became a favourite – influenced I think by my mother. I think I also liked Beethoven. But it was really only when I went to Oxford and went to a concert led by Neville Coghill on ‘Murder and Mozart’ and heard some excellent live Mozart that I added him to my favourites I think.

There will probably be a good deal more to say about music, as there is about poetry, for I have some of the poems I wrote myself at the time, as well as the much better model of some of my mother’s poetry, as well as my literary criticism, essays comparing various art forms etc.

The discipline of the soul, and of the ear and the eye, at Sedbergh have laid the foundations for a life-long appreciation of those gateways to something beyond this humdrum world which one finds through music, poetry and, to a certain extent, other arts. Sedbergh may have been a rather hearty school, but it was also keen to encourage creative arts and I am grateful to it, and to my family who encouraged me, for laying the foundations for so much pleasure and inspiration later in my life. Writing about all this will give me a chance to re-live some of those precious discoveries – artists, writers, composers who suddenly seemed to open a door into the enchanted garden which was closing for me through more formal religious channels.

Religion and God

The Sedbergh years cover the first part of the period when I most ardently strove to find God. At the Dragon and in Dorset I went to Church and even studied divinity at school. I don't remember that I absorbed very much or was particularly interested. The one exception may have been when I went a couple of times to a prep school version of the Iwerne Minster religious camp – at Swanage. There we were exhorted to pray and wait for God, but most of our attention was on the games and expeditions.

I think several things made me seriously interested in religion at Sedbergh and as an undergraduate at Oxford. One was the influence of my uncle Richard, a devout evangelical Christian. His missionary work on me was muted, I suspect, by the suspicion of my grandparents and parents. But they were happy (and relieved, since our holidays were always a slight problem) that he took me off, or arranged for me to go to the Christian camp at Iwerne two or three times while I was at Sedbergh.

At Iwerne the religious instruction seeped into me. The catchy little hymns, the shining faith and kindness of the Oxbridge 'Officers', the spirit of enthusiastic good will, the very muscular Christianity of it all (David Shepard the cricketer and later Bishop of Liverpool, who was also associated with the Dragon, was a shining example) I found attractive. I learnt the techniques of prayer and bible reading and I have a number of notes and workings on religious practice which I shall investigate.

Despite all the encouragement, however, I never had any real mystical experiences and felt frustrated that I never felt that Christ entered my heart. I was told that he would become a personal friend, as others reported had happened to them, but I never felt him close to me.

The second influence may have been a variant of Wordsworthian pantheism. The glorious and uplifting scenery which inspired Wordsworth and which is expressed above all in 'Intimations of Immortality', also affected me. As I walked, climbed, swam and skated in Wordsworth's valley, I think I felt those ecstasies, or at least heightened states of emotion and something of the numinous, the greater forces rolling through the rocks and stones and trees. I saw the strange lights on the mountains, felt the powers and infinities which lifted me out of myself. So it was here, and in the poetry that I read, that I came closer to some kind of feeling of a power more deeply interfused. Yet it all seemed a long way from the rather dry, practical, rational Christianity that was taught to me at Iwerne and at Sedbergh. If I was seeking allies in the battle against disenchantment, then the kind of puritan Christianity I was being presented with was hardly a help – was indeed part of the problem. This, of course, I was later to learn was at the centre of Weber's insight – Protestantism is one of the engines of the disassociation of sensibility, of the attack on magic.

Another influence was my mother. She was always a seeker after some ultimate solution, some truth in poetry, in Hinduism, Buddhism, Christianity, philosophy or poetry, which would answer the deeper questions. She meditated and went on pilgrimages and in our later conversations, at least, we discussed these things. Like me she felt the closest to spiritual power in poetry and nature.

What I did find attractive in religion was that at least it attempted to give me answers to the great 'why' questions a child asks. Why are we here? Where do we go? Why should we be good? Why is there suffering? I remember having those typical discussions about these subjects with some of my friends, especially Ian Campbell, where we also discussed whether altruism was possible, whether life after death was believable and such like – often after lights-out in the dormitories. Even if the answers were mildly unsatisfactory, Christianity was a start.

Religion, I thought, seemed to be a way of creating meaning and holism, stopping the disenchantment. I was not aware that one of the very deepest assaults on magic, faery, another world of spirit, was Protestant Christianity which had sent God a million miles away and savagely attacked all miracles, magic and the interfused world of Catholicism. I somehow felt that at least religion tied things together, it supplied a morality that was relevant to political, economic and social life, it seeped through the strengthening borders that increasingly split my life into parts.

Towards my sixteenth birthday I was confirmed into the Church of England. I felt a real sense of excitement that I might now be entering a true and believable haven. Yet all the time, as I gathered my strength for this new path, I found myself assailed with temptations which I found myself unable to overcome. The most powerful were sins of the flesh, particularly lust, but there were also doubts, doubts as to whether I was really saved, doubts as to how a loving God could allow or even encourage such cruelty and suffering in the world. My reading of history showed no benign providence at work. So I agonized with G.M. Hopkins over the odd behaviour of God in his supposed mercy and omnipotence.

I suspect that my tour in Wordsworth's footsteps were part of the attempt to touch the numinous. Yet I vaguely remember that although I enjoyed it very much there was a feeling of sadness that in the great moments in the Simplon pass and elsewhere, where I knew Wordsworth was having his ecstatic moments, I felt nothing special, just a flat, this-worldly, beautiful, place. I shall check this, but it looks as if I already felt that the magic had largely fled from my world.

The religious enthusiasm continued and I was very devout and somewhat priggish at Oxford for three or so years until this Christian evangelical strand faded away and I turned to anthropology. Yet I think that those ten or so years, from 14 to 24, when I felt so eager to answer the great existential questions, to work out a satisfactory ethics, to find God, marked or stained my whole life. I have in a humble or indirect way always been searching for answers to those same child-like questions and came back to them in *Letters to Lily*. My travels through anthropology (space) and history (time) and philosophy have been a continued search for answers to the great religious questions. I feel sorry for those I interview who, while expressing a mild attraction to the social side of religion, do not seem ever to have had any desire to seek spiritual consolation or inspiration. I have found that my early experience has given me some insight into what I have studied as an academic, whether in seventeenth century England or contemporary Nepal or Japan. I lost my faith, but not my desire for such a faith.

So I am grateful for a brief interlude, partly inspired by my uncle Richard, when I tried to find a tentative answer to the large questions. Yet I am also delighted that as an

anthropologist, I can now escape from the entrapment in the whole monotheistic, post-Axial, Judaeo-Christian world view. I can join a world religion – Huxley’s ‘Perennial Philosophy’ – which allows me freedom without denying the importance of the spiritual dimension.

I now have what I like to see as an open mind, a suspended judgement, and an excitement at our expanding picture which again allows in many alternatives to secular rationalism, consumer capitalism, and egotistical individualism. Yet I now find my religious freedom in the imagination and its possibilities and return at last to my Wordsworthian youth.

Religion and Jesus

The saying of Jesus “Knock and it shall be opened unto you” was a favourite among evangelical Christians. They suggested that our hearts were like closed doors and it was up to us whether we would open them for our saviour. We should try to receive Jesus into our lives, to be re-born in him. This was the crux of the religious teaching of my Sedbergh years. It was strongly associated with the famous picture by Holman Hunt, ‘The Light of the World’, where Jesus is painted holding a lantern and knocking at an ivy-clad door.

I have already written a little on the evangelical theme under ‘The Protestant Ethic’, namely the nonconformist, Low Church, background to Sedbergh combined with the effects of the religious camp at Iwerne Minster. But this was such a major part of the Sedbergh experience, and went on into Oxford for a couple of years, that it deserves more attention.

When I went to Sedbergh, as far as I recall, I was not really interested in religion. There are some references to Church going and services in my Dragon days and I studied divinity at school, but there is not much evidence of strong belief. I had been sent a couple of times to the pre-Iwerne junior ‘camp’ at Swanage where we were given some simple explanations and encouraged to stay our prayers. Yet the search for religious meaning was not at all strong, as I recall. Yet from the start of Sedbergh my reports on divinity were enthusiastic, so I may have already had an interest.

The combination of existential searching for the meaning of life, carried out through long conversations with friends and reading, became more important. I was confirmed at the end of my sixteenth year and even commented on sermons. I went to Iwerne most years, sometimes more than once. At the end of my time I went to a religious retreat near York. I have a number of notebooks which suggest I took bible reading and prayers seriously and which will be worth analysis. The religious nature of my ever-seeking mother, my uncle Richard’s devoutness, the effects of further camps at Iwerne, all had their consequences. I notice in my general essays, for example, a rather sickly religious strain which clearly did not impress Andrew Morgan who marked one or two essays down.

Yet while I yearned to be religious, something held me back. I remember praying that I might open my heart’s door, trying to force it open. Yet while I felt I was holding it at least ajar, no-one came in. I felt no glowing otherness. It is a lack of response which I think I detect in my mother’s childhood diaries, where she felt the same yearning and

absence of the expected guest. The personal feeling of being occupied by the loving Jesus, of feeling an inner strength and certainty, was always missing. In prayers and services I felt on the tip of belief - but always a fraud.

Always there was a strong consciousness of sin, not just the usual petty sins of anger, jealousy, pride and so on, but also the damnable sin of lust. (I have found a summary of my sins at the religious retreat at the end of 1960 which I will insert). In the contest between my desire for sexual ecstasy and the desire for spiritual ecstasy, the former was far more real and attainable. So I constantly felt I had failed, had a secret shame, and that this was probably why Jesus would not come into my polluted heart.

Perhaps I made the conflict more dramatic than it really was. In hindsight it looks like a Bunyan-like struggle. Yet it was very real and the overcoming and mastery of my body was something which I could never fully achieve.

I don't think that I was as yet consciously questioning Christian dogma. What later shocked me about evangelical Christianity was its bigotry and intolerance, its condemnation of two thirds of the human race to hell and damnation if they did not accept Christ. As I recall, it was really only at Oxford towards the end of my third year that it dawned on me that countless Indians, Chinese, tribal peoples and others ought to be allowed to get on with their lives without giving up their beliefs to Swinburne's 'Pale Galilean'. Yet I think I was quite early a fan of William Blake and saw religion as sowing doubt and greyness over the world.

Reading was part of my liberation - *South Wind*, the hugely influential *Love and Death* by Llewellyn Powys, which celebrated rather than condemned physical love, John Donne and the metaphysicals, Keats, all these opened me up to a world outside the somewhat grey and drab low-church Anglicanism which surrounded me. Yet I continued to struggle to believe, treating the whole matter somewhat like rugger or running, believing that if I tried hard enough I should be able to succeed. Yet finally, as with sports, I realized that certain things couldn't be achieved by sheer will power and effort. Religion, like mathematics or cross-country running, is something that it takes more than effort to be successful at. So I switched my efforts elsewhere.

Undoubtedly this struggle left a stain or after-effect through all my life. I have frequently realized that my academic work, especially anthropology, is a search for answers of a religious kind - why are we here, where are we going, what is the purpose of life, why is there so much suffering. So, like my heroes, Montesquieu, Smith, Tocqueville, Weber, Tawney and others, I am searching for something to replace God. I did not find it in communism, as an earlier generation did - 'The God that failed' in Koestler's term - but I did largely find it in a mixture of anthropology and history - and also in love, especially my relationship with Sarah.

*

It will be seen from the account of the yearly events that as children we went to church most Sundays, and always at Christmas and Easter. We would always go with some other member of the family, my grandparents, mother or my uncle Richard. We would often walk across the fields, a walk of about four miles there and back. I don't

remember much of this apart from the cool white church in summer and the pleasure of carols at Christmas.

*

A brief indication of the nature of the Varsities and Public Schools boys camps is given in some extracts from a blog on Thursday 20 May 2010 Cranmer's Curate 'In Defence of Iwerne Minster' by Julian Mann.

Mann wrote 'An evangelistic enterprise focussing on pupils at what it considers to be the "top 30" public schools is hardly swinging with the spirit of the age. But the Iwerne Minster work, founded in the 1930s by the Revd E.J.H. Nash to bring the Evangelical Christian message to public schoolboys through holiday camps, is still going.'

Mann then quotes from a book by Canon David Winter, reviewing a life of John Stott: 'He (Stott) was converted as a teenager at a camp for public schoolboys by a man in khaki shorts known to them as "Bash", whose mission in life was evangelising the "leaders of the future". It took John Stott a long time to escape from the embrace of that oddly male, oddly elitist, and oddly simplistic world. He did, and that is the true "inside story" of the man.'

Julian Mann writes: 'The talks morning and evening were a wonderfully clear, biblically faithful and winsome presentation of the Christian gospel of salvation. It is not the fault of anyone that they are institutionalised in the English boarding school system from the age of eight. The fact that Iwerne Minster was prepared to bring the gospel to those so spiritually and emotionally disadvantaged is surely something to thank God for, even if it did perceive its intended targets as 'strategic' in producing an evangelistic trickle-down effect nationally. This has manifestly not happened.'

I went to these camps at least three times during my Lakeland years. The occasions are recorded in my grandfather's diaries and an extract from a letter.

On 18 March 1956: *Mr Coates one of the masters has very kindly agreed to take me down to Iwerne on the 10th and I will be brought back up again by Uncle Richard which will be good fun.*

9 April 1956: Violet takes girls to Kendal and sees Alan off to Manchester

17 Apr: Richard arrives with Alan

Sunday 22 Apr: Richard takes Alan to church at Ambleside

22 August 1958: Alan leaves for Iwerne

3 September 1958: Alan and Richard return

Letter of 16 March 1959: *Next holidays I am going to a V.P.S. camp for a while*

Thurs 9 April 1959: Iwerne for Alan

Thurs 16 Apr: Alan finishes at Iwerne

Certainly later on it was up to me whether I went or not, for example my mother writing on 10 February 1959: *If you want to go to camp at Easter will you let Richard know, I don't like to bother Granny at this stage.*

I do not remember a great deal about these camps. I remember Clayesmore School where they were held with its lovely park and the great tree under which we played and battled in many ingenious games. I remember the teas on the terrace with jam-jar traps for wasps. I remember feeling nervous when one of the 'officers' took me off in his car or a long walk at the end of the camp to discover whether Jesus had come into my heart. I remember wonderful trips down to the nearby sea. There was a great deal of sport, games, expeditions to Corfe Castle and elsewhere and mostly it was extremely happy and I went on attending them into my twenties at Oxford.

The pleasure of the sea-side is captured in the only surviving description of a camp in a letter to my parents, written on 5 Sep 1958.

As you probably gathered from my last letter (if it was not too crumpled) I enjoyed "Camp" very much indeed, I hope I can go there again next Easter. ... We were at last beginning to have our summer at the end of the camp. Actually the weather of the whole camp was pretty good. But for the last four days it was simply beautiful. I went down to the sea several times, Poole Harbours (to go round the "Marines" there) and down to Studland. When we went down to Studland it was a particularly nice day. We could see the Isle of White with ease - a white gash on the skyline while the "Harry" rocks to our right were very clear cut. We had a glorious view of Poole harbour on the way, and the sea was very blue and inviting, and also warm!! I bought a bit of fishing tackle on the way there but I could not find any bait as the tide was right out. But I tried fishing with a bait of orange-peel and silver paper, in the hope of a stray sand-eel or lost lamprey, but to no avail. Just as we were leaving however I saw a lot of lug worms coming up - yes actually throwing up their casts - and I tracked one and caught it when it was doing this. But really it was a most enjoyable day.

It is perhaps significant that I do not mention the religious side, though that perhaps came in the letter I referred to. I do remember that each morning and evening we would gather in a large library, with windows on each side looking out on the park. There we would sing short bracing songs, whose tunes I still remember. I copied down a number of them into a notebook at the time which give a flavour of what we were being filled with.

Then there were some 'Choruses' (for use for prayers etc), again biblical texts. One or two I remember singing, such as:

Jesus my Saviour, Jesus my Saviour
Greatest of all friends he is to me.
When I am lonely, I trust him only.
Constant Companion I'll prove him to be.

Another was:

Pray, pray without ceasing,
Ask what you will in His name;
Trusting, in perfect assurance,
His faithful promises claim.
Pray, pray without ceasing;
If in your heart you believe,
Faith shall at length be rewarded

You shall the answer receive.

Another:

There's a fight to be fought, and a race to be run,
There are dangers to meet by the way;
But the Lord is my light, and the Lord is my life
And the Lord is my strength and stay.
On his word I depend'
He's my Saviour and Friend,
And he tells me to trust and obey.
For the Lord is my light, and the Lord is my life
And the Lord is my strength and stay.

We also copied out talks and biblical readings and passages to be learnt by heart. We were also being trained to evangelize ourselves, starting with children. Here are a few extracts from a small green notebook inscribed 'A.Macfarlane, Lupton House, Sedbergh School, YORKS' which I suspect dates from the camp in 1958 when I was aged sixteen and a half.

It starts:

BIBLE READING

"PRAYER"

- i) St Luke 11:1 "Teach us to pray" - and so on. It suggests that I start the day and end the day in prayer and before a big decision or in personal stress and anxiety. I should pray alone and with others, for my Ennemies (sic) and my friends.
- ii) There is then an "Outline of Ezekiel" for several pages.

There are notes on a talk on 'Consecration' by J. Edison, at Eastbourne on a Friday a talk on 'Christian's relationship to the world'

There is a section outlining a talk on presenting the good news to children, with an obvious parallel to Bunyan.

Just a cheery line to keep in touch and to assure you that you are not forgotten. I hope all is going well at your end and that the term is going enjoyably along. I wonder if you have had 'flu yet. In many schools they seem to have had huge numbers going down. But perhaps you have escaped.

[A paragraph on the weather]

I hope work and games are going well and I am wondering if we shall see you at Iwerne in April. You know how welcome you are whenever you can come as it is always so nice to have you.

Have you seen the new Iwerne prospectus? I expect you have and I wonder how you like it. Some people think it is a little bit gaudy but I think it is at least cheerful and bright as compared with the last one, which was getting rather stale.

With best wishes and looking forward to meeting again before long,

Yours sincerely, Commy

More extensive is a correspondence during my last summer before Oxford with a Clive Boddington, one of whose talks at the Camp I made notes on. Clive was clearly a student at the theological college Ridley Hall at Cambridge and he wrote to me several times during 1960. I shall give some extracts from his letters as a key to the fact that religion continued important to me.

The first I have is on 27 February 1960, shortly before I left Sedbergh School.

Dear Alan,

Thank you very much for your letter of last term. Sorry not to have replied sooner than this, it was good to hear all your news and to know that you are trying for Worcester. I was there the other day when visiting Oxford. Do let me know what happens and whether you manage to get in. Bad luck about the Trevelyan Schol: I believe there's enormous competition....

I was interested to hear of your difficulties to find time for bible reading etc. I do sympathize and know how these things so easily tend to get pushed out. Remember that even if you fail you are dealing with One who understands and forgives & who longs to help. Yes, I was sorry you didn't manage to get to Iwerne in the Summer but I'm sure at the same time the experiences that you did have would have been, in their own way, most valuable to you.

..... [later page(s) of the letter are lost.

The next letter is also from Ridley Hall, on 9 July.

Dear Alan,

Many thanks for your letter from Norway - which arrived when I was away - I apologise for the delay in my reply.

I was delighted to hear your news and that you have managed to get into Oxford - that really is wonderful (though there is one better place, you know!) I was sorry to hear that you only may be coming to Iwerne (or rather West Buckland). We do very much need the loyal help of you stalwarts who already know the ropes and I can think of no more worthwhile cause to give your time to while you are at Oxford than the Camp - first as Senior Camper to gain experience and then - who knows? - to share in the rewarding and thrilling work of being an officer and being able to give back to boys some of the benefits that you yourself have gained. Will you think about this and pray for God's guiding hand to be shown to you? We so much want really dedicated and

single-minded men in the work, but, of course, its costly in time and energy. I can assure you from experience that if you're still thinking in terms of ordination there is no more wonderful training ground in speaking and in dealing with others than Camp. I remember David Sheppard saying this to me right at the beginning of my University Career and I've always been most grateful to him for it. And if it's not to be ordination the fellowship amongst Campers at Oxford will be of immense value in preparing you for a really useful life as a Christian in whatever you do.

I'm back here at Cambridge again now and have just begun my last academic year of training. My exams were not brilliant but at least I passed for which I am most grateful...

I'm going to Haileybury next week and will, no doubt, be seeing Rhodes [my uncle Richard].

Do let me know how you feel about Camp and I very much hope we shall meet in the Summer.

With ever good wish, Yours ever, Clive

The third letter is dated 15 September, shortly before I went up to Oxford.

Dear Alan

I was so pleased to get your long letter the other day and to hear your news. We missed you at West Buckland but I quite understand your position with respect to your parents departure so soon.

Don't worry about being a Freshman - a third of the University will be too! The great change you'll find, I imagine, will be that there's masses of work to be done and no one to see that you do it. If anything I regret that I didn't put more time in at the books - and not only books on my particular subjects - but more general reading. The distractions at University are many and varied and another problem will be 'What to do and what not to do.'. My order of priority was work - Christian Union activity - sport - other interests. You'll find the C.U [Christian Unikon] an enormous help in your Christian growth and I would advise you to throw yourself in with them wholly from the start. You may find the one or two in it whom you can't really take - don't worry but chat it over with another Camper there. Any Christian organization has its failings but I think you'll agree with me after a term at Oxford that the O.I.C.C.U [Oxford Inter-Collegiate Christian Union] is doing a really wonderful work putting the wonder of Christ's salvation before undergraduates.

I do regret however that I didn't do more sport and wish that I had been a little more selective in the C.U meetings I attended. I think there's a real danger of being rushed off one's feet in one's enthusiasm - Meetingitis!

Social life was for me a bit of a problem. 95% of the dances and evening parties were really merely excuses for lust and drunkenness - that's putting it strongly but I'm afraid its very near the truth, and so I didn't go. You do meet, however, through work or sport a large variety of people and tea is a great social time when one entertains one's friends. There are many opportunities to help others as a Christian - I had the most thrilling first term in this way - but my advice would be not to talk too freely at first but to make a wide circle of friends and then pray that God will show you just the odd one or two to whom you may be of some real help.

I expect much of this you know already and there are a number of Campers at Oxford who will give you any help you need. I look forward to hearing from you how it is all going. Gilbert Gauntlett is the Camp Representative - he's in his final year at Wycliffe Hall and will, no doubt, get in touch with you early in the term.

I hear you met my cousin up in the Lake District. She came over yesterday and seems to have had a lovely holiday up there.

I'm enjoying a few days peace.... I till don't know where I am to go for my first curacy but will let you know when it is fixed...

All the very best to you, Alan, and may these next three years be a time of great growth in the love and knowledge of the Lord Jesus and I know that He will guide you in the right way - as He has guided me.

With every good wish, Clive

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I did not go to Iwerne in 1960, but I did decide to go to a religious retreat, lasting for three days, a practice I continued several times as an undergraduate. This was held at a retreat near York, and I probably went there on my motorbike.

There is an orange notebook headed 'Wydale Hall Retreat Aug - Sept 1960'.

On the Tuesday there was a talk on "Theme of Retreat". I took notes on this, for example noting that:

"The world is trying to live without God - chasing up blind alleys i) social conditions etc. Port Talbot "Boom town nos 1" "Heaven upon earth" - highest wages etc but happiness? No!

iii) Education - beautiful medicines produced - but rust with spiritual emptiness

iv) Iii) Science - but Why am I here - what am I doing etc?

EVERYTHING IS BREAKING UP. Mental hospitals a quarter all absence from work Neurotic. 1 in 5 children 12 - 18 psychiatric treatment.

"Journey through the Fog" Gollancz Press - London Youth Club - don't even want to play football. Life without purpose & power.

- and much more to that effect.

Later, section four is headed:

What happens when I die?

- i) Heaven and Hell is beyond our experience therefore we must use picture language - images not always useful The true purpose of life is DEATJ.
This is the long term policy. We will see all things clearly.

And so on...

There is information on confession, thanksgiving, supplication and useful adages like "Holiness is not taught but caught". We are advised to combine catholic, evangelical and liberal views of life. There are several pages of useful references on 'Where to find help when... Afraid, Anxious, Backsliding, Friends Fail etc.

There are reports on the current state of religion in the country and abroad and a quotation from Einstein: "Universities, Newspapers, Philosophers and Writers soon snuffed out - only the Churches stood out for truth - it alone had the courage, persistence, power."

There are a number of further pages on prayer, confession and other matters, but perhaps most interesting is a table

CONFESSORY

1. Up to the time I went to school

Home	Friends	Personal	God
Thoughtless - did not give of my time or effort to others. Bad-tempered & selfish - ill-treated my younger sister. Thought only of myself Ungrateful.	Was often unkind - saw them merely as a means to further my own good.	Selfishness Self-seeking	- an almost total lack of contact. Reluctance to give ourselves

2. School

A desire for position & prestige so I could congratulate myself Bad temper at times Jealousy. Unkindness	lust & committing adultery in my heart. <u>Uncleanliness</u> - loving my prestige & position more than God. - worrying all the time what others thought of me - not God.	lack of humility Self-satisfaction with myself. Pride which could not stand rebuke. A desire to be "liked" for my own sake	frequent failures to make contact. lack of humility No real faith or trust or even working belief.
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3. The last 6 months

Lack of kindness & helpfulness. Moping and moaning around.	Falling in love in a selfish way - thereby forgetting God and harming the girl.	A desire to excel in the field of flirtations - thus merely showing off	Complete lack of faith - belief that Christianity only a moral code - with no mystical power. Lack of humility.
<p>Add to this cowardice in stating my beliefs - judging others & considering myself superior to them - and hypocrisy and Take into account all other sins which I cannot or will not see.</p>			

I shall not comment except to say that I am pleased to note that my sin of ill-treating my younger sister Anne seems to have been confined to my very early years. I am sorry to note however that I was 'moping and moaning around' in the six months since I had left Sedbergh and was 'falling in love in a selfish way - thereby forgetting God and harming the girl', and a desire to 'excel in the field of flirtations'. That I noted that I had a 'complete lack of faith - belief that Christianity only a moral code - with no mystical power' is an accurate reflection, as I now see it.

*

The Protestant Ethic

The Dragon was set in the lush landscape and cloistered affluence of Oxford. Although it was horse-hair shirt days of post-war austerity, there was a feeling that this was only temporary, an enforced aberration, something to be overcome before we all returned to the gentlemanly understated affluence of upper middle class life.

The atmosphere of Sedbergh was very different. The place was a compound of Wordsworth, George Fox and the Quakers, Charlotte Bronte and *Wuthering Heights*, Benjamin Franklin, Henry Hart, Gerard Manley Hopkins, Scott of the Antarctic and Spencer Chapman.

The cause for this puritan feeling was, of course, partly physical – the winds, the mountains, the rushing rivers enforced a certain sense of austerity and battle, a bracing encounter with elemental forces. It is no accident that the Quakers and Wordsworth are products of this world. Yet it was also a historical chance.

Northern Lancashire and Yorkshire, along with East Anglia where I now live, have long been the real heartlands of nonconformity. My work on Oliver Heywood and on the history of the parish of Kirkby Lonsdale all put me in a position to explore this nonconformist background – which was the spirit of those who went to found America and hence provided Max Weber's archetypical case – Benjamin Franklin.

Thus my study of life in Sedbergh can feed into a wider study of a powerful streak in English character – the Methodist, Quaker, nonconformist tendency. This leads directly into my own character, my obsession with saving, planning, time-accounting, organization, hard work, seriousness, honesty and a certain philistinism. As Andrew Morgan realized when he urged me to read *South Wind* (my notes on the reading of this book are very interesting), I was a very strong Puritan. Hence our reading of Shaw's *Three Plays for Puritans* will be very revealing.

The plain, rustic, Wordsworthian and Quaker feel of Sedbergh with its evangelical tendency and pantheism was re-inforced by a continuation of this into the university evangelical movements of OICCU and CICCU (Oxford Inter-Collegiate Christian Union and its equivalent in Cambridge). They in turn were linked up to the Christian Boy's Camps at Iwerne Minster to which I went several from Sedbergh. These camps inculcated the same values – watchfulness over our souls, eschewing the Devil and his temptation (no easy thing – especially with sex!), integrity and honesty, muscular Christianity in short. [I have discovered quite a bit to flesh this out in my notes.] Even the people who came to speak to us and the school's links to various missions emphasized the evangelical nature of the school.

Simplicity, homeliness, integrity, plain speaking, easy friendship, hard work, hard play, all these were the virtues – and they were, of course, good virtues for the future explorers and rulers of the British Empire, the Spencer Chapman's, Philip Mason's and Bruce Lockhart's of this world.

I did not really question any of this, but I think that while accepting much of the evangelical position, two things moderated the effect. One was Wordsworth (and other

poets), too much a pantheist to fit easily into evangelical Christianity. A second was Quakerism, which is in a way a revolt against formal religion. With its tolerance and almost Zen emptiness, it is far from fundamentalism of any kind. A third influence was my mother who at this time was moving from her accepted Anglicanism towards an interest in Assam and India, including its religion, especially Buddhism. The constant reminder that much of the world did not believe in my god and seemed to get on pretty well was a sobering thought.

So while I modelled my life on the regimes of Franklin, I was also searching for something far more deeply interfused, as Wordsworth would say. I worshipped nature and the natural world and it is significant that most of my attempts at literary compositions for school magazines were about the world of nature – not about social relations, which seemed to concern the other writers.

Theology and religious opinions

One other way to get inside my developing religious views is through the essays I wrote for the divinity classes at Sedbergh.

DIVINITY AT SEDBERGH

V.b.c.

'The point of a Christian reading the Old Testament.'

The main reason why Christians read the Old Testament is, I think, because they want to learn upon what foundation and religious basis the land which our Lord visited was founded. For if we do not know their history we cannot understand the Jewish mentality, and why some received and some rejected our Lord.

Also many of our Lord's wishes are made known to us through the mouths of his prophets and also we can see the example of how to live a really Christian life in some of their lives. The Old Testament also is important as it foretells the coming of the Messiah, and if we do not read it, we cannot understand the many references made to it in the new testament.

Lastly Christians can gain moral strength from such stories as David and Goliath, and Daniel and the Lions. These are in themselves well written and interesting; worth reading just for the enjoyment of reading a good story.

[9/12 Good]

Questions on Old Testament

1. The daughter of Pharaoh
2. He met another Israelite who accused him of it. "Will you murder me also as you murdered the Egyptian."
3. Because all baby boys had to be killed and she could hide him no longer.
4. He helped give water to the flocks of her father the priest of Midian.
5. The priest at Midian
6. I AM THAT I AM.
7. The walking stick to snake, the water turning to blood, the palsied hand.
8. Aaron

[All are given a tick and 8/8]

- (i) Ch 19 (43) (ii) 20 (9-16) (iii) Ch 20 (22-23) (iv) Ch 21 (22)
- (i) He is foretelling the siege and sack of Jerusalem by the Romans.
- (ii) The Lord told this parable, as it showed up the scribes and chief priests (who were the husbandmen in the story) as being unworthy of the earth, and showed that he would give the earth to the Gentiles. [v.g.]
- (iii) This was to catch him, for if he said no they would hand him over to the Romans and if he said yes he would be going against his own teaching and make himself unpopular with the people.
- (iv) Luke foretells the end of the world will come in his own lifetime after the sack of Jerusalem, this was said by Jesus, but was probably put in by Luke as it was the prevalent idea of the time.

[11/12]
[28/32]

V. b.c. Divinity Test

1 The Jews of the dispersion were the hellenists who went to other countries and grew rich. The dispersion was when most Jews were taken to Babylon.

2 the stoics were people who followed Zenos and tried to be above temptation and rather like gods. The epicureans followed Epicurus and tried to lead a righteous and good life to gain happiness.

3 Religions like Isis could offer, sacrifices, rituals, ceremonies, lone vigils in dark temples and other mystic forms of worship which philosophies could not.

4 The godfearers were a sect of Christian hellenites in the East Mediterranean.

5 They decided that the gospel must be spread farther afield so st Paul began his missionary work abroad.

6 The sort of people in St Paul's audience would be partly gentiles but mostly hellenite jews who were attracted with Paul's idea of this religion because it did not need the constant ritual which was impossible for those away from Jerusalem.

7 he was supposed to have been crucified in Rome.

[Total mark 12.21 'Good'. The only completely wrong answer was 4 - 'Christian' underlined]

LOWER 6TH HISTORY

"DIVINITY PREP"

A comment on extracts from Meister Eckhart (P125) and the Bhagavad-Gita (P125)

There is one obvious similarity between these two extracts, and it is that God will forgive us our sins. But they also say that God does not only forgive some of our sins, but that he will forgive them all. He does not only forgive us our smaller sins but even the greater ones. In fact Meister Eckhart goes on to say that the bigger the sin the more ready God is to forgive it. At first this looks as if God does not mind us committing the worst crimes, in fact a good way of pleasing him would be to do just that. But this is obviously not so, and therefore we must seek another meaning. The clue is that he will not forgive us unless we repent. And it is obvious that the worse the sin we commit, the further we have strayed from God. Therefore it is harder and more unlikely that we will return to God, in other words repent of what we have done so God is naturally "the gladder And the quicker to forgive."

Mark: 14/20

Divinity Prep 18/5/58

"The very best and utmost of attainment in this life is to remain still and let God act and speak in thee.". Meister Eckhart (P136)

This sounds to me a wonderful saying, for as the bible says “if we serve God completely, we are completely free.” So if we let God use us as his instrument we will be very happy. But it is not at all easy. We are soon tempted to go our own way and to do what we want, and not what God wants. This was the essence of the temptation of our lord, whether he should serve the lord completely or go his own way. Yet he managed to overcome the temptation and we must also gain victory over the devil. For it is only by serving God completely that we can gain everything of worth in this earth.

[Typed comment: If it is true that God dwells in the hearts of all men, then to cultivate the virtues of faith, hope, and charity – which turn our minds completely from ourselves, thus letting God act through us – is the way to begin to realise what Eckhart says.]

“The word of God became man that you also may learn from a man how a man becomes a God.” (P50)

We must first understand what Angelus Silesius means by “word of god” and “man becomes God.” The word of God is obviously Jesus, who has been sent by the Father. For the Lord found that he could not enlighten enough people through his normal messengers. I think that “becomes a God” means that we become able to go to heaven.

I believe this saying to be very true, for it is far easier to learn how to overcome the evils of this earth from a person who has experienced them, as Jesus has. And by his practical suggestions and example it is far easier to attain to Heaven.

[In red ink: ‘My comment on your other little essay bears on this.’]

Divinity Prep

“The Hound of Heaven”

The “Hound of Heaven” is a wonderful poem, and so it is extremely difficult to decide which stanza to consider. The one I have chosen is the second last one – beginning “Now of that long pursuit” There are four points in this verse which are essential parts of the Christian belief, which have been shown to be true in the lives of many great Christians.

The first is the inescapability of god’s love. We may try to avoid him, but if we do, all pleasures will seem hollow and bare. And will, in the end, disintegrate, leaving an empty, wasted, past. [red tick in margin] We will never succeed in escaping him; even if we escape during our life we will meet him in death.

Another point is that god does not forget us if we have sinned, for God can make “much of naught.” Also we must remember that even if we are loved by no one else, he will love us, for God is love.

The last point stressed by Francis Thompson is that if God gives us tribulations, if we suffer, God only allows it because it will bring us nearer him. When we are tried, therefore, it is helpful if we remember that any misfortune gives us an opportunity for showing our love for God. [‘showing our love for’ is bracketed in red, with a comment in ‘turning back to ... (this is the real meaning of repentance)']

[Typed comment at the bottom. 'You have understood the main point of the poem. The special point of this stanza is that F.T., by seeking to be loved by children, men, women, etc. etc. had been asking for the impossible: he was not worthy of their love. Only God could love him while he was still unworthy.']

Divinity Prep.

'Marcus Aurelius'

The main theme in these passages of Marcus Aurelius is that we should pay attention to the divine 'genius' inside us. He argues that it must be very miserable trying to guess what is in other people's minds when all we need to do it [sic] to serve the spirit inside us. If we substitute the word God for the 'spirit' I agree, but I think that we can achieve a great deal by looking at other people's divine spirits also. [red tick in margin with 'v. true' against it] However I agree with M. Aurelius that it is essential that we should sometimes retreat into our own souls, as we will find more comfort from finding God in ourselves than from searching outside ourselves for him. Marcus Aurelius confesses an identical belief to that of the Christians when he says that our attitude towards suffering and tribulation should be that of joy that we have a chance to bear it nobly, and in Christianity to bear it for Christ's sake. M. Aurelius keeps reminding us of our inner self and say that within us is the fountain of 'Good', or in our case God, ready to come out whenever we want it. He also says that like a spring our 'Self' is indestructible. But we must not be too introverted, ['V. true' in margin] in fact we must not worry too much about what other people think of us. [margin 'true again'] This is exactly what Jesus was encouraging us not to do when he said "Blessed are ye when men shall revile you, and persecute you and shall say all manner of evil against you falsely, for my sake."

[Comments in red.

Good points.

You might have added that M.A. often says things which come to much the same as the Gospel "???" Thyself (and follow Me)" It is by denying the superficial self, with its uncertainties, anxieties, and different forms of egoism, that the true self has a chance to arise. 15/20]

"Divinity Prep"

"The Word of god became man that you also may learn from a man how a man becomes a God." Clement of Alexandria.

These words give us an insight into God's reason for sending Christ to this earth. He sent him so that he would redeem us, not only by his death, but by his life which would show us how to pass a godly and righteous existence. The Word of God is God's message which is carried by Christ who although he is really a god was born a man. He was open to all our temptations troubles and anxieties, and by his conduct he shows us how to live in this world the life our Lord wanted us to live.

There was no other way in which God could show us this. Christ had to be the supreme standard because he was the only person on whom God could really rely to lead a perfect life under the stresses of this earth. We could not understand God's mystical advice, so he sent us a living, breathing, human being who would show his fellow human beings how to live as God desired us to live.

This sacrifice by our Lord shows us how great his love is for us but it shows us more than this. It is a visible and obvious proof of God's power. For if he can turn a God into a man, why should he not be able to help man into becoming a God? But all the same he will only 'help' us to become godlike, he will not force us. Therefore we must study and imitate the life of Christ minutely if we are to attain to a state of fellowship with God.

[Comment etc. in red. Good. I will have something to say about your last 6 lines in class. Beta plus.]

Plan.

I how they are alike

II What they mean

III I agree

Divinity

Is the week by week repetition [sic] of church services a good thing [sic] or a bad thing?

I think personally that for school services it is a bad thing, as most boys during a service do not think of what they are saying when they repeat the prayers. [tick] Therefore I think a little variety would make people think more, if they do not think what they are saying the prayers are of no value.

But on the other hand I think that the things we do repeat should be included in all services but in a different order. However for those who can concentrate the whole time and think of what they are saying I think this repetition [sic] is justified. But there are not many who can do this. [tick against last two sentences]

6/7

Test

1. Rebekah

2. A ram

3. Drink and I will give thy camels drink also

4. He was nearly dying of hunger and he asked for some pottage and Jacob said he would give him some if Esau gave him his birthright, and he did

5. Jacob pretended to be Esau

7/7

[13/14 V.g. in pencil]

ESSAY PLAN

There is a short essay plan which seems to be concerned with the strengths and weaknesses of the Roman Catholic church.

There is another 'Divinity Prep' which consists of three columns, headed Mark, Luke and Mathew. This compares their account of the events leading up to the crucifixion. For example, starting:

Mark - Chief priest delivers Jesus to Pilate

Luke He is tried by priests (and admits being king of the jews)

Mathew - ditto - Judas tries to pay back money. He hangs himself.

And so on.

There is also a cyclostyled 'Evans Divinity Prize' for Lent Term 1958. I give the full paper for 1960, so will only include here the two out of nine questions against which I have put a cross.

'One. The Conference Urges all Church people to "give a distinctive witness (a) by the practice of private prayer, Bible reading, and self-discipline (b) by bringing the teaching and example of Christ into their everyday lives (c) by boldness of their spoken witness to their father in Christ"

Resolutions, Lambeth Conference 1948

Write in detail about the practical application of these principles, in the context of school life.

Three. From a Christian point of view, what is the purpose of life?

CLIO ESSAYS

"Divinity Essay"

"Someone I know vey well."

My friendship with x, as I will call him, was not sudden or dramatic. For several years I knew him quite well, but I did not really come to understand him until about two years ago. I have picked him out of the few people I know well as he has perhaps taught me the most; and my conversations with him are more intimate on the whole than with anyone else outside my family. Also, apart from anything else, he has a character unlike anyone else I have met. I do not think it is necessary or desirable (?) to describe x's appearance, apart from the fact that he is quite a good games player and perfectly normal in all other respects.

The first thing which interested me about x was his view of life. It was so completely different from mine that I was staggered and incomprehending of its values, but I think I have now learnt some wisdom from them. When I met him he was in the "atheist" stage of reaction, when his firs unreasoning beliefs were being attacked by the vicious elements of a public-school. In a sense he was a stoic, in that he was prepared to bear the opinions of others without flinching, or perhaps in this he [is] a Christian? He did not seem to aim to win popularity or friendship. He went on his own way, minding his own business, not worrying others. This may be attributed to reticence [corrected 'c'] or even selfishness, but I believe it was not this but in some ways a useful virtue. For I find that one of the most difficult evils which I must overcome before becoming a Christian is that of worrying what people think of one. It is extremely difficult for me to carry out the saying "woe unto you, when all men shall speak well of you!"

We have many things in common in interests, and the thing I find most refreshing about our friendship is that we can speak freely to each other. He has many of the same hobbies as I have, perhaps one of the most binding being our mutual love of poetry and

(some) philosophy. His religious feelings are also akin to mine, though he himself will admit that he is not a true Christian. He does not find difficulty in believing that there is a God, though he does find difficulty in believing in Christ and is willing and anxious to be shown the way. Slow to anger, ready to laugh at himself, tolerant of the faults of others he is a pleasant friend and companion.

His life is founded on three principles, or so he says. "Do not worry

[rest is lost - this is perhaps half of the essay]

There is a one and a half page essay on the history of the Kodex Sineticus and its discovery by Tischendorf. There is no mark

The only other piece of writing for Clio Divinity is as follows:

"Individual and social sin."

Sin is the name given to moral evil, when regarded from the point of view of religion. What we consider to be morally 'evil' depends on our own judgement to a certain extent, the laws however which govern our moral behaviour are a social acquisition, they are not innate to the individual. In itself our desire and appetite is not 'evil' or good, it is the extent to which it is stretched that shows its true value. Hunger may be turned into a virtue or a vice, it may be turned into something noble and pure or into mere gluttony, sensibility may be turned into voluptuousness.

Individual sins are harder to regulate and cure than social sins. This is only true if one takes 'social sins' to mean those sins against a society to which we belong, or performed by that society. Individual sins come from selfishness and self ambition, rather than a dislike of the conventions of the society one resides in.

It has truly been said that "self-love ... is not so vile a sin as self-neglecting", but how many of us are there who err on the wrong side in these two extremes? I am sure that most of our own individual sins stem from self-love. I personally find it a superhuman task to see through the glass and see others, for I find myself constantly gloating over my own reflections! So many of us find it too much of a task to "deny ourselves and take up our cross" for we love ourselves with an unadulterated adoration. If we love ourself in this way, as most of us do, other sins are bound to arise. We will be selfish and forget others, we will be willing to break all moral standards as long as we personally gain, for do not we consider ourselves ultra-important?

This is a sin gross and deep in its nature which is almost impossible to weed out without divine assistance. Whenever we succeed in checking ourselves in this way we think "what a martyr I have been!" And the fatal word 'I' has crept in again. We are intolerant of others views and when they say "...fling away ambition by that sin fell the angels..." we will be inclined to say "Perhaps I won't be beaten!" Even if we do succeed in the end in uprooting this hardy thorn there is likely to be a great hole where the roots were, for we are back to the problem of the danger of self-neglect.

Social sin in the sense that I am talking of it is in all probability the same collection of vices; sexual immorality, deceit, jealousy, ambition, and many others. Intermixed with these are such 'sins' as robbery, murder, arson, cheating and many others, but these are of secondary importance as they are usually only the manifestations of one of the deeper, innate, sins.

I am sure however that actual wrongs themselves, such as stealing a jewel, are not serious sins in any way. These acts can in some cases be justified, and at the worst they

are only crimes committed against the State, which is an amalgamation set up for the preservation of man, and for his welfare. There are accepted checks and punishments for these crimes, but the wickedness within us has no judge or policeman to keep it within bounds, except for our conscience and reason. Unfortunately our reason is often too weak to hold back the ruffians, and that drowsy nightwatchman our conscience is too often asleep!

[There is no comment, but the marker was singularly unimpressed, giving it the low mark of Beta minus]

There are two other clues as to what we were doing in Divinity which are perhaps worth including.

The first is a cyclostyled VI Forms Evans Divinity Prize paper for February 1960, which I seem to have taken though I did not win any prize.

The paper is as follows:

Credit is given for quotations from the Bible and the Book of Common Prayer. Attempt any number of questions up to three.

1. Explain and discuss the following quotation from the Book of Common Prayer, Article I:
“There is but one living and true god, everlasting, without body, parts, or passions; of infinite power, wisdom, and goodness; the Maker, and Preserver of all things both visible and invisible.” [This has ‘3’ marked against it, perhaps my third choice?]
2. Why do you believe in God? [This has a double line mark against it.]
3. Write about three of the following
 - (i) What is sin? [A line against it]
 - (ii) “Original sin Is the fault and corruption of the Nature of every man ... so that the flesh lusteth always contrary to the spirit”. [mark against it]
 - (iii) Repentance.
 - (iv) “A general confession” Evening Prayer (B.C.P.)
 - (v) Forgiveness of sin [mark against it]
4. How would you show that man’s life can be predestinated? How can man exercise his freedom? Discuss some of the problems arising out of the two questions above.
5. Discuss the following statement from the Archbishops of Canterbury and York:
“All baptized and confirmed members of the Church must play their full part in its life and witness. That you may fulfil this duty, we call upon you: To come to Church every Sunday”.
6. The following statement was made by the last Lambeth Conference of Bishops of the Anglican Communion:
“The Conference calls upon Christians to press through their governments ... for the abolition by international agreement of nuclear bombs and other weapons of similar indiscriminate destructive power, the use of which is repugnant to the Christian conscience.” On what grounds would a Christian justify this point of view? Discuss this in relation to the present world situation.

7. Lambeth conference. Condemnation of Racial Discrimination. "The Conference affirms its belief in the natural dignity of every man, of whatever colour or face, as created in the image of God ... It therefore condemns discrimination of any kind on the grounds of race or colour alone." Discuss this in relation to such countries as South Africa. Explain the Christian justification for this point of view.
8. Write a short biography of Judas Maccabaeus and assess his importance in Jewish history.
9. Write a short biography of Herod the Great. What was his character?
10. Explain and illustrate the meaning of the Christian virtue of Honesty. Discuss some of the problems of being honest.

Finally, I have my brief notes on two Divinity talks.

One of these consists of genealogies of Herod's ancestors, and of his children, sketched out as a genealogy, with a few minor notes of battles etc.

The second starts with suggestions for some reading:

The Mind of the Maker - Dorothy Sayers

Your god is too small - T.B. Philips

Foolishness to the Greeks -

Christian Ethics - Green

The Hardest Time - Studdart Kennedy

The actual talk is again mainly a family tree, around Judas Maccabaeus and his descendants.

There are also some thin notes on Sadducees and Pharisees, the latter for example, "were the people - the poor - conservative - the separate ones - try to keep the law (clean & unclean) - descendants of the Hasidim' - etc etc.

[From small brown notebook] (Reading Log)

Surprised by Joy - C.S. Lewis

i. The first years

"Happy, but for so happy ill secured" Milton b. 1899

from the age of 1-7. His parents completely different from each other and him.

Lewis - passionate Welshman, Hamilton - tranquil intellectual - no religious

teaching - read and wrote widely - great interest in 'Romantic' stories Morte

D'Arthur etc - his stories of animal-land without beauty.

BUT 3 touches of Joy (stabs)

i) when his brother brings in a little garden on a tray.

ii) When he reads "Squirrel Nutkin" falls in love with Autumn.

iii) On reading some Longfellow

"I heard a voice that cried,

Balder the beautiful,

Is dead, is dead --"

- stabs of Joy (different from happiness)

Joy - only common thing with Happiness and Pleasure - anyone who has experienced it would want to experience it again.

- almost a particular kind of unhappiness or grief - anyone who has tasted would ever exchange it for Happiness or pleasure.
- - in these experiences - surprise and sense of incalculable importance - something in "another dimension"
- - a sensation of desire - but before I knew what I desired, the desire itself was gone, the would only stirred now by a longing for the longing that had just ceased.
-

II CONCENTRATION CAMP

Reciting his terrible years when a boy of 8-10 at a 15-boy school in Surrey. The headmaster 'Oldie' was probably insane and the whole effect was useless for the intellect - he does not learn anything - but it is here for the first time that he takes some interest in religion. The two contributions of the school were.

- a) They- like his father's rhetorical and passionate anger - drove him to comradeship with his brother & friends
- b) It shows that the present and immediate do not matter so much. At the beginning of a term 'hope' and 'faith' are gratified - teaches you to live by hope and faith - beginning of term as hard to realise holidays as heaven
 - learned not to take present things on their face value

III Mountbracken & Campbell

- natural result of a boarding-school - children grow up strangers to their next-door neighbours

Patterns and puzzles

[I shall write a more considered set of closing observations later. Here are just some first thoughts after re-doing the Lakeland chapters.]

The strong overlap between Sedbergh and the Lakes. I had thought before I read my grandparent's diaries and parent's letters that my grandparents/parents kept away from the school - that there was some kind of boundary or taboo which kept these worlds apart. In fact, I see that when they were home my parents visits quite often, and even my grandparents tried to do so. I seem to have been keen that they come over and though I had anxieties about Fiona at one point, I obviously liked them coming over. What I did not do was to go home to Field Head for one of these occasions. I think we were not allowed to stay out for the night and hence the 30 mile journey back and forth just for a day's visit would not have been sensible. I even went over on my motorbike to Sedbergh to fish a couple of times in my last year - suggesting an overlap.

Friendships with school friends. This clearly developed in this period. Apart from Stephen Grieve, a Dragon friend, there is no sign of spending any of the holidays with Sedbergh friends, apart from Mike Doogan's dance in 1957, in the first three years. But by the last two years I was inviting Geoffrey Bromley and Ian Campbell to stay at Field Head and was staying at both of their houses in the holidays. So, along with the Continental tour, the relations were developing. The culmination was the party on Jan 6th 1960 when 4 boys from Sedbergh were present - with me, that made up one third of the males present.

Scotland remained important, especially the fishing trip to the Shetland with my father in 1957. But apart from that, and wearing a kilt on Sundays, it was mainly in the mind - I can't find evidence of visits to stay with Alan and Jean or Pat and Alan of the kind which are there in Dorset Days and of course my Scottish grandparents were dead.

There is interesting material on the range of *my grandparent's social contacts*, both in the diary of my grandfather and his address books. I have not analysed this yet.

It is not easy to convey the nature of my parents' relationship during this period. But as this is in many ways the backbone of my life, and I was obviously enormously influenced by this, I have attempted to do so mainly through including the full letters written by my mother from England in the three first months of 1960 when she was waiting for my father to arrive.

What I am trying to do is some kind of entering of another world, which speaks for itself without being over-interpreted. I shall let others draw their own conclusion, for I do not want to be too analytical and anthropological, it is above all an ethnography of a time & place.

Yet it also tells a story, and the story is of the growth of a child into a man - which we can see through the early days of Beck House - fleb girls, the Stain, electric trains, early Field Head with padder & Subuteo and local trout fishing, through to the Shetlands, Assam in winter 1957, the Continental tour and Norway and so to Oxford. And alongside this change, paralleled in the story is the growth of the love of poetry, the search for Jesus etc and the growth of mind.

Other impressions:

When I arrived in Beck House and over the next year or so, my passions are still those of a child. Basically I had little control over the full-scale adult world, so I was playing with it through small-scale models. I was mimicking adult control in preparation for the real thing. Hence there were

Toy soldiers – battles with my sister Fiona

Toy footballers – Subuteo with my uncle

Toy trains – the passion for electric trains at Beck House

Toy animals – mice, hamsters and miniature animals

All the above were the phase from 12-14 and Junior School at Sedbergh and Junior Day Room. Life was lived at a scale of about 100:1, as with Hornby 00 gauge railways which I collected.

Then the scale changed in my next two years, 14-16, middle school and ‘O’ level years, Senior Day Room etc. Life was now lived at a scale of 10:1. I gave up model railways, soldiers, small animals etc, and moved on to a passion for fishing, walking our much larger dog, walking on my own over longer distances. This was the period of transition. It was the time of move from Senior Dayroom to my first study etc.

Then the scale changed again and I was at a scale of perhaps 1:2 – that is I was between the ages of 16-18 half an adult, half an adolescent. I had motorized transport – but a small motorbike and not a car. I had a bank account later on, but very little money in it. I went further afield in search of sea trout etc., but still within a local region. I started to have almost adult friendships with boys and girls. This was the time of the Upper Sixth, of senior studies, of my first long distance overseas trips etc.

So my relationship to adult life altered with scale – not just puberty, muscles, extra weight and height. But I began to be treated almost as an adult and behaving almost like one – responsibility, dependability, accountability.

Yet which this happened in many ways, in others my mind and heart remained those of an adolescent. What I mean by this is that, as the Oxford material so vividly shows, there was a great deal more development to come. That took me another six years from 18-24. When I arrived in Oxford I was still a very innocent, hopeful, romantic and idealistic teenager, keen to explore the world, but still without any fixed certainties. I was still in many ways an undivided, composite, pre-modern, schoolboy.

This surprises me. I had always imagined Sedbergh and Lakes years were those when I went through the Wordsworthian transformation, when the magic and enchantment went out of my life. I had thought that these five years were when the great battle between head and heart, reason and belief, took place. And I had thought that this was the period when I was desperately clinging on to the unity of my childhood vision, a world where natural and supernatural were interfused etc.

Now I can see that the great battle actually happened later, from about my second year at Oxford. The first year at Oxford was really a continuation of Sedbergh in some ways, just as the first year at Sedbergh and the Lakes was a continuation of the Dragon – there was a sort of year’s overlap. My first ‘Julie’ summer was still really magical,

undivided, filled with delight. It was after that, and especially from about the summer of my second year, in other words when I was about in the middle of my 20th year, and for the next three years or so, that I felt the slipping away of magic. That Burford spring in 1963, when I was 21 and just preparing for my Finals, and the later summer of that year in Patterdale, was really the centre of the battle. And so it was out of that time - when I was still reading Tolkien and T.H.White and others and interested in Arthurian magic and such things - that I evolved into my witchcraft thesis. I came to study disenchantment as I went through the process.

So my self-image is skewed. It is true that my interest in all this battle was there from about 16 or so as I read Hopkins and Keats and Wordsworth. But the depths of the struggle was not really internalized until the period from 1962-1965.

What strikes me strongly about the Lakes holidays was how much I enjoyed them. Of course I could not have been in a more beautiful place, nor surrounded by a more supportive and loving family, and never short of all the things I really needed. And the natural hopefulness was added to by the times. It was a Wordsworthian "Bliss was it in that dawn to be alive" moment - not because of a directly political revolution of the French kind, but of a cultural one - the growing wealth and affluence, the pop and rock culture, the rising youth culture and rebellion. We felt we were on the crest of a wave - carried forwards by the extra power around us (literally through the development of electrical goods, cars etc) and all very exhilarating. Even the down side, the Suez debacle and Cold War were not too overshadowing.

On top of this I was becoming intellectually excited - really centred around new imaginative worlds at school through immersion in history and English. I was starting to be told that I might have some serious intellectual potential. At the Dragon I had been in the third class from the top. At Sedbergh I ended up as top of English in the school, and about second or third in history. My teachers talked about Oxbridge, I was editor of house and both school magazines etc.

Also my relationship with my parents was richer. I could communicate better with both of them, especially my mother through letters which in our last year begin to become real conversations about important things like novels and poetry. My parents absences did not seem so un-ending, and I did not miss them as much. The fact that my grandparents or parents were living only 30 miles away was re-assuring.

And of course having our first bought house, where we were settled and could do what we liked, was enormously comforting. For me this particularly meant a room of my own - that is a room I could decorate as I liked, begin to store my ever-accumulating set of papers in tomato boxes, keep private. I could start to organize my inner as well as my outer world. It was a wonderful freedom.

So what comes through I think is exhilaration. And home was where I was well fed (by my grandmother), reasonably warm (by the Aga), less ill than at school, and could relax and enjoy myself. We did not seem to have much family or other stress and every year brought new privileges and excitements. It was good to be alive.

Further thoughts on 6.6.2013

School was full of rules, punishments for breaking the rules, hidden boundaries, traps, half understood codes and customs. We were always stretched – too much to do, a kind of endless hurdle race. No sooner had I played one match or run a run, than there was another looming. The same was true with work. There were constant targets, goals, fortnightly reports, new things to master. It was epitomized by the ten mile run – where one struggled on from point to point, urged on to the next effort and conquest, but knowing there were more and more.

School might be fun, especially in company or when I did well, but it was always, in the words of the Ten Mile song “strain and struggle, might and main, scorn defeat and laugh at pain”.

Home was not like that. I understood the rules and codes and there was much less fear. I don't remember ever being beaten at home after about the age of eight. The worst I would get from parents or grand-parents by the Lakeland years was a reprimand. We were not docked pocket-money as far as I recall (not that I remember pocket-money at all) and never confined to our rooms or subjected to other punishments. We swam with the current, not against it as happened at school.

The physical conditions, as I have mentioned, were very different – cold, some hunger, illness at school, with warmth, good food and health at home.

So school was the stiff climb term by term up a higher mountain. Each hill, which seemed as one approached a possible summit, turned out to be just a ridge, Himalaya on Himalaya. But the holidays were the restoring period, the jogging along on the level, gaining one's breath, with even time and energy to look around.

I did not really dread going back to school, even after a term or two, and in the last couple of years, certainly, looked forward to returning, especially to the summer term. But I definitely looked forward to the holidays even more.

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I suspect that one of the advantages for my grandparents and parents was that they knew that the hard work of turning me into an adult was being done by others. The point of the school was to hone us, to teach us manners, confidence, logic, self-discipline, both in terms of character and mind. So the 'heavy lifting' from childhood to adulthood could be left to the paid professionals. The grandparents and parents were there for R & R – rest and relaxation, to tend the wounds, to give us a break. So we were encouraged to our own thing, follow our own hobbies and interests.

What my family at home did not want was us children moping around. I remember as a little boy of six to eight trailing around a bit aimlessly at times asking 'what shall I do now?' Consequently my mother was constantly entertaining me. But I remember none of that at Field Head. There always seemed plenty, if not too much, to do. I woke up each day with a plan and often even when the weather was bad we would carry it out. We were constantly exploring, trying out new things, adventuring. I never remember being bored.

Obviously there were wet and cold days which we spent inside. Yet having a room, books, music and several active hobbies and toys, I was always active. A central part of this activity, certainly from about sixteen onwards, consisted of sorting out and arranging my various collections of papers. This was the time, before I moved into the shed in the garden from my early twenties, when my room became the centre of my life.

My little oak panelled and floored room became a cabinet of curiosities. I piled my present and my recent past round me like a shell, stacked filing systems of cards, envelopes, shoe boxes, tomato boxes, depending on the materials, alongside fishing

tackle, soldiers, cassettes, postcards, stamps, letters, school books, essays. Soon I was fully involved in that pattern of self-archiving which has continued for the rest of my life. I set the work pattern for the rest of my life.

Why I should have been like this and how unusual it was I have never been sure. Whether it was simulating my grandmother, trying to get security through accumulating and storing my past actions, seeing that the past and present were connected, keeping a strong link with my absent parents, I don't know. It was probably all these and other things. And there was also a real practical necessity to keep the school essays and work books which would be needed in my last years as I approached final exams and possibly an attempt to go to university.

What encouraged me in my written self-accounts I do not know. Of course small pocket diaries tended to be given to us each year, and we would try to keep them for a while. I did keep two, each for a term, aged 14 and 15, but then I gave up. Yet the idea was there and while keeping diaries or ordinary life was too boring, it did seem important to try to capture special events for future contemplation through some kind of diary or self account. So there are diaries of the trip to Assam, around the Continent and reflections on significant events such as the fishing trip to the Shetlands with my father, and my first love affair aged eighteen. I was clearly watching myself and commenting on how I was developing.

Perhaps the self-analysis and observation was linked, as I suggested in the introduction to the work on the seventeenth century diarist Ralph Josselin, to the Puritan or Protestant streak in my life. With the abolition of confession, it has been argued, diaries and autobiographies became a device for communing with God, as well as a daily way to monitor the constant struggle against the forces of evil. Yet though there may be something in this, and I was certainly, as has been shown in the evangelical religious account above perhaps more than usually engaged in religious self-monitoring, I am not convinced by this argument. The diaries and accounts of holiday trips do not read like confessionals or self-monitoring.

The accounts seem to be more about wanting to preserve, save, keep special occasions, much in the same way as photographs or films taken on a holiday are made to capture the fleeting moment in a somewhat hopeful belief that we will be able to relive the pleasures. Although from experience we know that we seldom look at the photographs or films again, and that all attempts to interest others in them are doomed, yet somehow at the time it feels a waste not to try. Somehow not to record special events, not to chart the flowing years in the belief that one day one will glow again with some of the earlier thrills, seems a loss.

So I collected and stored impressions and ideas – and the result is... this work!

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In my account of the Dragon I became aware of how much the growing child lives in their imagination, that we move in a world peopled with characters from books, films stories we are told, radio and comic characters, a world which spreads out far beyond the here and now. At the Dragon this encompassed not just the school and north Oxford and Dorset and its coastline, but also, largely through shreds of infant memory, my mother's graphic letters and one re-visit when I was eleven, the world of Assam and India.

This world of the imagination did not diminish at Sedbergh and the Lakes, as I had previously thought, but went in new directions. Sir Galahad, Robin Hood, Mowgli,

Peter Rabbit, Captain Hook, all these faded, but in their place new worlds of the imagination opened up through poetry, films, and, at the end, real travel. The past also opened up more vividly as I became engrossed in history. My Scottish ancestry became more alive as I wore a kilt every Sunday and went with my father fishing in the Shetlands. And Assam became even more vivid, partly from my mother's renewed enthusiasm for the country. She seems to have discovered Assam's rich culture only in 1957 when she went back for the first time with no children and started to learn the language and excavate, and write a children's book about life on a tea plantation.

These imaginative explorations, re-living the world of the Tudors and Stuarts with Andrew Morgan, travelling with Keats or Hopkins with Dave Alban, starting to enjoy adult films of adventure and romance, starting to get interested in other cultures, are the basis for my later work as an academic and writer.

Wordsworth was well aware that as adult writers we draw on the reservoir of images and associations, dreams and deep feelings laid down in our childhoods. He felt that the years from late infancy to the end of his undergraduate days at Cambridge, ie about ten to twenty-one, were the crucial ones for his poetic work. I suspect that mine stretched out longer, from five or six up to my mid-twenties. This is a period I shall cover in this account of my life's education and what I hope to do is to show the different virtual or imaginative landscapes I traverse during those years.

The Dragon contained one set of landscapes - described already - full of wonder, magic, make believe, play, fairies and wonders. That has never been abandoned and in later work on witchcraft, the Shamanism of Nepal or Japan, I have drawn on my own childhood experience of enchanted lands to help me enter empathetically into these magic lands so different from adult rationality.

Then at Sedbergh there were supplementary landscapes - some overlapping with earlier worlds like Assam, but other new ones, like Wordsworth and poetry, the Continent after my tour, the whole of British and some European history.

Later at Oxford I shall encounter other landscapes - some connecting back to the earliest - a new interest in the magic lands of the Dragon years - CS Lewis, Tolkein, Charles Williams and the Oxford magicians. Some new avenues of history, biography and so on.

In all these imaginative explorations it is the delicate link between experience, being in places, meeting people, smelling, breathing, feeling, with what goes on in the mind - listening to music, reading, conversations, writing, which I find fascinating. I hope that this lengthy and intense reconstruction of the growth of a child from birth to about 25 (the end of my Ph.D., the return of my parents to England, setting up home in London with Gill) will give some special insights into what happens, and connect to my later interests and efforts at understanding the world we live in.