

CHAPTER TWELVE

In the midst, as I am, of my recollections and my reflections on them, I have come to realise how little the great events that have occurred in my lifetime have affected my feelings and imagination at the time they happened. The reason for this is, I believe, that, as a press telegraphist, I had in the copy on my machine in front of me detailed accounts of all these occurrences. These accounts in words on the page took on a fictionalised character. In middle age I developed clear and strong views on social and political affairs but the daily handling of reports on events tended to distance me from them. An example of this is of the announcement of the abdication of Edward VIII. Babs heard of it a day or so after the event ! I knew all about it, of course, having dealt with the story all along but had happened not to mention it at home.

My only recollection of the dynastic furore is a trivial one. I heard, when on holiday at Alltshellach in that year, that in the week before I arrived a section of the Glasgow Orpheus Choir had holidayed at the guest house. Their contribution to the customary evening concert was a potted comic opera in which the theme was the abdication. It was said by some people that Edward was forced to abdicate by the Prime Minister Stanley Baldwin on the insistence of his strait-laced wife.

I feel now I should have been much more concerned about Mussolini's invasion of Ethiopia and about the Spanish Civil War. I was in a general way very passionately against war - hence my enthusiastic membership of Federal Union. I suppose that while the Finnish Winter War was being fought I felt that it was by then too late to worry about avoiding war, but that something

must be done afterwards. In early 1940 I was prepared to be a conscientious objector but, of course, my objections were political, not matters of conscience.

I recollect the day in 1939 when the war started. I was driving from Kingston when the famous first air raid warning sounded. I was furious at being so disturbed and was rude to the air raid warden who stopped me and told me to take cover. The warning was either a false alarm or intended as a rehearsal. For the next few months I approved of some of the wartime activities - the placing of the balloon barrage over London, the production of fighter aircraft (these being defensive measures) and the dropping of anti-Nazi leaflets over Germany.

I remember the day, though not the date, when I was working in the garden at home and Babs came to tell me the Germans had entered the Low Countries. I cannot recall what I felt and thought but I have a cryptic entry in a diary that on 20 June I attempted to join the Local Defence Volunteers. Why "attempted" and not "joined" I cannot remember. This means that at that moment I had come to realise that the war against Nazi Germany had to be fought and that I must do my bit in it. It was not till 6th November 1941 that I joined the LDVs at the moment when their title was changed to Home Guard. I became Private Smith, a signaller in the 5th battalion, East Surrey Regiment. The hilarious experiences of the television's Dad's Army are scarcely more comic than ours in the Claygate Home Guard. (The Fleet Street battalion of the Home Guard was attached to the 5th Bn City of London Fusiliers. Their shoulder flashes read 5COL. This was said, humorously, to be a reference to the Fifth Column, a term brought into use in connection with the secret military activities behind the enemy lines in the Spanish

Civil War.)

Nearly all the available men in Claygate were members of the Home Guard, veterans of the first world war being the officers and NCOs. Equipment was very scarce: I actually saw, in the headquarters in an empty house in Foley Road, pikes made from bayonets attached to piping. I never saw these weapons in anyone's hands. Training mostly took place on Sunday mornings but stopped at public house opening time. It seemed at that time that the Home Guard would have been quite useless to meet an enemy invader but I am quite sure now that if the United Kingdom had been invaded the Home Guard would have made itself effective in a matter of hours.

As time went on new officers were appointed, new equipment arrived, better training schemes were devised and serving regular soldiers were attached to battalions as training officers. Ours, I recall, was from a Highland regiment and attended parades kilted. The Home Guard version of battle dress was brown leather belt and gaiters and side cap. These caps were flat but designed to open out to cover the head and fasten under the chin: I never saw one so used. Gas capes were, at first, carried rolled on top of the knapsack. When one flung oneself on the ground to fire one's rifle, the cape knocked one's helmet over one's face. So afterwards the capes were carried under the knapsack.

The men in the signal section were an odd group. The corporal was Tom Carroll, an operator with Cable and Wireless. Cable and Wireless was the nationalised version of the old Eastern Telegraph Company, the company I meant to join originally. Mr Peck, a retired Post Office engineer, had to get special permission from some authority to continue to serve in the Home Guard because he was over 70 years of age. He had earlier been a morse man

and could receive morse at a very great speed. On one occasion, for fun, I sent morse to him as fast as I could - and that was quite fast - and Mr Peck, who could not keep up in longhand, got it down in shorthand in which he was also proficient. His great hobby was campanology which he practised in Kingston church - after the war, when bells could be rung again.

Tom Dean was blind and earned his living as a piano tuner. Unlike most blind persons he was an extreme extrovert. He scorned the use of a stick and if he stumbled against anyone as he strode about the village he swore at them fluently. He cycled about on a tandem cycle, the first seat being occupied by members of his family and, occasionally during H.G. duties, by me. I marvelled on an occasion when I met Dean swimming in the Black Pond. From the diving board he plunged unhesitatingly into the water which was to him, I suppose, a black void. Some years later he deserted his wife and two sons and went off with a young school teacher.

The other signallers were a dentist, a butcher, a gardener, a civil servant and a young clerk waiting for call up to the army. The officer in charge of the Headquarters unit was Colonel Wyatt: his rank in the Home Guard was first lieutenant. I became friendly with Mr Wyatt and was shocked when, shortly after the war, he collapsed and died while attending a service in St Margaret's church, Westminster. I attended his memorial service there later.

At first I tried to teach my comrades the use of the morse key and sounder. This was a waste of time: no sort of skill could be acquired in a useful time. We were supplied with great lengths of wire, wound on garden hose drums, and improvised a standby telephone system between Claygate and Battalion HQ at Thames Ditton. I have had the odd experience of having

climbed many of the lamp posts and telegraph poles in the district ! Carroll was promoted battalion signals officer and I became the section's corporal.

I was also, because of good eyesight perhaps, a member of the marksmen's team. I once found myself zeroing rifles, a task that I had, hitherto, no knowledge of or interest in ! On one evening I was at a shooting match at Sandown Park when a stick of incendiary bombs fell across Claygate. Damage was done to my neighbour's house but not to ours. During the war Sandown Park Racecourse was used as the depot for the Welsh Guards. A number of the guardsmen made friends in the village and settled here after the war. Hence several families in Claygate have Welsh surnames.

At length the Home Guard was issued with portable radio sets. They were C2s of Canadian manufacture. The strictest attention had to be paid to procedure when the sets were used because, however unimportant the signalled messages were, they could be picked up usefully by the Germans. I felt, therefore, that I was doing some really effective training when instructing my section in this radio procedure. One Sunday morning I was at a session, as part of my training as an instructor, in the American establishment on the top of Kingston Hill (where Eisenhower had a house). This hill stuck up into the flight path of flying bombs, the V1s, during a heavy attack. My concentration on what I was doing was less than perfect.

The tower of Ruxley Towers was used as a Home Guard look-out post. During a flying bomb attack the Home Guard there loosed off at one of these very low flying projectiles and, by an extraordinary chance, hit it. Strict orders were then given not to fire at the V1s. All Home Guard members were required to throw at least one live hand grenade. I threw my one on a range in Richmond Park. We also had to go, by way of training, through a poison

gas chamber wearing our gas masks.

The Claygate Home Guard were great on social activities. We had a series of parties and dances and so that part of our wartime lives passed pleasantly enough.

There came a time before the war was over when the Home Guard were disbanded. The "standing down" ceremony was interesting. The battalion marched off led by its most junior member, followed by the men in ascending rank, the last man in the column being the commanding officer.

The disbanding of the Home Guard was done in what I thought almost indecent haste. No doubt the powers that be thought that firearms should not be left in the hands of ordinary citizens especially, I suppose, in a time when all sorts of radical ideas were growing up in the minds of the people of this country.

We were, en famille, on holiday at Milford-on-Sea when the evacuation of Dunkirk took place. The year before we had met the young man acting as H.F. secretary for the season. In the intervening months he had joined the army, been sent to France and was then brought back again from Dunkirk. He was engaged to be married to one of the girls on the staff at the guest house. After landing on the south coast he made his way to Milford. He was put to bed in the "reigning" secretary's bed and slept for several days. This need to sleep seemed common among the returning soldiers. The wife of a political friend of mine in Claygate told me later that her husband arrived home and went to bed. She sat with him through several days and nights. He turned in his sleep, holding her hand, smiled and went off to sleep again.

The Milford guest house was closed at the end of Dunkirk week and some

years went by before we returned to it.

During that summer the air battle of Britain was fought. I recall one Saturday afternoon, while working for the People newspaper, going into Endell Street and watching the vapour trails from the aircraft, RAF and Luftwaffe, criss-crossing the sky.

Later in the year came the blitz on London. The earlier attacks were largely fire bombs. On 9th September '40 an incendiary bomb struck our house. We had a visitor occupying the spare bedroom and the bomb came through the roof and ceiling into a suitcase at the foot of the bed. Babs rushed upstairs, grabbed the suitcase with the bomb in it and threw it out of the window. She took the children, then aged six, four and nearly one, into our good friends next door. She returned to find the bed still smouldering. She bundled all the bedclothes out of the window also. I returned from the office at about 9am next morning, having been on night duty, to find a heap of charred remains in the garden. I later repaired the burnt bedstead and it remained in use for several years more.

In the early weeks and months of the war I was, of course, a member of the Air Raid Precautions unit in Hare Lane. I was unable to be much use because so often away at work at night.

As the blitz intensified, it became difficult to get to and from the office because of damage to the various forms of travel. We in the wire room, therefore, rearranged our duty roster so that we worked continuously for several days, sleeping in the office and eating out, and then being off duty for several days, getting home as best we could. Some of my workmates sent their families away to the country and joined them in their few days off. I did not quite follow this pattern. Using a bicycle to cover the

stretches where the railway line was out of use, I slipped home quite often during my on duty periods. I would ride, say, to Clapham and join the train there, taking my bicycle with me: or perhaps train to Clapham, bicycle to Wimbledon, get on a train to Surbiton and ride home from there.

I recall one such journey. I boarded the train at Waterloo, putting my bicycle in the guard's van. Reaching a point near Clapham Junction the train was halted. It was a very heavy raid. Bombs whistled down and the whole area at the top of Latchmere was ablaze. The thought went through my mind that here would be an excellent chance to rebuild when the fighting was over but, oddly, the area looks as shabby as it always did. Two very agitated American service men shared the darkened train compartment with me. I felt I must behave with English phlegm and managed to do so.

When sleeping in the office and breakfasting in a nearby cafe we would have some time to spare before starting to get out the next day's Herald or People. I used to go to the cinema, which opened mid-morning, once in a while and find myself the first and possibly the only customer in one of these vast West End theatres.

During the raids we went, when the warnings sounded, down into the machine rooms which were below ground level. I recall one incident. A very big bomb fell at the back of the buildings the other side of Endell Street about 50 yards away. The great printing presses rocked in the blast. The bomb site, when cleared, served as a park for our cars for several years.

The parents of one of my colleagues, Charles Downing, were both killed when a bomb struck their home.

After one raid I walked down Long Acre with Eddie Jones - the journalist from Eastbourne who claimed he had initiated the campaign to buy the South

Downs for the nation - and we found his car, where it was parked in a side street, crushed flat by a great lump of masonry. He could only shrug his shoulders, say, "Ah, well," and go off with me for breakfast.

At the end of the year, when St Paul's Cathedral was so nearly destroyed, there were very heavy raids and bombs dropped on the Odhams' offices. One of the wire room men, Tom Brown, helped fight the fires. He claimed for and, after some argument, was given a new pair of trousers to replace his own, damaged during his efforts.

One night, slipping home on one of my bicycle/train journeys I was crossing Waterloo Bridge while a raid was going on. Bombs falling into the river splashed the roadway - and me. I was furious. I think emotions like fear and anger, anxiety and love are reflexes so I can say that on this occasion I did not feel frightened but very angry. In the same way I was angry when ordered to take cover when the first alarm was sounded and also I was angry when I had to lift my baby son from his cot when the air raid warning sounded while we were at Milford at the time of the Dunkirk evacuation. Later I was saddened but just short of being angry when I watched the waves of aircraft flying over Claygate at the time of the thousand-bomber raids on European cities.

The Federal Union lunches in Fleet Street pubs and restaurants came to an end because of the damage and confusion in that part of London.

Early in 1941 I was required to register for the army. my job as a press telegraphist was a reserved one. As the war went on several of my workmates left for the services, the younger first and so on. Had the war gone on longer I would have been the next to go. In 1944 I was 40 years of age and had been served a de-registration notice. The young man who had been our

apprentice suffered very badly every year from hay fever. He spent his war at sea as a radio officer and so enjoyed being free for several years from this distressing condition.

Early in 1941 I was elected a member of the executive committee of my union, the National Union of Press Telegraphists. The union had offices in Fleet Street and I had to attend there every week for the next year or two to help with the running of the union. The union had a part-time general secretary named Allen. A year or two earlier Allen's predecessor, a colourful character named Cox, died, sadly but, I think, gallantly. He was a bachelor. He found he had cancer of the throat so he travelled to Maidenhead, drank a great deal of gin, walked into the Thames and was drowned.

The London members of the E.C. met at least weekly at the union offices to conduct union affairs and from time to time the full E.C. had meetings in various provincial cities. Occasionally when these meetings were over, I would take advantage of being away from home and work to go to one of the H.F. centres and take a walk over the fells. I remember particularly going several times to Longshaw near Sheffield and walking over Rushup Edge. I also went to Derwentbank in the Lake District.

My E.C. membership led to my attendance at meetings of other trades union organisations. At the Professional Workers Federation I met Fred Hughes who, years later, influenced my political activity. My union was affiliated to the Printing and Kindred Trades Association, the president of which was George Isaacs. Mr Isaacs was a tremendous personality. he gloried in being a Cockney and would take off his jacket and use rhyming slang on quite formal

occasions. His life and mine ran distantly parallel for many years. He came from Southwark, of which borough he had once been mayor. He lived in Molesey. His house was on the river bank and he had a morning swim every day of the year. Lieutenant Isaacs was a member of the Intelligence unit of my battalion of the Home Guard. Mr Isaacs was also a member and sometime chairman of the Kingston County Petty Sessional bench. After the war he was Minister of Labour in Attlee's Labour government and was able to help powerfully in placing the returning service men and women, avoiding the mistakes made in this operation in 1918. A little later, when I became active in the Esher Constituency Labour Party, I had occasion to call at Mr Isaacs' house. He was out and I spoke to Mrs Isaacs. She said to me, sadly, "Don't become a politician, young man."

George Isaacs retired in the Fifties and for many years I heard nothing of him. I thought he had moved from Molesey and, possibly, I had not heard of his death. This was not so: he continued to live in Molesey to a great age. I did hear of his death in 1979 and attended his funeral in the parish church of West Molesey.

It was while I was a member of the E.C. that my chairmanship of the London branch of the Union was interrupted. That office was taken over by Cecil Steggles, my friend and colleague at the Herald. He also was ex-Western Union. After my time on the E.C. came to an end I was for a year London branch secretary. Then I changed over with Steggles to resume being chairman of the branch again. Many years later I followed Steggles, when he retired, to become chief telegraphist at the Daily Herald (by then called the Sun). For many Christmasses thereafter we exchanged greeting cards to indicate to one another our continued existence !

CHAPTER THIRTEEN

As I read my diaries I am reminded that my life during those war years was strenuous. I did not feel frantic at the time: I suppose I was physically strong. Home life consisted of playing with and caring for the members of the family. Our walks over the commons went on almost daily - with the spaniel who was, unhappily, run over and killed in 1942. We went on swimming expeditions. I, with friend Whitley, tended our two allotments which measured about 20 rod in all. I still helped with the branch library. The organised collection of blood had been started and I made my regular donation. I continued to do this for some years till age stopped me: I received the blood services medal. I must have contributed several gallons of blood over the whole period !

There was a moment when all three children were at school that I and they, but not Babs, went down with chicken pox. While convalescing we played all the board and card games we knew. Margot learned to play bezique at a quite unusually early age. Jenny, at one point, contracted scarlet fever and went to the isolation hospital at Tolworth. Her mother, a small woman, had to stand on a box to see her through a window when we visited daily.

With the children, I kept a pen of bantam hens. These birds gave us a good supply of their small eggs.

I became chairman of a small discussion group in Claygate which dealt with problems we thought we foresaw at the war's end.

The family holiday in 1941 was taken at the H.F. centre at Lynmouth. In the autumn Buster joined Jenny at Newlands College. Although called a college, Newlands was a privately run junior school. The next year we

holidayed at Llandogo in the Wye valley. The oddest possible recollection I have of that holiday is that in that week honey was put on ration !

Our visits to the cinema were frequent. I have a diary note that one day I saw myself on the screen: it was a brief glimpse in a film on newspaper production.

In September '42 Jenny broke her arm in a fall from her bicycle. In the December of that year I bicycled to Reading and from there I went by train to Portishead to stay a day or two with my parents at Stobo. I returned in time for Christmas at home. Throughout the year the Home Guard training called for several attendances a week and an occasional night exercise, guard duty or wire laying around Claygate, Hinchley Wood and the Dittons.

In March '43 I spent some days in the Lake District, staying at the H.F. centre Derwentbank - to which I and the family were to return many times afterwards - walking and climbing before going back to a union meeting in Manchester. After the meeting I went on to Longshaw and a walk over the Derbyshire moors. Then home.

By now Babs and I had involved ourselves with the children's school activities: we attended the parties and displays and I helped to arrange the sports day. About this time I began to take the boys, including my son Buster, for cricket. This, as I have mentioned, I continued to do for many years.

In the summer I helped local friends who had a market garden in Claygate and some fields in More Lane, Esher. In the first I helped a few times and in the second I helped get in the harvest by driving the tractor. In September '43 Babs took the children to Stobo for a week.

A great deal of new political thinking was going on in the middle of the war years and onwards, a number of new ideas and plans were being discussed. Beveridge was preparing his Report on social services based on a New Zealand scheme. It fell to me to write a note on this in my Union journal. I recall attending a lunch given by the Daily Herald where H.G. Wells launched his plan to write and publish a new Rights of Man document. Nothing came of this directly although there are now statements as to civil rights in the constitution of the European Parliament.

I had a small, active part to play in the consideration given to why the war was being fought and what plans we might make for the world after it was over. An organisation, the Army Bureau of Current Affairs, was the brain child of a man named W.E. Williams. Its purpose was epitomised in Cromwell's dictum, "*An army must know why it fights and love what it knows.*" A study scheme called British Way and Purpose was entrusted to the Army Education Corps. Throughout the services reading, study courses and seminars were organised. Groups of officers and NCOs were sent to civilian tutors to learn how to conduct these discussion groups in their own units as well as to learn more about the subjects to be discussed. I became one of those tutors. A neighbour in Claygate, George Cottrell, was secretary at Morley College in South London. He had a part in the organising of these ABCA tutorials and he invited me to join him. I was attached to the City Literary Institute which, as it happened, was very near my workplace at the Herald in Long Acre. This was the venue for my tutorials. I managed the work adequately, I think, and I received payment for it. My greatest effort had to be made when the officers came from the Royal Electrical and Mechanical Engineers. These REME men all had academic degrees and were all keener and more intelligent than

regimental officers and NCOs. We studied history and politics and aimed at using the Socratic method of instruction in the unit discussions. I am inclined to agree with the opinion expressed that W.E. Williams was very largely responsible for the landslide victory of the Labour Party in the 1945 General Election.

There were heavy falls of snow in December 1943 and we took the opportunity to go tobogganing on the splendid slopes of Box Hill and on the smaller slopes of Telegraph Hill in Claygate. Telegraph Hill gets that name from the fact that on its top stands Semaphore House. This house was one of the 23 such stations between Portsmouth naval dockyard and the Admiralty in London. In Napoleonic times, by means of the semaphore apparatus on the roofs of the houses, messages were passed between London and Portsmouth.

Christmas of that year was spent at home and we went to the pantomime as always. Among Buster's presents was a knife I gave him. He cut himself badly on it and I, rightly, brought on myself Babs' fury.

In the New Year we all travelled to Stobo for a few days with my parents and a little later Babs took the children to stay with Uncle Jim and his family who by that time lived in Luton. Jim and Dink had two daughters; a baby son had died within weeks of birth.

Margot, still not yet five years old, started at Newlands so that we now had all three children, happily and usefully, together at school. As had so many of our family, Margot had a pet name, Bujie. It had arisen from the baby talk used to her by her sister and by it she was known to almost everyone right through her life.

On 6th June my diary notes "Invasion started". For some time before this

(I cannot remember how long) a big signal establishment had been set up on Portsdown behind Portsmouth to provide communication between this country and the Allied armies during the start of the campaign on the European mainland. Morse operators were needed and the only group of telegraphists in the country able to use the morse code were the press men in Fleet Street: the Post Office had long since ceased training morse operators. So members of my union volunteered to man this Portsdown station and Bill Crowley, chief telegraphist at the Herald, was put in charge. The station stayed in use till the Allies moved forward and the communication headquarters were taken over to France, The press telegraphists then returned to their offices in the Street.

In June '44 I have a note that the flying bombs (V1s) attacked. In my diary I referred to them as "pilotless planes". For a couple of weeks life went on busily but by 30 June the attack became so heavy that we decided Babs should take the children with her to stay with my parents at Stobo. So off she went in considerable haste, bag and baggage including the cat and its kittens. The journey was a roundabout one via Guildford and must have been little short of a nightmare. I joined them for a few days later. Jenny and Buster briefly attended Portishead village school. I gather they hated it. What they did love was going with Babs and Bujie over the lovely hill at the back of Stobo to the beach on the Bristol Channel where they played and bathed at a spot called the Loaf. A small pool had been built there for swimming in when the tide ebbed. All three children became very good swimmers.

At home we had been supplied with a Morrison shelter. Earlier in the war households were given Anderson shelters named after the Home Secretary of

that time. These were meant to be sunk into the ground outside the house. We never had one, the children sheltering in the cupboard under the stairs when air raids were in progress. The Morrison was issued later when Herbert Morrison had become Home Secretary. These were big steel tables with stout wire mesh between the legs. Ours was put in the dining room and could accomodate, when necessary, Babs and the children. I never used it and, when at home, obstinately slept in my own bed. On a Sunday morning, alone in the house when the family was in Somerset, I lay in bed listening to the Vis travelling overhead. While one could hear their jet engines all was well (with one) but if the sound suddenly stopped one knew that, fuel being exhausted, the bomb would fall to earth nearby. This happened. I put my head under the bedclothes (for the second time in moments of danger !) and thought, "This is it." The bomb landed about a quarter of a mile away at Hinchley Wood on the house of a friend of ours and his wife and children. All were killed.

This was the time, too, when I was on Kingston Hill during a very heavy attack. As the Germans were driven northwards the launching sites for the "doodle bugs" got further and further away from their targets.

Although perhaps a little early, Babs and the children returned home in September because Jenny, by now ready for secondary education, had been given a place at the Surrey County School for Girls at Guildford. She was thus able to start at her new school at the beginning of the autumn term. Buster and Margot returned to Newlands.

In this September the Home Guard, as I have said, were stood down in surprising haste. My H.G. duties continued for a time as there was de-wiring and other clearing up matters to attend to. There was a farewell parade and

a number of H.G. parties. A 1940 Association was started for members of the Home Guard but it never became active.

The 1944 Christmas we spent with the Eastbourne grandparents. By now they had come to live in Meads Village, which I described earlier. In front of the house Grandpa Sidney had erected a mast and spar and made some bunting flags - he having been a yeoman of signals when in the Navy. He flew the flags on appropriate occasions, the grandchildren helping him. One flag was a red one: he said it was to indicate his membership of the Labour Party. I suspect it annoyed the neighbours, too !

Our home at Number 55 Hare Lane provided plenty of space for my family and, with its fourth bedroom, for guests. Down the years we had a number of people to stay with us. Our next door neighbours, old Mr Gardener and his daughter, May, had a friend, Miss Cartwright - Aunt Daisy to the children - who, during the war, left her London flat and stayed with us.

A workmate I knew in the early days at the Press Association had gone to work for the Newport Argus for some years and then returned to join me at the Herald. While waiting to find accomodation for his family, his daughter Jeanne was demobilised from the W.R.N.S. She could not join her father so she stayed with us for some months.

During the war Babs' relatives in Jersey lived, of course, under the German occupation. Life, I gathered, was not too terrible. The cousin, Harry Paine, was a market gardener and was able to help supply his family from what was, from the German viewpoint, the black market. When liberation of the Channel Islands came, several members of the family in turn paid us visits. They flew over in the daks (Dakota aircraft) supplied by the Americans.

Babs' niece Ethel, by family tradition called Poppet, came with her brother John. John was joining the merchant navy, as so many young Jerseymen do, and stayed with us while being kitted out. Poppet stayed on with us for some time while she worked in London. Later she moved to a flat in town which she shared with a friend who was in show business. On a leave, John met and married this friend. Babs and I attended their very splendid wedding. John wore a sword with his uniform ! Many theatre folk attended and I recollect particularly Harry Roy the band leader.

Babs, ever hospitable, had other people to stay with us from time to time. Later still my parents spent the last years of their lives with us at 55.

On a suggestion of mine, the branch of my union had taken up the idea of arranging courses of lectures on the developments in telegraphy that had taken place since our training days. A new system we called "facsimile" had come into use, which could produce, and transmit, whole pages of print. In conjunction with the new Webb offset device, it became possible to print a whole newspaper without the use of hot metal. This revolutionised the printing process and led to further industrial strife. We older men felt we should be instructed in the science behind these technical changes and so courses at the Northampton Street Polytechnic were arranged, the lecturers being Post Office engineers.

One morning while attending one of these lectures, the building shook with a gigantic explosion. It was the first of the V2s to fall on London. It was towards the end of the war but the date of it has slipped from my memory.

Babs and I had always loved dancing. In our courting days we went dancing in Eastbourne. We danced at Holiday Fellowship evenings. Now, the war being

over or nearly so, we joined a dancing class at Hinchley Wood and polished up our ballroom dancing - slow, slow, quick, quick, slow ! Jeanne, staying with us at that time, came too.

Our dancing teacher taught children, also. Bujie became a pupil and it was found that she was very good. She was and is very small and I recollect seeing her, at a show given by the class, a lone figure on the stage, being the little crippled child who could not, with her fellows, follow the Pied Piper of Hamelin. Such was Bujie's promise as a dancer that her teacher and we thought she might make dancing her career. She was small and turned out (or in - I never grasped the meaning of this technical description). However she did not make a career of dancing. Had she done so she might have followed her cousin, my cousin Dorothy's daughter Shirley. Shirley attended the Royal Ballet school, joined the Ballet Rambert and later the Bluebell troupe in Paris. It was while she was in Paris that one poor Bluebell was murdered. Shirley became head of a dancing school in London.

Buster became a Cub Scout and led the pack. Then he went up to the Scouts and, while at their summer camp in Jersey one year, was able to visit his relatives there. He took a normal interest in football and cricket. He was, for a while, a strong boxer but, meeting a friend in the finals of a competition, so disliked hitting him that, there and then, he gave up boxing.

Jenny took no interest at all in any sport. She walked strongly and swam beautifully. At school the girls belonged to that part of the Girl Guide movement called Sea Rangers. Jenny was an enthusiastic member. She spent one holiday in the Foudroyant, a ship of Nelson's time, moored in Portsmouth harbour and used for courses by various youth organisations. I recollect an

occasion when the Sea Rangers were to collect a new rowing gig from Kingston and take it up the river Wey to Guildford. The party stayed overnight at Weybridge and here Jenny joined them. Babs and I went to see them set off next morning. Very smart, white topped caps, precise drill, they were disgusted when I called after them, "Bring us back a parrot." We went along to watch the gig shoot the Wey Bridge. Time went by: no boat. We heard that in the maze of channels at Weybridge and Shepperton the girls had chosen the wrong one and rowed a mile or two up the Thames before realising the mistake. After that they had to negotiate the many locks on the Wey to Guildford and also to be wolf-whistled by the anglers on the river banks !

At school Jenny started her lifelong love of choral music, singing in music festivals and school productions of opera, including Gluck's "Orpheus".

CHAPTER FOURTEEN

In the time at the end of the war and in the period up to the General Election of 1945 the Claygate Branch of the Labour Party had been formed and I joined it. A very short while after I became a member a meeting was called at Walton-on-Thames to organise an Esher Constituency party. A dominant figure at it was Fred Hughes who I had met when I was my union's delegate to the Professional Workers Federation. When my name was put forward for the position of chairman, he, knowing my background, supported my nomination strongly and so I became chairman of the Esher Constituency Labour Party and remained so for 18 years.

Local government in this neighbourhood in those days was on the basis of a number of wards including Oxshott, Cobham, Esher, the Moleseys, the Dittons and Claygate making up an Urban District. With the Urban District of Walton and Weybridge, which included Hersham, the two Districts made up the Parliamentary Division of Esher.

In my view chairmanship can take one of two forms. In the first the chairman confines himself to the conduct of meetings, having strict regard for order and procedure. In the second, while still making himself responsible for conducting meetings, he takes on the leadership of his organisation. I put myself in the second category: chairmanship of the party involved carrying out many political tasks. The monthly executive and full meetings of the Esher C.L.P. were held in the Friends Meeting House, Esher, as they are to this day. It fell to me to organise the fund-raising small lottery scheme. At one time the party distributed a syndicated monthly newspaper called the Clarion. Page one of it was the Esher page: I edited it

and made it up, saw to the printing and distribution. I took the chair at many public meetings, small and large. The one I liked least was one at King George's Hall, Esher, where Robert Maxwell, the publisher who then lived in Esher, was the speaker. The most lively and crowded meeting I chaired was one in the Playhouse, Walton, where Lord George Brown was the principal speaker.

I was involved in all the elections, both local and parliamentary, first as chairman and later - for many years - as agent to the candidates. On one occasion, when Professor Scorer was our parliamentary candidate, my daughter Margot acted as agent but this, of course, meant my giving her a certain amount of help and support.

Labour Party supporters in Claygate are few but the tiny ward party steadily did its political duty right down the years. A little joke made recently was that at a political demonstration Esher had only a flag because there were not enough members to make up the necessary two to carry a banner ! Labour in this division gets its strongest support in West Molesey. At one time the ward there was represented by three councillors and had sufficient numbers to justify hiring, every year, a train to take a party on a trip to the seaside. At the moment we fall short of this.

The deputy chairman of Esher Constituency Labour Party was, for many years, Paul Vanson. On one occasion he stood as parliamentary candidate. After my period as chairman I had little to do with him although we never lost touch completely. Fairly recently, however, I have been associated with him in a quite different activity.

One of the greatest pleasures of my political activities in the area is the very great number of friends it has brought me.

Some years ago, the boundaries of the area of local government and of parliamentary representation were redrawn. The Walton and Weybridge wards of the old parliamentary division were moved to the Chertsey constituency. Walton and Hersham, without Weybridge, were left to join with the rest of the old division to form the Borough of Elmbridge. The name Elmbridge is that of the Hundred of this area as it appears in the Domesday Book. Elmbridge then built itself a fine new town hall at Walton-on-Thames and elected itself a mayor. This arrangement left the Esher parliamentary division little more than a rump. Later the boundaries were redrawn yet again. Esher was extended to include Horsley, which is at least 12 miles away with stretches of open country between it and Esher. This may have produced a number of voters more nearly the national average but, it seems to me, to tell strongly against any feeling of community when it comes to arranging local government.

Starting in 1944 our family holidays fell into a clear pattern. In April of that year Uncle Jim was good enough to have Bujie to stay with him and his family. Jim was now a surveyor and was responsible for all the roads in South Bedfordshire under the Bedfordshire County Council. Years later the M1 motorway was built through his area and added greatly to his work.

While Bujie was with the family in Luton, Babs and I and the two elder children went off to Derwentbank for two weeks. As always we explored the district and thoroughly enjoyed the mountains. In the evenings we danced, debated, played games and sang. In this and many other holidays with the Holiday Fellowship I acted as Host. My duty was to take a leading part in the communal life of the guests. My holiday expenses were franked but not

those of my family.

In 1945 during the Easter school holidays we went for the first time to the Co-operative Holidays Association guest house at Hindhead. The C.H.A. now called Countrywide Holidays Association to indicate that there is no connection with the Co-operative Movement, is a sister organisation to the H.F. It was started by the same group of people, run on exactly the same lines but was based in Manchester.

The Hindhead Easter holiday became for us an annual fixture for a number of years. Often one or more of our youngsters' friends came with us. We met people who became our firm friends - in one or two instances for life - and by arrangement we and they spent the same week together many times. Sometimes the week would spill over into the school term time and Jenny and her schoolfriend - if with us - would travel to school in Guildford from Hindhead. We all got to know well this part of Surrey by walking over it.

Jenny has described those holidays and those years as halcyon days. As well as close girl friends, she had a series of boy friends. All these young people were in and out of our home at 55. The first of the boys, Derek, was very musical. If he missed the train at Claygate station he would rush in to 55, play the piano and sing for a while before catching a later train. His successor, Gordon, came to the Lakes with us on one holiday and was one of the first of my morris men. His successor, Tim, Jenny later married.

Our holiday visits to Hindhead at Eastertide continued uninterruptedly till 1954. I went alone to the Nant Gwynant in Snowdonia in the June of '45, to Langdale in the Lake District in '46, back to Snowdonia in '47, to Coniston in '48, to Derwentbank in '49, with Jenny, Gordon and Buster to

Derwentbank in '50, with Buster to Derwentbank in '51, with our friends Margot Nichols and Dorothy Hull, who we met at Hindhead, to Alltshellach in '52. On that holiday I did my second traverse of the Chancellor's Walk. With those same friends and with Bujie, now old enough to undertake these strenuous walking holidays, we went to Derwentbank in '53. The following year I went with Margot, Dorothy and George Lawrence, a close friend, to Snowdonia staying at the H.F. guest house at Conway.

In September 1947 Babs and I and the children went back to the reopened Milford-on-Sea guest house. In August the following year we all went to the Kessingland H.F. centre in Suffolk. This holiday was notable in several ways. The centre was hutted and tented and was alongside the seashore. The party numbered 150 making my job as host extremely strenuous. Games of rounders and quick swims in the sea were continuous. Local fishermen landed their catch and immediately cooked it, with potatoes, in a hut near the beach. People came from all around to eat, there and then, the delicious meal.

In September 1949 we went, en famille, to the Crowlink H.F. centre - despite the fact that it is situated only a few miles from the grandparents' home in Meads. The centre is a very cleverly converted Sussex barn and farm buildings on the Downs near East Dean, just west of Eastbourne. My most vivid recollection of this holiday is spending hours with Buster flying his kites. We were all to visit and stay at Crowlink many times.

There had been in Claygate before the 1939 war a folk dance club affiliated to the English Folk Dance and Song Society. After the war some of its members came together to join an evening institute class at Hinchley

Wood. Babs was invited to join them. She did. Occasionally I would drive over to fetch her after the class. Another husband called for his wife, too, and he and I became acquainted. In due course we were told, "Don't just wait: join in." We did. In this way Babs and I embarked on the pastime that became so much part of our lives from then on and George Lawrence became quite my closest friend for the few years till his untimely death.

We joined the folk dance class and arranged to have it moved to the school in Claygate. We learned more of the dances and attended dances round and about Surrey. At about this time a famous photograph was published showing Princess Elizabeth and Prince Philip square dancing while on a visit to Canada. This picture started a great surge of interest in this form of folk dancing and we found ourselves caught up in the thick of it.

As well as enjoying learning and performing the dances, reading about the lore and history behind them, I found myself taking a big part in the organisation of folk dances in our part of Surrey. I became chairman of the Claygate group and George Lawrence its secretary. We had then two small halls in Claygate. One was the Lantern Hall which was leased to NAAFI for use as a clubroom for its employees at the Ruxley Towers office. NAAFI allowed the use of this hall by local organisations - among others by the Home Guard for dances and by the folk dancers. The other hall was originally the skittle alley behind the Foley Arms. During the war the Home Guard had use of it for training. The folk dancers had the use of it, too.

Additionally during the summer we arranged dances out of doors - on Hare Lane Green, on Claygate Recreation ground and, once, in Claremont Park. We went further afield occasionally to Oxshott and to Weybridge Cricket Green.

In folk dancing the caller has tasks beyond those of a master of

ceremonies. He has to describe the dances and during their performance he calls the figures and prompts the less experienced dancers. As time went on, I found myself a caller.

I and other members of the Claygate group, especially George Lawrence, became involved in the local organisation of the E.F.D.S.S. and got to know many of its leading figures. It fell to me to move our separation from the East Surrey District and set up our own District to be called Kingston/Thames Valley. This arrangement continues to the present time.

In the early Fifties the Director of the E.F.D.S.S., Douglas Kennedy, was very ill and the Society sought his successor. I was short-listed for the post but was not appointed. Mr Kennedy did retire and, happily, was restored to health. Very late in life and a widower, he remarried and is alive and well to this day. When he and I were associated he invited me to take part in the festival at the Albert Hall in Kensington. This festival takes place every year and draws folk dancers and spectators from all over the world. A year or two later I got myself a place in the company again after being auditioned for it.

Folk dancing and its organisation became one of the major interests of my life. I arranged and called at numerous dances. Occasionally I was invited to give talks on the subject at schools and clubs. Some years ago the Claygate group, including Babs and Jenny, took part in a Three Towns Pageant at Hampton Court. The folk dancers crowded a medieval street, dancing and pelting with cabbage leaves an actor in the stocks. At each performance an actress was dipped into the Long Water in a ducking stool. The mounted police from Imber Court, the police training college nearby, filled the roles of knights (*"And Sir Gervaise jousted best of all."* Whereupon he was

pelted with bottle tops representing money). The three towns of the title were Kingston, Richmond and Twickenham.

George Lawrence became the folk dancers' representative in an association set up to build a Claygate village hall. He became prime mover in it and, at length, the present village hall got itself built.

During the time of our Hare Lane Green dancing on summer evenings we also danced at the coronation celebrations and as part of the annual Claygate Flower Show programmes.

It was at this time, too, that the Smith family and the Jones family came together. Tim Jones had become keen on Highland dancing while at school at Marlborough. He wished to continue to dance when at home and got into touch with me - and hence with Jenny, his future wife.

Tim's father, Norman Jones, was at that time president of Claygate Flower Show. He suggested to me that a folk dance demonstration might be included in the Show programme. By this time I had seen morris dancing. I tried to arrange for a team of morris men to dance at the flower show. I failed. So, I thought, I will persuade half a dozen men to learn sufficient for a short demonstration and show the morris ourselves. So successful was this small show that we called a meeting at the Foley Hall in the following September. A whole band of men turned up, some local, some from the area round about. Three or four of them had had earlier experience in dancing the morris and became our teachers. This meeting was the beginning of what became the Thames Valley Morris Men.

On three occasions I have been a member of a party representing the English Folk Dance and Song Society. The first time was to Carmarthen in South Wales, the second time to Carraroe in Galway, Eire, and the third to

Hellecom near Arnhem in Holland.

Returning from Hellecom I had an interesting experience. I was alone and left the train at Rotterdam at the wrong station, due, I suppose, to lack of knowledge of the language. The rail authorities, very concerned that I should not miss the boat at the Hook of Holland, were making arrangements to run me and a lady in the same plight, to the Hook by special train. It was learned, however, that the Blue Train from Athens had been held up for some hours by a mishap somewhere in middle Europe. It could, therefore, be stopped specially at Rotterdam. Arriving at the Hook (on our own Blue Train !) the lady and I tore along the quay to board the boat for Harwich which had been kept waiting for us !

The trip to Carraroe was interesting in that it is in the Gaeltacht (that part of Ireland where Erse is still the first language). We spent the time very closely in touch with Celtic singing and dancing. We attended clubs in Galway where the local people sang the rebel songs and apologised to the English for doing so. I found myself, however, very much in sympathy with the feelings of the Irish. The draught Guinness stout we drank in Galway is vastly better than can be bought in England.

The E.F.D.S.S. have a guest house in the Quantock Hills, the 15th century Halsway Manor. Here I have spent a number of weekends with morris men and, fairly recently, a weeks holiday with Babs and our folk dance friends. A.E. Matthews, the Director of the Society, was with us on this occasion.

There came a time fairly recently when, though still dancing with great enthusiasm, another chairman took over the leading role in our local folk dance group and then my friends here made me president of the Claygate group - a rather grand title for so tiny an organisation !

CHAPTER FIFTEEN

At this point in my story I will give myself the pleasure of writing about the morris.

I have described how the club called the Thames Valley Morris Men came into existence in September 1952. From that moment my life became more and more bound up with the club's activities: it has given me great pleasure for over 30 years.

From the start, and for a great many years, I was bagman (secretary) of the club. There was a two year gap in that period when I took my turn as Squire of the team. I cannot say that the experiences I have had with the club are too numerous to mention because I have, in fact, recorded them in detail in the club's Log Book. The Log covering the first 25 years is in a bound volume.

The Thames Valley Morris Men have danced at parties and fetes, have toured locally and in Scotland, in Yorkshire, in Pembrokeshire, in the Border country, in the West country, on Arran, in Ireland, in Germany and in France.

The most important day in the T.V.M.M. calendar is Boxing Day. For many years we have turned out on that day to show the morris outside each of the five public houses in Claygate. In our early years the crowds were small: nowadays they number thousands. We have got ourselves into guide books as being among such notable folk ceremonies as the Padstow May Day 'Oss, the Helston Furry and the Abbots Bromley Horn Dance.

On two occasions we have danced in the Albert Hall festival.

A tradition we have revived is dancing the morris in Kingston-upon-Thames

churchyard at Hock Tide. Hock Tide falls on the second Tuesday after Easter (we have moved it to the nearest Saturday !) and was, it is variously said, a labour hiring custom or a celebration of a victory over the Danes in the year 800. Perhaps it is both and possibly something else besides. Entries in the Kingston parish churchwardens accounts of 1507 mention payments to the morris dancers for food, drink and costume and are among the earliest known writings directly on the subject of the morris.

T.V.M.M. are affiliated to the Morris Ring of England and have taken a full part in its activities. The Ring organises meetings of morris men at various places up and down the country about three times a year. The pattern of these events is assembly on Friday night for dancing and beer, division into groups for dancing tours around the neighbourhood on Saturday, followed by a mass display in the late afternoon and a formal "feast" in the evening. There is usually a church service on Sunday followed by a massed display again before leaving for home. Our first Ring meeting was at Coventry and later notable ones were at Thaxted, Birmingham, Ludlow and Minehead. These we attended and once, years ago, organised a one-day Ring meeting at Kingston-upon-Thames. The Ring undertakes the collection of dances and music and has the care of a very considerable quantity of archival material.

Many years ago T.V.M.M. attended a morris gathering at Cecil Sharp House (the headquarters in London of the English Folk Dance and Song Society) where Vaughan Williams the composer was present. He was then President of the E.F.D.S.S. and patron of the Morris Ring.

One year we attended the Padstow May Day celebrations. Several times we took part in the well-dressing ceremonies at Worksworth in Derbyshire. On two occasions we attended and recorded the Ashen Faggot ceremony at Curry

Rivel and the Wassailing at Drayton, both of which occur on old New Year's Day, the 5th January.

There was an occasion when, on tour in Sussex, the Fool of the side was inveigled by roisterers into their parties in country houses nearby: he was not found till the afternoon of the next day !

Several times we have provided the morris dancing in local dramatic shows, notably at a Thames Ditton production of "The Knight of the Burning Pestle", a Beaumont and Fletcher drama in which the hero is a morris man.

Many other morris recollections come to me. There was a night when, returning to our very beautiful campsite at Ardvorlich on Lochearnside, we drove across Rannoch Moor from Glencoe in brilliant moonlight. Deer leapt from the road before our rather furious passage, we having had a certain amount of drink taken.

There were two or three other occasions when we were invited to show the morris at a stately home at Box in Somerset when its fine gardens were open to the public. It was also a girls' school. After the dancing the morris men disappeared with the young ladies leaving me drinking tea with the headmistress.

As well as our local tours on Saturdays we went on weekend tours of our own to Suffolk, Sussex, Dorset and Somerset. Indeed we still do. For many years T.V.M.M. have taken their members and families for a camping holiday in the first week in August. A list of these holidays include Devon, Pembrokeshire, Arran, the Yorkshire Dales, the Cheviots near Yetholm and Ardvorlich. A very notable week was spent in Kanturk in County Cork, Eire. Kanturk is the anglicised form of a Gaelic word meaning the hill of the wild boar. Our welcome by the townspeople of Kanturk was remarkable. They gave

several parties for us, arranged a shinty match for us to watch, made us free of the town park and an empty house for our camping. They referred to us, in some publicity, as visitors from overseas, not as English visitors. They were much concerned with the troubles in Ulster but, although while we were there they had a public meeting about Northern Ireland, never once mentioned the subject to us.

I will quote from the Log my description of the first morris holiday we spent in the Cheviot hills:

"AUGUST WEEK. Morris holiday in Roxburghshire, camping at Attonburn. These holidays are always remarkable. The campsite is a fine one in a valley three miles from Town Yetholm. There were about 30 of us including youngsters. Every tour was successful and included Selkirk, Jedburgh, Sea Houses, Wooller and places round about. The stop at Bamburgh with the castle as backdrop comes back to mind. We visited Holy Island and some of us boated to the Farne Islands. Rothbury and Kelso we liked specially well and returned there. We drove to Wallington, the home of the Trevillians where we morrised and later, at tea, had Jack Armstrong, the Duke of Northumberland's piper, play the Northumbrian pipes for us. On the off day a big party of us traversed the last seven miles of the Penine Way starting at the Hen Hole, where John bathed. These hills are magnificent, as was the weather. Route finding was a little less than good.

On Saturday our fellow-villagers-of-a-week had a festival. We joined in with the morris. Then we had our traditional dinner party at the hotel. After this we attended the village dance and, by golly, what a dance ! We played our full part in this extremely rowdy affair. Later as guests of the licencee we had a party behind drawn curtains far into the night. And what a

night ! The Storm rose just as we returned to the tents. The tempest raged all (the rest of) the night. It finally blew to shreds the Squire's tent (Mine - CDS). Other tents were damaged and all the gear was soaked. Several of us flung our belongings into cars and, negotiating a ten foot wide torrent that had been all week a negligible trickle, departed for home. The squire, for one, had no clothes to wear till some garments dried out well down the M1. Malcolm, who had arranged to be in a condition not to notice discomfort, was seen to emerge at 11am and empty his sleeping bag of water ! Some of the party stayed on a day or two but the Storm brought morris holiday 1970 to a spectacular end."

Further Log quotations relate to the first of T.V.M.M.'s several journeys to Krov/Moselle in West Germany:

"JULY 1972. The Krov/Moselle weekend. Mr and Mrs Furness of Ewell had seen us dancing on Boxing Day. They arranged for an invitation to T.V.M.M. to attend the 19th annual 'folk costume wearing' festival in the small Moselle town of Krov. This festival is the occasion of the town's wine tasting and wine selling. The whole town is *en fete*, the streets are decorated with banners and branches of oak trees. The local 'plonk', Krover Nachtarch, flows through the town fountain. About sixty German clubs attended and about twelve foreign groups including Dutch, Belgian, Swiss, Spanish, Hungarian, Luxemburgers and - the English. We found on arrival that the English morris was this year's feature. Thousands of wine glasses and goblets had a picture of a morris man on them. We headed the mile-long procession and danced, alone, at the opening reception. It happened, also, that this year's 'Protector' was an Englishman (although with a French

sounding name) Geoffrey de Freitas.

The festival started formally on Saturday with the arrival of the Protector. This was the first time we morrised before a big crowd in the town.

The central feature of the festival came later. All the teams taking part performed one after another on a great raft moored in the river Moselle. Teams were ferried to and from it in barges. We were less than satisfied with our performance on the raft. The high point of the show was the arrival of Mosella and her maidens in an illuminated floating 'shell'. The maidens danced in classical style. It being now dusk, at a signal, the whole opposite, steep-sided Moselle hillside burst into red fire and thousands of coloured lights floated down the river. The whole wonderful spectacle was watched by thousands of people.

Afterwards we morrised in the streets and drank. Our last dance, as I hazily recall, was Lads a Buncham where I vainly tried to strike one of the several sticks held by my partner while my opposite managed the stick-hitting perfectly although flat on his back. Bill and I found putting a morris team and their wives to bed an hilarious business.

Sunday morning church did not appear to happen, so we listened to band music being played very loudly and then, gently, took a small hair of the dog.

The afternoon saw this enormous procession with the English morris just after the leading band. Our processing to the tune of the Winster Processional and others and the contact we had with the crowd through the antics of the Goat and the Fool were a great success. There followed another barge performance where, we think, our contribution was more successful.

Later still we joined the Swiss for dancing and Alpine horn blowing in a wine cellar. Then we had one of our rather high toned feasts and finished with a sort of ceillidh in a cellar where a few local drinkers joined us.

Next day we none of us allowed sufficient time for the drive back to the Channel and we scrambled back to various ports for last boats home. My party - Francis, Mervyn and Ann - finished with two beers and four straws (owing to currency difficulties) in Calais.

Mr and Mrs Furness and party spent the weekend in Krov and we joined them from time to time."

"JULY 1978. Fears that the 1978 visit to Krov/Moselle would be less successful than the one in 1972 were unfounded. A party of 12 in a mini-bus and 4 in Peter's Rover car journeyed to this beautiful little town in the valley of the Mosel, decorated with banners and oak branches and set in hundreds of acres of vineyards. Here we danced and sang through a grand weekend.

The weather was better than in '72. It was a beautiful evening when the dozen or more national teams gave performances on the 'swimming Mosel Board' or raft moored in the river. At dusk the great red flares on the hillside and the hundreds of lights floating down the stream made a splendid spectacle. Our morris contribution, this time, was also splendid. (I watched from the bank - CDS.)

We danced round the village during our stay and, in the enormous procession on the Sunday, played a specially useful part. At this point the car party left for home. The Sunday shows were, this year, in two parts - one on the raft and the other in the gigantic Wienbrunnen tent. We performed

in the tent.

On Saturday evening we were part of a boisterous international party in the cellar of Mr Wien Stein. We played and danced and sang with the Germans, the Swiss and the Swedes into the small hours. On Sunday, after an elaborate evening meal at Der Echternacher Hof, we moved to another wine cellar for singing and playing - to the apparent delight of other customers. We laid to rest the belief that the English only know 'Rule, Britannia' for, with Phil Williams' excellent fiddling, we sang and played without repeating ourselves till about 3 am. At close of play the score was 24 bottles, most of the wine being given us by listening bystanders.

On Saturday afternoon we visited Gerde Kleine, one of the biggest growers in Krov and host to Graeme and Linda, where we learned much about the growing of grapes and the drinking of the product. The result of this is that we became discriminating wine sippers - not your vast plonk swillers of 1972. Gerde gave us a taste of what he described as the best wine he had ever made: the wonderful taste baffles description.

On Monday we drove smartly across Europe to Ostend to catch an early Channel ferry only to find we were not booked on it. The next vessel could not accommodate our tall load so we travelled with the juggernauts on the next. Four hours wait, a rough crossing and some cases of seasickness did little to mar the enjoyment of a wonderful weekend.

Mr and Mrs Furness of Ewell were the friends who secured our invitation to Krov in '72 and '76 and had planned to be with us again. About a month before our journey John Furness died suddenly in his garden. We all grieve with Mrs Furness in her loss."

The Swedes mentioned in that account took note of our English address. They wrote to us a year or two later and I was able to arrange a week's stay for the Master Olofsgardens Folkdanslag of Stockholm. At this time Bujie and her husband Rob were running their self-catering holiday cottages in the Cotswolds and here the Swedes were accommodated. A clubmate, Tim Cawdron, and I had a splendid week conducting them round the West Country. I had arranged for the Swedes to show their fine national dances, dressed in their picturesque costumes, at Sudeley Castle, Gloucester Cathedral, Stratford and other places. I had other morris teams join us from time to time and, on the last evening of their stay, arranged a folk dance at Aldsworth. The weather was glorious and the week was a great success.

The borough of Elmbridge is twinned (*jumelage de villes*) with Reuil-Malmaison, a suburb of Paris. This *jumelage* was inspired by Councillor Vanson. Paul Vanson was deputy chairman of Esher Constituency Labour Party when I was chairman. Although born in England and therefore an Englishman, one of Paul's parents was French and he spent his schooldays in Reuil-Malmaison. He has a French accent. Reuil held, in 1974, a folklore festival and at Paul's prompting T.V.M.M. were invited to it. We went and enjoyed lavish hospitality. We learned, much to our surprise, that the various national teams dancing at the festival were in competition. We won the very handsome cup ! We have exchanged visits several times since with Reuil-Malmaison and when folk dancers are members of the twinning parties T.V.M.M. help with private accommodation and also arrange folk dance parties. These parties tend to be rather noisy affairs. For some years I served on the Twinning Guild Committee thus being, once again, associated with my friend, Paul Vanson, its chairman.

CHAPTER SIXTEEN

Morris dancing, from its origins in primitive society, then through its attachment to the medieval plays and then through the period when it was an almost universal pastime, has, in its modern revival added to itself a strong element of show business. The men, of course, have always danced mainly for their own enjoyment, and partly for the amusement of their neighbours and, nowadays, additionally, they accept engagements to perform commercially for handsome fees. T.V.M.M. took part in a series of so-called medieval banquets at the Burford Bridge Hotel with a play involving a lord and a lady, courtiers, jesters, dancers and singers. In recent years we have provided the English part of folk items at functions at some of the great hotels in London's West End. The hotels include the Hilton, the Grosvenor House and similar plush establishments. We know this is taking folk dancing out of its own setting but feel that it is an acceptable development.

Some years ago T.V.M.M. were engaged by the Tourist Board of Jersey to go to the island for a week and, every evening, join with a German and French group in a performance in the Opera House in St Helier. We were freely accommodated in a very pleasant hotel. We went round the island, dancing and sight seeing. Our shows on stage were well received. The week was a little spoiled by bad weather. I had the opportunity to call on our relatives.

In 1976 Thames Television made a film showing several aspects of life in Kingston-upon-Thames its title being 'A Town Called Kingston'. T.V.M.M. were shown dancing in the parish churchyard as we do at Hocktide. It fell to me to be interviewed by the presenter, Monty Modlyn, and I managed to out-talk that voluble character.

For a year or two T.V.M.M. had a boys' team. I had been asked to show the morris to the boys in the Claygate village school so that they could perform at their fete. The girls provided the music on their recorders and the little show was a great success. Some of the boys continued dancing, the numbers having been made up to nine. Two of the dancers were my grandsons, Malcolm and Nigel, and two were the sons of my former next door neighbour, John Cole, lately of the Observer and now of the B.B.C. The boys' team came to an end because its members grew in height at different rates: Donald was nearly 6 feet tall when Michael was about half that !

The members of the Thames Valley Morris Men have become, down the years, close friends and join together to do many things other than folk dancing. One man, a bank manager, has arranged finance for several business ventures by his clubmates; an accountant has helped in money matters; a P.O. engineer changed telephone jacks at the exchange for a clubmate who was moving house; I had help in repairing a chimney and, by another morris man, in erecting a fence; occasionally I have been able to help in various matters including, once, a marital problem. Several men play hockey and rugby together, others play squash and two of them belong to a flying club. One spent a season jumping from aeroplanes in parachutes ! Some of the men belong to drama groups and dance bands. Once several of the men planned to sail a newly built catamaran to Cherbourg. Unfortunately and amusingly, it sank at its Southampton moorings and the time had to be spent in salvage and repair.

Our chief common interest, apart from the morris, is walking and climbing. Twice a year a biggish party go for a Sunday walk - some time ago it was a walk from Firle Beacon to Eastbourne over the South Downs: more recently it

has been over the Surrey Commons at Frensham.

On one notable weekend a party of three of us made the traverse of the Lairig Ghru. It was the Easter of 1971. Francis, Mervyn and I drove to Blair Athol in the Cairngorms, parked the car there and took train to Aviemore. Francis' pack weighed 80 pounds, Mervyn's 50 and mine 30. An absurd start to our walk was, before we left the road, to push a broken down motor car for some distance ! Then we walked the 10 miles, all uphill, to the top of the Lairig Ghru pass which is 3,000 feet high. Here we camped. We were above the snowline and the sound of rock falls and the tinkle of running water was frozen into silence when the sun went down. There was a full moon that night and a clear sky: the scene was magnificent. Next morning we forced our feet into our frozen boots and danced a jig to soften them up. Francis and Mervyn discussed, privately, whether or not the old man should continue the walk. Nothing was said about that and on we went for the next 15 miles to the Falls of Tarf, the second night's camp. On the third day we walked the 12 miles down Glen Tilt, glimpsing the deer from time to time but never seeing the wild cats said to still live in that glen. Arriving back at Blair Athol we drank the rest of the brandy, picked up the car and drove home.

Friends had warned us against making this journey at that time of the year. The following Christmas time a party was lost on the Lairig Ghru and several youngsters died at a spot only a few yards from our campsite. However, during our walk the weather was perfect. I was 67 years of age. A few years later Francis took another party over the Lairig Ghru but on that occasion I was in the support party and drove up Glen Tilt in John's Land Rover.

An interesting little incident occurred during the early days of T.V.M.M. We were invited to show the morris at a big banquet in Wandsworth Town Hall where a trade union, the Union of Shop, Distributive and Allied Workers, were entertaining a group of Russian visitors. Our squire (leader) of that time, Dr Penton, was able to make a speech in Russian to the visitors about morris dancing.

Arising out of a London Morris Ring meeting, men from some of the London clubs decided to keep in being what had been an ad hoc committee and to call it the Morris Clubs of London. Apart from being the means of the exchange of information, this M.C.L. has arranged morris dancing every Wednesday summer evening in Deans Yard, Westminster, and at other places in London visited by tourists. Its member clubs have taken part in the Lord Mayor's Show. M.C.L. organised, as part of the Queen's Jubilee celebration in 1977, a marathon morris dance from London to Norwich. This repeated and commemorated the feat accomplished by Will Kempe, the Shakespearean actor, in 1599. He danced for nine days, spread over thirty days, the 125 miles between the two cities and described it in a broadsheet, the Nine Dales Wonder. The modern morris men covered the distance in four days, groups of men from twentyfive clubs dancing five miles.

In May 1983 the Morris Ring called on T.V.M.M. to organise a celebration of the birth of Clive Carey, musician and folk-lorist. It fell to my club because the vicar of Holy Trinity Church, Claygate at that time was the Rev. Adrian Carey. My friend, the Rev. Adrian was the nephew of Clive Carey whose remains lie in our churchyard. The celebration consisted of day-long dancing and singing, and was attended by many members of the Carey family, one of whom made a notably fine speech on his uncle's life and work. Many prominent

members of the Morris Ring and of the English Folk Dance and Song Society also attended.

T.V.M.M. meet and practise weekly at the Foley Arms, Claygate. Some years ago a group of young men decided they would like to learn the morris and join our club. I, therefore, started, with help from a friend and his music, a practise night for newcomers. This continues to the present time and a great many men join us, some to go on to the senior side and some drop out. Members of other clubs look in occasionally for instruction. At one point, a group of men, all novices, sought our help when starting a new club in Ewell.

For about 10 years I had been delegate to the Morris Clubs of London, the latter part of the time its chairman. When I stood down from this position the representatives of the clubs were good enough to give me an inscribed tankard.

A few years ago I saw a film taken of my morris men in action. I was among them. I saw my performance and knew that my extremely good natured clubmates had let me dance with them for too long. I ceremonially danced myself out the following Boxing Day when some apprentices were dancing themselves in with their solo jigs. I occasionally shuffle through a dance in private and the men then announce me as "the oldest morris dancer in the world !"

Nowadays, no longer able to dance, I enjoy giving instruction to younger men and helping with the organisation of T.V.M.M.

CHAPTER SEVENTEEN

I will take up my story by writing about our children. Jenny's schooling continued happily. She has a gift for friendship and made close friends among her form mates: she has kept in touch with some of them down the years. In her examinations she got nine passes at 'O' level and two at 'A' level. She had early made up her mind to nurse. Our doctor, Dr Hilda Page, belonged to University College Hospital and at her suggestion Jenny joined that hospital when she was eighteen years of age. During her late teens she became closer to Tim Jones and they became engaged to be married.

Tim is the second of the four sons of Mr and Mrs Jones. Mr Norman Jones is (and I use the phrase again) a colourful character. He was the third generation head of the paper manufacturing firm of Samuel Jones. It is said that the original Samuel started the business by making fly papers in a shed in Camberwell. The firm's trade mark is a Camberwell Beauty butterfly.

Norman Jones lived in the White House, Claygate, with its ten acres of market and flower garden. The property is now entirely built over. He was in the Royal Naval Volunteer Reserve and during the war commanded a fleet of minesweepers. He owned an ocean racing yacht. He served for some years as a local councillor. Mr Jones' great passion, though, is flying. He owned many Tiger Moth small aircraft and had interests in Fair Oaks, Croydon, Reigate and Rochester airfields. He was a leading figure in the Tiger Club. At home he was very much the martinet and Tim found it very hard to get on with him.

Tim spent a great deal of time in our house. One day a workman at the White House said to Tim, "You are the adopted one." Indeed he was and this is how he heard of the fact. He was shattered and rushed off to Jenny who

was then at the hospital. I think this experience throws light on later events. Tim suffers greatly from asthma.

Norman and Mrs Jones were quite content with Tim's choice of a wife, although the Jones and Smiths move in different social circles. They were very generous at the time of the young people's wedding. Later on, however, Norman sought my opinion about a legal difficulty he was having and, because I could not give him the counsel he wanted, he reported me to the Lord Chancellor. Very late in life, Norman and Mrs Jones parted. Norman left Claygate and set up a new home. His new wife has given him three children.

As soon as Jenny heard she had passed her State Registered Nurse examinations she resigned and she and Tim fixed their wedding day. Tim worked for an agricultural engineer at Ripley and they were able to buy a small house at Woking.

At about this time Norman Jones bought an 80 acre farm on the outskirts of Claygate. On it he was able to have a grass runway on which to land his aircraft when he flew to Claygate. He built a house on the farm and persuaded Tim to bring his family and become manager of the farm and the market garden business. This Tim did and lived at Elm Farm with Jenny and their three children, Helen, Malcolm and Nigel, for nearly seventeen years.

Buster, arriving at secondary school age, went to Hinchley Wood Secondary Modern school. Here he spent four rather odd years, learning little more than when he started. Quiet and well behaved he seems not to have been noticed at all. He passed no examinations. This was not because of lack of intelligence as his later career was to prove. He and I were quite especially close. For example, I recollect doing his early morning paper

round for him when the weather was severe. We went fell walking every year and, in the weeks before such holidays, we got up early and did training walks round the common. One of Buster's playmates was Terry Jones who later was one of the authors of and actors in Monty Python's Flying Circus and who also broadcasts in a book programme on television.

Towards the end of his schooldays Buster got to know the tenant farmer at Barwell Court: I cannot recall how this came about. Buster then became quite absorbed in farming. He even took part, while still a schoolboy, in the early morning milking which involved cycling up to the farm at 5 am. He left school and worked full time at the farm. By the time he was due to do his National Service at age 17 he was an all-round farmer.

During this time Buster contracted the rare disease of ringworm, caught, presumably, from the cattle. He went to University College Hospital for treatment where, of course, his sister was a nurse. I recollect, too, another extremely rare occurrence on the farm: a cow died of anthrax and the carcass had to be burned immediately.

We planned for Buster to go on a course at Merrist Wood farm institute when he had done his National Service. In order to do this as early as possible Buster decided not to wait till he was 18 years of age but to join the army as a regular soldier at age 17 with an option to leave the service at the end of three years. I cannot now recall why Buster chose to join the Royal Electrical and Mechanical Engineers. The squire of my morris club at that time was Dr Penton, head of the War Office Psychology Department. He spoke to high army authorities with a view to helping Buster into his regiment. Truth to tell, I do not think this made any difference to Buster's career, one way or the other. Dr Penton had sold his N-type 6-cylinder MG

car to Buster who, having been driving farm vehicles for years, had no trouble in passing his driving test early before going into R.E.M.E.. Babs and I had set our faces against Buster having a motorcycle when he might have done on his 16th birthday. This had a bitter irony.

Buster got on well in the army. He received from R.E.M.E. training that made him a highly qualified motor engineer. He drove all types of vehicles from motor cycles to tanks and their transporters. He spent many months in Herford in West Germany and it was from there that his unit was kitted out with tropical gear and sent to Antwerp on its way to the Suez fiasco. It is true that the vehicles were sent to England and R.E.M.E. had to cool its heels waiting for its trucks to be found and restored ! On Christmas Day 1956 he went down with appendicitis and had an emergency operation performed by a surgeon who was in the middle of his celebrations and not quite sober. We were spared worry about this because we did not hear about it till afterwards.

The family and friends discovered Buster's gift for writing most entertaining letters, though the spelling was appalling ! We regretted getting no more of them when, after his three years and despite persuasion from the army and promotion, he left the army and returned home.

Buster, having now acquired other skills, did not return to farming but took jobs in various garages locally. In the course of his duties at a garage in Oxshott, he tested a car for brake snatch along Copsem Lane. The car rolled over on to its roof on to the common but Buster was unhurt. He had a series of cars, one being a "special" with an aluminium body which he himself welded. Welding aluminium is a rare skill. He built himself a Lotus and drove once round the Silverstone circuit. This he did not do again - too

heavy on tyres ! He took study courses at Kingston College of Further Education. The first year's examination results were marked with "distinction". The second was almost as good and the College authorities, knowing that there are many unskilled mechanics and a sufficient number of very highly skilled designers but very few middle rank engineers who can teach, suggested Buster complete his three year course and then go for a year to Garnett Teachers' Training College. This plan Buster intended to follow.

Meanwhile he joined AC Motors and helped design their Cobra sports car. He walked and swam, messed about with cars and went to parties. He and I went to the mountains regularly. Then came the holiday at Alltshellach where he met a Dutch girl Leni (Magdeline Straver). Buster and I returned home but he left his job and went back to Glencoe. He spent the rest of the summer climbing and courting Leni. He and a friend camped by the loch just outside the guest house. We at home heard a story over the radio and in the papers of two young men being struck by lightning and killed while sleeping in their tent. We contacted the police to learn of Buster's safety. His tent was, in fact, only a few yards from the stricken one: he and his friend had noticed an air of quiet about it but had not realised what had happened.

Leni went home after her season's work in Scotland but returned to work in a hospital at Oxshott in order to be near Buster. She and Buster were married in December 1962 at a Surbiton registry office and then went off to Holland for Christmas and to be married again at the Straver's Roman Catholic Church in Haarstrecht. Bujie, by then engaged to Rob Miller, flew off with Rob on the Boxing Day to represent our family at the Dutch ceremony.

This aircraft was the last to leave before the very severe weather of that time stopped all flights. The snow started only a few minutes after we Morris men had finished our traditional tour of the Claygate pubs. The snow persisted for six weeks that winter. Coal supplies became difficult and I recollect having to fetch fuel from the station yard at Chessington for our house and also for the maisonette to which Buster and Leni returned after their honeymoon in Holland.

(Down at Crowlink, the H.F. guest house where we stayed on so many occasions, the house and buildings were almost entirely covered by snow. The centre lies with a small group of other buildings in a fold in the Downs up which the prevailing south west wind blows strongly. The rooms face a square and the snow drifted into it, filling the space to the rooftops. Guests who had spent Christmas at the centre had to leave their cars buried and get up to the main road on snowshoes. Weeks went by before the cars could be brought out. When the thaw came water rushed through the buildings causing much damage to fabric and furniture.)

Buster and Leni settled down in their maisonette. Buster then had a job with Tony Brooks, the racing motorist, at Byfleet. The two young people had two holidays, the first in the Scottish Highlands, using the Lotus for transport, the second at our old haunt at Crowlink. Our second granddaughter, Jacqueline, was born. Buster then moved to a white-coated job with Peugeot at Croydon. Three weeks after having started there he was riding a borrowed lightweight motorcycle to work, travelling eastward on a very bright morning with strong sunlight in his eyes, when he ran into another moped stationary at the roadside being tinkered with by its driver. Both young men were killed.

Buster was killed on Monday 28th September 1964. Jacky was eight months old. Leni and every member of the family were grief stricken. Buster was beloved by us all. Bujie said she thought she would never be completely happy again. We had over two hundred letters of condolence including ones from Parliamentary candidates, the secretary of the national Labour Party (it was in the middle of the General Election of that year), all my fellow magistrates and many neighbours. I was involved in the heartbreaking business of inquests, death registry and funeral. Apart from the simple grief at the death of our son I was angry at the manner of his death and that he and I should end our lives in the wrong order.

Leni and her baby daughter stayed on in the maisonette for a year or so. Then after a visit to Holland, she decided to return to that country. Shortly afterwards she wrote to say, believing we would be upset, that she was marrying again. We were not upset and later visited Leni and her new schoolmaster husband in their home in Terneuzen. Terneuzen is in the small Dutch enclave south of the Scheldt, cut off on land from the rest of Holland. Leni and Jan never had any children: Jacky was the loved only child in their household. Leni and family visited us almost every year. When Jacky was 17 she came to England to play hockey against an English school. One summer she stayed with Jenny for several weeks. She told us then that it was not until she was about 8 years old that she had realised that she had an English father: she had wondered why she had had three grandmothers!

Margot, called by almost everybody Bujie, in due course joined her sister at Guildford County School. She went steadily up the school getting the family female standard nine 'O's and two 'A's. Her time overlapped Jenny's but she saw little of her elder sister who disappeared into the art

department for her last year at school. Bujie loved hockey and played for the school and then, for several seasons, for Claygate.

On leaving school Bujie had the chance of a place at the London School of Economics but before taking it she obliged a friend by taking the friend's place as au pair in a household in Aix en Provence. The friend had secured a place in Aix University. Before returning home Bujie went hitch-hiking round Europe, her travels taking her from Denmark in the north to Rimini in the south.

On her return Bujie took a six months secretarial course at Kingston Technical College. She then secured a job on the magazine called "Education". This was most successful. As well as being secretary to the editor, Stuart Irvine (later to become the editor of the Times Educational Supplement) she wrote for the paper. As she became responsible for the make-up and printing of the magazine she gained a close insight into the printing industry.

During this time she and Buster were members of a group of friends who together went dancing and to parties. At one such party at Claygate a tragic incident occurred. Leaving the party, a friend of Buster's drove too fast down Hare Lane and ran into the wall under the railway bridge. He died in Buster's arms.

At a jazz club on Eel Pie Island at Twickenham Bujie met Robin Miller. In due course they were married. They made their home in a house they bought which was immediately opposite the back gate in the Avenue of our old house in Hare Lane. Bujie, amusedly, thought it was not very adventurous to go so short a distance away. Robin's parents shared the house till their deaths a few years later.

Robin is a civil engineer and also has a degree in management. Soon after he and Bujie were married he was given a Fellowship by Manchester University to study consulting engineering business in this country. For his thesis on this he received a Master's degree to add to his list.

Next, Bujie, with great help at home from Robin, sent herself to Kingston Polytechnic to study for a degree in sociology. She was successful. She had become active in politics and in a women's international movement working for world peace. She went as representative of this organisation, The Voice of Women, on a mission to Moscow including a trip down to Armenia. Bujie met Valentina Terenshkova, the woman astronaut who was President of the Soviet Women's Committee.

While on this Russian journey Bujie found she was pregnant. The baby was named Alexandra Dusty and Dusty is the family's name for her. The birth was a bad one due largely to hospital mismanagement, so Bujie and Robin decided they would not have another child but would adopt one. Our sixth grandchild is, therefore, adopted. Johnny is a most endearing coloured rascal whose father came from St. Lucia and his natural mother from Staines.

Bujie's next activity was to take a teachers' training course. After qualifying she taught for a while at her old school in Guildford. On one occasion she got me to give a talk to her civics class.

Bujie continued her work for peace, this time in association with Hephzibah Menuhin, sister of the violinist. Bujie remarks that Hephzibah was a really lovely person. Together they started to organise an arts competition but Hephzibah was too ill to continue. She died of cancer in 1981.

This competition was nationwide for children on the theme of world peace.

Sponsors provided the prizes and the paintings and models were made up into a travelling exhibition. One entry - the model of an elephant and a mouse - engaged the attention of David Owen, then Foreign Secretary, who sent it in the diplomatic bag to the United Nations in New York.

In 1980 Bujie spent August in the U.S.A. attending the conference of the Women's International League for Peace and Freedom. Later she was at the Greenham Common Airbase when women arrived there after a march from Wales. She then went with two of the women to Amsterdam. Speaking at a meeting there they received a standing ovation and a gift of money. Bujie continues her close involvement with the women's peace movement. She helped to organise the first 24 May International Women's Day for Disarmament and also the December 1982 demonstration when 30,000 women "embraced the base" at Greenham.

As I have mentioned, the party of Swedish folk dancers who visited us in 1979 were accommodated during their stay in the holiday centre at Swyre Farm, Aldsworth. However, Bujie and Rob, that enterprising couple, sold Swyre Farm and acquired a property a short distance away at Shilton near Burford, Oxon. This has a very attractive house made from a group of 15th century cottages. It has a beautiful garden, an orchard and several surrounding fields.

I wonder what they will do next.

"... the justice ... with eyes severe..."

CHAPTER EIGHTEEN

Early in 1951 I was nominated by the Surrey Federation of Labour Parties to be a Justice of the Peace. In those days certain organisations had the right to submit names of their members who were thought to be suitable to the Lord Chancellor for appointment to the judiciary. The Lord Chancellor would then put the names before a secret panel and to the Lord Lieutenant of the county. The nominee would then be seen by the Lord Lieutenant on behalf of the Lord Chancellor. Nowadays the position has changed and anyone can offer himself or herself for consideration for appointment. I found later that, in practice, a Bench finding itself short of justices would look round for people they thought fit and invite them to offer their services.

I was interviewed by the Lord Lieutenant, General Haining. He grunted a few questions at me and seemed chiefly concerned that I would be living permanently in the neighbourhood and that I was not, as he said, a bird of passage. He invited me to sit with him while he presided over his court and a few weeks later I joined the bench of the Kingston County Petty Sessional Division of Surrey. My magisterial career then lasted for 24 years and, after the first few months, became an extremely busy one.

The Kingston County bench was an ancient one, probably dating back to the 14th century. The uncertainty about its date of origin arises from the fact that the Kingston County offices and archives were under water from the Thames for six weeks in the floods of 1865. The magistracy in the form that we have it today is said to date from 1361. In 1961 we justices celebrated 600 years of our corporate magisterial existence with, locally, a service in Guildford Cathedral and, nationally, with a garden party at Blenheim Palace

where the Queen Mother was the guest of honour. I attended both of these gatherings.

In 1951 no training was required of a new justice. He plunged straight into his duties and depended a great deal on the help given him by the chairman, the senior members of the bench and on the Clerk to the Justices. My first chairman was Mr McGee, a rumbustious Belfast man. I met Mr Isaacs again as a member of my bench. The Clerk was Mr Bell, who I liked and from whom I received great help. Mr Bell was the third generation of his family to be Clerk, the succession going back more than 100 years. Mr Bell's daughter also served briefly in our court, making the fourth generation.

Nowadays justices are required to go through a period of training before adjudicating. There are books to be studied, lectures to be heard, courts to be attended and institutions, penal and otherwise, to be visited before the chairman and senior justices indicate that the new magistrate is ready to embark on his or her duties. In my late career I took part in the training of the new justices.

I was able to take so full a part in the work of my bench because - the Daily Herald being a morning newspaper - I did not go to the office till later in the day or at night. After only a few years I was elected a Deputy Chairman. A deputy chairman normally presided over every court he attended unless he invited a junior colleague to do so in order to give the junior experience. Kingston County was an extremely busy court and I was called to attend very frequently, occasionally three or four times a week. In this way I acquired great experience as a court chairman over a long period of time.

I was on the panel of justices sitting in the court dealing with juveniles. Mrs Cecily Hobkirk was a notably wise chairman of the juvenile

court and my association with this lady greatly influenced my approach to my judicial duties. I was chairman of the Adoption panel. I was a licencing justice which meant I took part in the issuing of licences to sell intoxicating liquor to owners and managers of public houses, the granting of "occasional" licences (licences to sell liquor on occasion - parties and so on) and the annual inspection of public houses.

For some years I was on the Board of Visitors to Wormwood Scrubbs prison. Here again, because I was available at short notice, I was called in to adjudicate on breaches of prison discipline - and they were frequent - as well as pay the regular visits of inspection. I reflect that a few years before this time, efforts had been made to rehabilitate the prisoners and the prison officers were trained to take part in the process. However, when the spy Blake, imprisoned at Wormwood Scrubbs, escaped, was "sprung" in the popular phrase, the warders returned to their earlier function as mere turnkeys.

That Boards of Visitors to prisons were local justices arises out of history. Originally the justices built their own local prisons, victualled them, staffed and filled them. When prisons became, so to speak, regional the system continued. Indeed, giving local justices public tasks has been the pattern right down the centuries. When some new service was set up the justices were made responsible for it. When the work became too much the justices were relieved of it. For example, at one time the justices had to victual the navy. In my day, when betting shops were made legal, someone was required to licence them: justices, who did not necessarily know anything about such an activity, were given the task. Until about 1830 some levels of local government were in the hands of local justices. At that time county

councils were set up and local government became their function.

My bench, Kingston County, shared courtrooms in the Kingston Guildhall, with the Kingston Borough bench. This latter came into being when the county council boundaries were drawn and its jurisdiction was within the Borough boundaries. Kingston County P.S.D. had jurisdiction over the urban district of Esher and the borough of New Malden. In the middle 1960s the boundaries of Greater London were redrawn as were others in the country. This called for the amalgamation of the two benches sitting in Kingston, County and Borough, to form the Kingston Petty Sessional Division. This division comprised Kingston and New Malden: Esher was joined to Walton and Chertsey P.S.D. Some of our justices moved to Walton and Chertsey but I, among others, remained in Kingston. The welding together of these two groups of justices was not without difficulty and I, as a senior justice and later chairman of the joint bench, helped to resolve those difficulties. I was a member of the Magistrates Courts Committee, both old and new, which had responsibility for the practical running of the benches in its area, including buying material, acquiring furniture, arranging court room accommodation and staffing the Clerks' departments.

Important changes were made in the juridical system of this country around 1965. The old Assize Courts gave way to Crown Courts and there were other changes. Petty Sessions deal with 98 per cent of all criminal cases - and many non-criminal such as domestic proceedings - brought before the courts of the country. Above them, to deal with more serious crime and to hear appeals from the decisions of the lower courts, were quarter sessions. Historically these courts sat for short periods at intervals but in Surrey the volume of work was such that they were almost permanently in session.

The chairmen of these courts were qualified lawyers: they had lay justices sitting with them. As well as "sessions" there were courts of Assize. These were courts presided over by a Judge sitting alone but very often being assisted by a jury. These judges' courts were placed a day's horse ride away from one another: a house was provided for the judges' lodgings while they were on their circuits.

In some of the bigger towns in the country there are courts presided over by salaried lawyers, known as stipendiaries, who sit alone. Magistrates of petty sessions are lay justices and receive no payment at all. In very recent years travelling expenses have been allowed.

In only a very few minor cases can lay justices adjudicate alone. These are the few remaining offences coming under common law. Law in this country falls into three categories - common law (unwritten), case law (a body of law built up by basing judgements on the decisions made in earlier similar cases) and, increasingly of course, statute law (law enacted by Parliament). The best composition of a bench of lay justices is three: five can be useful but not more. In my early days it was traditional for almost all the justices to sit at the brewsters' sessions in February when all the local licencees came to get their licences renewed. This was rather a social occasion.

Certain cases have to be brought before the lower court to have decided whether or not there is a case to answer. A single lay justice can hear them by way of examination, not adjudication. If it is decided there is a case to answer it then goes to a higher court for adjudication. I once sat alone for 22 sittings to examine the case relating to income tax fraud. I decided there was a case to answer. At the higher court the defendant pleaded guilty

at the outset of the proceedings.

I sat as chairman of examining justices in two cases, one of murder, another of conspiracy to murder. In the first, sadly, an army officer killed his very badly deformed infant. The higher court passed a light sentence. In the second, a couple living in Claygate were said to have agreed together to kill a 13 year old girl. Normally the press benches of our court had only one or two reporters from the local papers. In this case the courtroom was packed with representatives of the national press. I suspected that these people were looking for something sensational to report and I was glad to agree with prosecution and defence that the court should be cleared. I ordered that it be cleared. We found there was no case to answer in respect of the conspiracy charge. The couple were later found guilty of other grave offences.

Sessions courts and courts of assize were replaced by Crown Courts. These were set up in each Division and were immediately superior to petty sessional courts. In them a judge sat with lay justices - whose function, apart from legal direction, was equal to his own - and with a jury. I took my turn with my colleagues in sitting at Surbiton, first with Judge Cassels and later with Judge Ellison.

Traditionally a judge in a high court is addressed as "Your Lordship": a Justice of the Peace is addressed as "Your Worship". A very nervous defendant once addressed me as "Your Majesty"!

I helped to make two tiny pieces of law. Among the many changes made in the 60s the pleas by post procedure was introduced. Motorists facing certain charges could, if they chose, write to the court pleading guilty instead of attending in person. Space is given on a form in which the defendant can set

out a plea in mitigation. This must be read out in court. On one occasion the plea as written was very long indeed. I, as chairman, suggested my colleague might read out only the salient points. However, despite having posted his plea, the defendant was in court. He complained to a higher court that his plea was not fully read out. The higher court directed that all written pleas must be read out in full.

My other case was that of a young man who, after driving into a telegraph pole in the small hours, was breathalised. The reading gave 81 milligrammes to a hundred millilitres of alcohol in his blood. This is one milligramme above the permitted level. My court, on the basis of *de minimis non curat lex* (some things are too trivial for the law to take account of), dismissed the case. The police appealed against this decision and the higher court sent the case back to us to make a finding of guilty. This bound all subsequent similar cases.

A young man was before us charged with, I think, receiving stolen cameras. A warrant had been granted for the police to search his rooms. In his speech to us the defendant remarked that he knew nothing about skin diving. This non sequitor^d baffled us until we recalled that the words on the warrant said search could be made for certain things - and divers articles !

One day Kingston Council brought before my court a group of caravan dwellers. Torrential rain had flooded their campsite at Epsom and they had moved to ground along the Kingston Bypass Road. The council sought an eviction order. The defendants who came in a group all gave the name Smith. Smith is a very common gypsy name (I believe the Romany equivalent is Petulengro). I got an impression that the court was populated by Smiths that afternoon.

During the 60s and 70s I was an increasingly busy Justice of the Peace. As I have described, a great deal of work has to be done outside the court room. I served on the compensation committee which deals with payments to owners of public houses whose licences have been discontinued. I was on the probation case committee, a very busy and important one. Its members meet regularly to hear reports from the probation officers on the progress made in the training of offenders who have been placed on probation. Sometimes troublesome youngsters have to be brought before the courts again but, on the other hand, when good progress has been made the probation order can be discharged, that is to say, ended.

I gave up my position on the Board of Visitors to Wormwood Scrubbs prison because there came a time when the Home Office itself took over the appointment of Visitors. I took strong exception to this, believing that people generally unknown and with no judicial training or experience should not be called upon to adjudicate on prisoners said to have breached prison rules. I could do nothing about this, of course, so I resigned the position.

The Magistrates Courts Act of, I think, 1965 laid it down that justices' names should be put on a Supplemental List when the justice reaches the age of 70. At that point justices can no longer exercise any judicial function where matters are dealt with under oath. This means, practically, retire, although a few small duties can be done such as witnessing signatures and so on. Oddly a justice can continue to sit and adjudicate in the Crown Court till age 72: I chose not to do this. Up to this date in 1965 justices went on to act as long as they wished to, often into advanced old age. Judges of the higher courts still do: I think they should be bound by the same retirement rule as lay justices.

A justice retires on his or her birthday unless he or she is chairman of the bench, in which case he or she goes on to the annual meeting of the bench. In my case, my birthday being in January, I continued for eleven months after age 70. When I was elected chairman of the bench the voting was, I am proud to say, 29 to 1.

CHAPTER NINETEEN

The years after the war were, for me and the family, crowded with activity. The list of those activities would be very long indeed. The on-going ones were painting and decorating the house and tending the garden and the allotment. In 1947 I was required to give up the allotment in Elm Road for building space. I took another in Telegraph Lane. At that time there were still German prisoners of war at the War Office establishment at Chessington. In some way I cannot remember now I got the help of two of the prisoners, one an Austrian, to give the ground its first digging over. I enjoy sawing logs and, with a big two-handed saw, the youngsters helped me keep the house supplied.

We walked over the commons frequently and, in the summer months, went swimming in the Black Pond. We occasionally went boating on the river Wey. My Home Guard friend, Tom Carroll, had a boat in the Medway and Jenny and I went over once in a while to sail in it with him. I recall going with Buster to watch the diving in the Olympic Games at White City in 1948.

We visited the grandparents from time to time and always looked forward to our various holidays - by which we set great store. Often we went for a day at the seaside usually at Clypping in Sussex.

I continued my fairly full trade union activities in Fleet Street. My duties as Father of the Chapel were light: they consisted chiefly of arranging hours of duty and holiday rotas. I can recall only one occasion when I was called on to play the traditional union versus management role. We in the wire room did some work which we thought was outside our normal contract and asked for extra payment for it. I was summoned to the offices

of the financial department of Odhams, I was shown into an ante-room and told to wait. I believed this was a gambit so I settled down comfortably to read my New Statesman. This was noticed and I was called in to make my case. After some discussion our demands were met or, to put it more gently, the management agreed to pay us what we asked !

Early in my branch chairman career, our meetings were held in rooms in various public houses in Fleet Street, often on Sunday mornings. One room we used had many glass cases containing stuffed fish. I used to think it was difficult to tell whether or not the meeting was well attended ! Later we arrived at a more settled arrangement for our meetings and for years we met in the Memorial Hall, Farringdon Street, on Wednesday mornings. I liked to recall that it was in this building that the trade unions decided on setting up, in 1900, the Parliamentary Committee which later became the Labour Party.

One of the chapels in the London branch was the Tass Agency one and its half a dozen members were Communists. They were very keen and liked to get their way at meetings by playing the procedure game very sharply. I was prepared for, and indeed enjoyed, this challenge and was successful in countering their gamesmanship. I was also called on to chair sub-committees when special items of business had to be dealt with. For example, the operators in picture-transmission offices often had problems when called on to accompany their reporters on distant assignments.

Just after the war a press agency called A.E.P. (I cannot remember what the initials stood for) arising out of the French Resistance established a line between London and Paris. Until they engaged an operator of their own, we at the Herald, lent them one. Because of my schoolboy French it was more

often than not I who did the job.

During these years I regularly attended the Union's biannual conferences. At one of these conferences a member was disciplined for an incident that had occurred while I was a member of the union's executive committee. Some years later I received a scurrilous anonymous letter followed by a whole stream of newspaper coupons - those where readers are invited to write for coupons in order to obtain goods cheaply. These became so numerous that the staff of the post room at the Herald complained. I sought help from the police but they could do nothing. I was at a loss as to what to do. After much thought it came to me that it might be this aggrieved union member, living in Glasgow, who was pestering me in this way. I wrote to him saying, "Stop it." He did.

Early in 1950 Grandma Bim (Downer) died after a distressing illness. The music hall joke does not apply in my case: I was very fond of my mother-in-law. Grandpa Sid continued for some time to live in Meads with much help from very friendly neighbours. He visited us and Jim's family in Dunstable. Eventually he broke up his home, planning to spend all his time between the two households. After the first spell with us I drove him to Jim's home where, in April 1954, he died. He lies buried with his wife and Jim's first wife in a grave at Eastbourne.

In July 1951 my mother became very ill and Babs and I hurried down to Stobo. She was admitted to Bristol Royal Infirmary and underwent major surgery. We visited Somerset frequently while she was in hospital and in September brought her to our home in Claygate. She stayed till the following February convalescing and then returned home.

It had become clear that my father could no longer manage successfully the two acre market garden so, first, the acre fronting the road was sold for building and later the remainder of the garden and the greenhouses were let to a tenant.

Through the years up to March 1955 I made regular visits to Stobo, accompanied as a rule by one or other of the family. My mother became too ill and old to run her house and live without constant care. Jenny and Tim Jones were engaged to be married and for a while the idea of them taking over at Stobo to live and work was considered. It was decided not to do this. We, therefore, refurnished the dining room at 55 Hare Lane and brought my mother there in that March of 1955. Stobo was sold and my father took lodgings with friends in Portishead. Jenny and Tim were married from the White House, Claygate, the Jones' home. For a week or two while preparations were being made for the wedding and a week afterwards, to allow Babs and me to take a holiday at Freshwater Bay, Isle of Wight, my mother had a bed in a private nursing home. She was now bedridden. I visited my father regularly and he came to us for visits. On the second occasion he could not return to Portishead so he joined my mother in our dining room.

Those years, from 1955 to 1960, were, of course, ones of great effort and worry. The burden on Babs was very great. The care of my parents and, for example, the family laundry were major tasks. I did what I could to help: I was the only one who was able, alone, to lift my mother out of and into her bed. We managed to take our much prized holidays because Aunt Mabel, my father's sister from Drayton, came to take charge of the household for the holiday periods.

In the March of 1958 my mother died at home at 55. She was 93. My father

continued with us. I took him on many car drives, visiting the pubs round the neighbourhood and on two occasions he went to stay with his sisters at Drayton. At length one day he collapsed and a bed had to be found for him at a private nursing home. After a week or two he was moved to hospital at Richmond. He lost all need for food and for his lifelong solace, tobacco. The hospital authorities did what I think was a wise thing. They fed my father, so to speak, on a little brandy and so he spent his last days comfortable and a little tipsy. He died in September 1960 aged 85.

In the autumn of 1956, on holiday at Milford-on-Sea, the old Morris Ten came to the end of its usefulness. I mended a broken spring by lashing a big tyre lever to it, limped home and bought a second hand Austin Ten. George Lawrence helped me in this episode.

Soon afterwards George's work took him and his family to Ipswich. He still morrised enthusiastically and founded the East Suffolk Morris Men. On a visit to Claygate he called in on a morris practice at the Foley. We got him to dance his favourite jig, Jockey to the Fair, Headington. That night he became ill and took several months to recover. His recovery was only partial and, one sad day, he collapsed in a street in Ipswich and died of heart failure. He was my very close friend and his death is one of the major sadnesses of my life.

In July '58 Bujie spent a holiday with the Ramblers Association at their hostel in Glencoe. Buster and I drove her there and straightway returned for our own holiday at Derwentbank - a quite considerable car drive. We took turns in driving. Later I was to drive for about the same distance, 800 miles, alone. At the end of a morris holiday in Aberdeen I drove home to

Claygate stopping only briefly for rests and re-fuelling.

In 1959 Buster and I had an extremely strenuous holiday. We drove my father, then living with us, to Drayton. We then went on to Conway for a week's climbing in Snowdonia. We spent the next week climbing in the Lake District. After returning home, I set off to fetch my father from Somerset but on the journey home "blew up" the car engine. I telephoned Buster. He and Tim brought a van and towed the Austin home all the way from Amesbury over 70 miles away.

In August '59 Babs tried a new venture and went with a neighbour on a study course to Urchfont Manor in Shropshire.

In July '60 Buster and I went to Arran. We took the Lotus 7, crossing to the island by ferry from Ardrossan. Buster took one of the young women on a round of the island completing the circuit in 59 minutes. He also made the traverse of the Cir Mhor, a climb beyond my powers.

In June '61 Babs went off on another of her study courses but this time it was at a centre with which we were familiar, Freshwater Bay.

The August of that year '61 was eventful. I lent the Austin to two morris friends for the holiday. Buster and I went in the Lotus to Alltshellach. This was the year Buster met his Leni. At the end of the week Buster drove me back to Edinburgh to join the Thames Valley Morris Men. He returned to Alltshellach. The morris men then carried out an important engagement in the gardens of Princes Street, Edinburgh. We showed the morris as an item in a concert given by the band of the Scots Greys. The next day the morris party returned to Glencoe to a campsite beside Strathcoe for a week of morris dancing in places round about.

After the first day by the Coe it rained solidly for nearly a week. The

water level in the river rose several feet and the campsite became a quagmire. Additionally the Austin car developed engine trouble, a sticking valve. Not being prepared to attempt a repair by dismantling the engine, I drove the car, limping along at about 18 miles an hour, for the whole 500 miles home. Buster soon fitted a new engine and we were ready for the family holiday at Freshwater Bay.

In the December of 1961 Buster and I both developed mumps !

CHAPTER TWENTY

I am able to include in my story a version of it written by another hand. It was printed in my union's journal, The Press Telegraphist, in 1959 and was headed:

" The London Branch Chairman.

Even if we are not intended to take seriously all that Norman Douglas wrote, we can surely see the truth in his dictum that '*All men fall into two main divisions: those who value human relationships and those who value social and financial advancement. The first division are gentlemen, the second division are cads.*' In the person of the London Branch Chairman we have a good representative of the first division. Cyril Smith is much more interested in people than things and this finds expression in all that he does.

He was born in Eastbourne, won a scholarship to Eastbourne Grammar School, no mean achievement at that time, and at 16 left to join the Western Union training school in London.

He spent the whole of his cable service in London and in 1922 joined the P.A. After a few months at Byron House he moved to the Bristol Centre. His years in Bristol were very happy, especially as his parents had by then moved to Portishead.

He made the usual round of small provincial offices and in 1926 returned to London, joining the Daily Herald in 1930.

He married and for the next eight years became the complete family man, devoting himself to wife, children and home but reading widely. He was for a time the Claygate (Surrey) village librarian and, sampling the best of his wares, read Lionel Curtis's *Commonwealth of God - Civitas Dei* - a book which probably turned his attention to active social and political work. Lionel Curtis was a fervent advocate of Federal Union and Smith joined the society that was formed in the immediate pre-war years. About the same time he began his first spell

as F.O.C. at the Herald, an office he later reassumed and still holds. If his duties are light he makes them lighter by his patience and good humour and the Herald is a happy 'ship'.

He joined the E.C. in 1941 and served for two years, not perhaps the happiest of his experiences and when a London member was elected as 'caretaker' General Treasurer he decided not to seek re-election. He became instead London Branch Secretary but for reasons of temperament and convenience exchanged offices with C.S. Steggles and was elected Branch Chairman. He still is and a very good one too. He has a good knowledge of the rules of debate and uses it, though he is quite ready to set aside rules if it means reaching a decision, which, he says, is the purpose of the meeting. He has the knack of getting 'the sense of the meeting' and it is worth noting that he has not missed a meeting for 16 years.

During the war he served in the Home Guard and also lectured for the Army Bureau of Current Affairs. Like so many others he viewed the war with a divided mind but, at the end of it, his political attitude crystallised and when the new Esher constituency was formed he became the first chairman of the local Labour Party.

His Socialism is the Socialism of William Morris and Robert Blatchford. He loves the country and village life and traditions make a special appeal. He discovered a taste for folk dancing which has drawn him into organisation of the local and national English Folk Dance and Song Society and more recently the National Ring of Morris Dancers. He was also introduced to the Holiday Fellowship and found he had a passion for mountains and a continuous delight in mountaineering literature.

He was made a Justice of the Peace in 1951 and joined the Kingston (Surrey) County bench where he sits with another 'printer' George Isaacs. His friends all think this office fits him like an old glove. He has all the equipment for it: warm humanity, respect for human personality, restraint, a sense of humour, sympathetic understanding, above all it satisfies his desire to serve his fellow men.

Cyril Smith says of himself that he has been late in everything. But

if he matured late he matured well. There were times when he baffled and exasperated: when he seemed aloof even superior. Times when in conversation or speech he was apt to talk over his hearers' heads. But he is now always ready to discuss and give freely from his wide reading. If however he enjoys discussion he hates arguments. He has been known suddenly to break off quite indifferent as to whether the other side thinks it has won, only sure his view is still the right one. This looks like conceit - of which he has been accused - but more likely it is because he has read and thought deeply and sees the uselessness of further wrangling.

If I conclude as I began, by quoting, it is because Hilaire Belloc said it all in fewer and better words. Cyril thinks you should '*weigh human actions carefully, explain the worst of them with Charity. Mayhap there were two sides to that affair of Cain and that Judas was a tolerable chap.*'"

J.E.P.

All along as a householder I have done the maintenance of the three houses I have owned. I have painted the outside woodwork and decorated the inside. I helped Rob and Bujie decorate their house in the Avenue, Claygate. Throughout Jenny's householding I have taken a part in helping her also. After 50 years of this activity I have acquired a fair degree of skill at it. I kept my allotment garden in Telegraph Lane for many years, plagued though it is with very heavy clay soil and attacks by jays on the legumes and attacks by pigeons on the brassicas. In one night I lost a whole planting. I moved to a smaller plot in Foley Road but gave up eventually when my household comprised only Babs and myself. I am able to grow sufficient vegetables in part of the garden of our present home.

Small domestic disasters have had to be coped with from time to time, such as frozen pipes and, on two occasions, burst water tanks. Once or twice a

chimney has caught fire. In 1961 the car was stolen but recovered next day.

In 1963 we were burgled. The thieves went to some trouble to climb through a window not knowing they could have simply walked into the house through the unlocked garden door ! A number of items were stolen including, oddly, Babs' sewing machine and all my clothes. We had gone that night to a reception at Cecil Sharp House, the Headquarters of the E.F.D.S.S. I decided to wear my best suit and change into my morris costume if my team were called on to show the morris. Normally I would have driven up wearing my morris kit. If I had done this I would have had to go to work next day dressed as a morris man !

A couple of years later, returning home and walking up the garden path, I saw through the dining room windows the curtains on fire. I rushed in and, using a bowl, threw water over the flames. Babs, unable to find her spectacles in the heat (!) of the moment, was having difficulty in dialling 999. I hated throwing water over our grandfather clock but I managed to put out the fire by the time the fire brigade arrived. The long curtains had caught light by brushing against an electric fire.

In May 1963 Babs one day asked me if I would like to move to a smaller, quieter house in Telegraph Lane. I said "no" not wishing to leave our home. After about 15 minutes reflection, however, I realised Babs and I did not need a house of the size of 55 Hare Lane. Babs had talked to a friend whose family needed more accommodation. So we changed houses with the Robins and now live in a small semi-detached 2½ bedroom house in Telegraph Lane. Mr Robins paid us £1,200 which we judged was the difference in value between his house and ours.

After the death of my parents Babs was able to take a bigger part in

village life. All along we have shared a keenness for folk dancing. However we did more than merely attend the dances: she, more often than not, provided the refreshments while I was often called upon to move the piano ! Babs is a quite excellent cook as well as being a very skilful needlewoman, especially in wool. She made most of her own and the children's clothes, including top coats. Once she made me a pair of plus-4 trousers ! She has kept the family and many friends supplied with sweaters and other woollen garments. The number of morris costumes she has made and supervised must approach a hundred. She does all the household washing, almost never uses an outside laundry and has never been to a launderette for her own use.

Babs has for years been a member of the Claygate Townswomen's Guild, has served on its committee and, for a spell, was its chairman. Her special interests in it are drama, social studies and table tennis. Fairly late in life Babs took up lawn bowls. Leaving her original club in Esher for another at Surbiton in order to play in games of a higher standard of play, she played outdoors in summer and indoors in winter and reached a degree of skill that took her to county level. At this level she found the competition in the game keen to the point of bitterness so she rejoined her old club and for many years played happily all summer and served on its committee.

Babs is an inactive member of the Labour Party except when, at some election times, our house is used as committee rooms. She also supports my daughter Margot's peace movement.

When in April 1964 Bujie and Rob Miller were married, the wedding reception was held in Claygate Village Hall and Babs did all the catering. It proved a successful and happy occasion. Afterwards and arising out of it, various members of the family and friends asked Babs to cater for their

functions. This activity, so to speak, snowballed and for several years Babs undertook catering from time to time on a business basis. Nowadays she does it very rarely.

In the spring of 1964 Babs and I attended the first of many weekends at Crowlink and later at Findon with our folk dancing friends. Once we had another weekend of folk dancing at a centre at Pulborough.

Jenny and her husband Tim had spent their honeymoon on the Scilly Isles and loved those islands. They returned there on holiday from time to time and, in due course, took the children with them. They were good enough to sometimes have me join them. We rented a cottage and enjoyed the walking and swimming and the boat trips to the other islands in the group. The Scilly authorities insist that the appearance of the islands should be changed as little as possible: they seldom allow new building. Our cottage was built inside a farm building. The journey to the islands in the old Scillonian was always an experience. Because St Mary's harbour is very shallow the Scillonian is almost flat-bottomed and she rolls and pitches horribly ! Once I travelled from a Morris holiday in Pembrokeshire straight to the Scillies via Penzance in a helicopter. Arriving at St Mary's tiny airport I stepped out on to a red carpet (made of crepe paper) leading to a glass of beer on the bar in the airport lounge, all prepared by my grandchildren. Years later, I was able to say in my speech at Helen's wedding that the most pleasant sort of remark ever addressed to me was hers when she said, "Come on, Gramps. Let's go for a swim."

Earlier in my story I mentioned what I think is an interesting survival of the system of recruiting soldiers into the army privately. When I was

appointed to the Kingston County bench I met Major McCarthy, a member of it. When he happened to learn I was interested in morris dancing he asked me if I knew a man named Jim Brooks. At the outset of the 1939 war Major McCarthy, who was a builder as well as being a soldier, took with him into the Royal Engineers a group of building workers as a unit and commanded them. Among them was Jim Brooks and his friend Ted Perry. These two, keen on the morris, persuaded some comrades to join them, got Major McCarthy to provide costumes and, throughout their travels with the army including a spell in Iceland, performed the morris in their off-duty hours. However, the army being what it is, the gear was stolen.

Major McCarthy's unit landed in France on D-day. Jim Brooks was with them. He leapt overside from his landing barge into eight feet of water. Jim is not much over 5 feet tall and his comrades guided him to the beaches by hitting his helmet with their pick handles (they were equipped for building, not for fighting, although they were often under fire.) The unit built its way through to Berlin.

Jim Brooks and Ted Perry turned up for that first meeting of the Thames Valley Morris Men and Jim and I remain close friends to this day.

CHAPTER TWENTYONE

I stood down from being chairman of the London branch of my union but continued for some years as F.O.C. at the Herald. In 1965 I resigned the chairmanship of the Esher Constituency Labour Party: my presentation clock keeps excellent time up to the present moment. I continued being responsible for the money raising scheme for the Labour Party until 1976. Two years later I found myself re-elected Claygate branch chairman !

I gave up being Father of the Chapel some time before I became second in charge of the London Wire Room at the Herald. The paper was now called the Sun and the change of name came about as the result of a change of ownership. Fleetway Press published the Daily Mirror, the Sketch and a number of magazines and its business was failing. Odhams published the Daily Herald, the Sunday People and many magazines (including Debrett's Peerage, oddly) and was very successful. Cecil King of Fleetway bought out Odhams. It is, I think, an odd quirk of private capitalism than an unsuccessful business can take over a successful one.

In October 1976 my predecessor, Cecil Steggles, retired and I became chief telegraphist. The staff of the wire room now had few of the workmates with whom I had worked so long and with whom I was on terms of friendship. Almost at once on taking over I became involved in the preparation of a productivity scheme. Under a man named Cox I became part of management. Mr Cox remarked that I was material for management but I pointed out, wryly, that I had worked away in the wire room for nearly 40 years and no one had noticed it before ! With the wire room staff not liking the changes that the management were making and seeing in me the agent of those changes, I became

unpopular.

Being F.O.C. implies being popular; quite suddenly becoming unpopular is an uncomfortable experience. I disliked the people I met in management. So, therefore, my last months at work were not happy. I was due to retire in January 1969 but Cox kept me on for three months to complete the scheme on which I was working. Then, having days off owing me, I just stopped going to the office two days before I was due to leave, saying nothing to anyone except to hand over to my successor.

Babs and I went off to the Swanage H.F. centre for a holiday. On returning from this holiday I immediately started to work at the Claygate Village Hall. Some years earlier a Mr Dean had been a leading figure in the accumulation of funds to build this fine and useful hall. He became its manager and letting secretary. Then he became very ill and the hall management committee, knowing I was about to retire from work, engaged me as a possible successor to Mr Dean. He, however, recovered and returned to continue his activities. My job at the hall then became part caretaker, part maintenance man and continued so for about three years. Then, suddenly and without notice, Dean told the management committee that either Smith went or he did. I went.

While buying petrol at the Texaco station in Esher I saw a notice that a forecourt attendant was required. I took the job. The company had other stations in the neighbourhood, at Hampton Court, at New Malden and at Epsom. I became a peripatetic forecourt attendant: I was sent to these stations when they were short handed. The manager of the Esher station could not trust his other employees to open the station at 7am. So, for a time, I bicycled in, opened the station and when other staff arrived, went home to

breakfast. This gave rise to an amusing incident. One winter there was a petrol shortage and garages were limiting their customers to £1 worth of petrol at a time. On this morning I started serving and the queue of waiting cars grew. I collected the pound notes and stuffed them in my pockets. 8am, 9am and 10am came and went and no one appeared to relieve me. I then realised I had forgotten it was New Year's Day and a holiday. I should not have opened the station at all. I had to get police help to cut the queue of cars at the only garage open in the south of England !

After about three years Texaco sent for me less and less. I had known the Salter family, proprietors of S. Salter and Sons Ltd. a garage in Claygate. I had bought one of our cars from them and was with the 'and Sons' in the Home Guard. I remarked to Len Salter, when paying a largish bill for car repair, "I shall have to work this off !"

"I wish you would," he replied.

So I became a forecourt attendant at Salters, and occupied this small position in the oil industry for seven years. A pleasant part of the job was that I was on first-name terms with a great many of the customers !

Shortly after starting to work at the village hall the suggestion was made to me that I might undertake the grass mowing in the churchyard of Holy Trinity church, Claygate. This I did for nearly ten years, working for four or five hours a week. This work I enjoyed very much. Churchyards are thought of as sombre places but the two acres of churchyard in Claygate, some of it formerly an orchard, is a very pleasant, even beautiful, place. I became friendly with the vicar, the Rev. Adrian Carey. Mr Carey was the nephew of Clive Carey, a well known collector of folk music and an associate of the

folklorist, Cecil Sharp. Clive Carey is a hero of morris men and his remains lie in Claygate churchyard.

More help was needed to rescue the churchyard from years of neglect and Jim Munday joined me. He was my allotmenting neighbour and about 80 years of age. He was capable of working as well as a man half that age. Jim was born and lived in Common Road, Claygate. I learned from him the history of Claygate and I listened with great interest to his stories of the place and its inhabitants, many of whom lay in the ground beneath us. I took great pleasure in hearing visitors remark to us that the churchyard was now restored to its old good order.

After a few years, Old Jim died, full of years. I tried for two more years to keep up alone with the work. I developed a "frozen shoulder" (inflamed biceps, I am told) and I found I could not get rid of the condition while lifting the big machines round the gravestones. At this time, too, Mr Carey moved to a living in Guildford, becoming a Canon of the Cathedral there. It seemed a good time to give up working in the churchyard.

Babs and I were very happy that Canon and Mrs Carey travelled up from Guildford to attend our golden wedding party.

In those years my grandchildren, Helen and Nigel, were members of the church choir and, though no churchman, I often attended evensong. Clive Charlton was also a member of the choir and later he and Helen were married. When these three and the Rev. Carey left, my regular churchgoing came to an end.

Down at Haywards Way, Drayton, in the ancestral home (although, of course, only two generations of my ancestors had lived there !) my two aunts were living on after the death of my uncle, their brother Jack. Uncle Jack owned

the cottage and, a Roman Catholic convert, had willed it to the nuns of a Bristol Convent. The cottage was to go to them after the aunts' deaths.

Aunt Mabel was the more enterprising of the two. She had, for instance, gone on the Queen Mary ocean liner on its maiden voyage. She had gone to stay for six months in New Zealand in order to be with our family there. Usually the two of them spent holidays on coach tours and several times they had stayed with Bujie at her Farley Green home. I visited Haywards Way regularly and always in September to dig the potato crop and to trim trees and hedges.

At Easter time in 1975 I was sent for by my cousins. Both old ladies were very ill. I hurried down and soon found myself alone in the cottage to care for my aunts. I was dismayed and wondered how I should cook (I have no skill at it) and nurse them. There was, however, a knock on the door and Jenny arrived in a blinding snowstorm! She stayed a few days till Bujie came to relieve her. Both had left their families to come down to help me. Jenny returned home and turned one room of her house into a sick ward. Bujie and I put an aunt into each of our cars and brought them to Claygate. This was an odd cavalcade - one very ill old lady in an M.G.B. and another, almost at death's door, in a Sunbeam Rapier, both cars being driven rather briskly up the motorway! The aunts stayed for about a month. Jenny, S.R.N., nursed them back to health and we then took them home again. We heard nothing from the two ungracious old ladies for the next two years. Just once in that time I called in one evening on my way from elsewhere to find that they were well and able to look after themselves.

Next came a call from my second cousin to say Aunt Kathleen had died. I went to Somerset to make all necessary arrangements for funeral, registry,

probate and the care of Aunt Mabel. From then on I went many times to Somerset. Aunt Mabel had to be admitted to Taunton Hospital several times and there, about a year later, she died. Again I carried out my family duties. In July 1978 the cottage was put up for auction. It had been built for just a few pounds but it was sold for £11,600. This sum went, of course, to the Little Sisters of the Poor in Bristol. My connection with Drayton was now at an end.

In April 1973 Jenny, Tim and the three children and I spent a holiday at Derwentbank. Malcolm took his canoe on the roof of the car and spent some hours in it on Derwentwater. I recall that on the Sunday heavy snow covered the whole landscape: it was very beautiful. We climbed Helvellyn in snow. By the end of the week the weather changed completely and we enjoyed the lovely spring sunshine.

After this I noticed that Tim was often moodily quiet in manner. His relation with his father was an extremely unhappy one. And so it was, unhappily, increasingly so with Jenny. In January 1976 he deserted home, family and work. Some months later Jenny divorced him.

Tim and Jenny had always had in mind that their connection with the unpredictable Mr Norman Jones might come to an end and so, when opportunity offered, they bought a house in Foley Road, Claygate. The house was in poor repair and we all helped in its redecoration. It was then let to a group of students. Most conveniently this house was empty when Tim left and so Jenny, Helen and the two boys moved from the farm into it in a matter of days. Here Jenny has made her home.

Jenny went back to nursing and, after refresher and promotion courses, is

now a district nurse. She was for some years the very busy captain of her Girl Guide company, taking parties of girls off to camp several times a year. She has moved from this to be a commissioner in the Girl Guide movement. Jen continues with our family connection with the Holiday Fellowship. In 1980 Jen thought she would like to try an excursion a little more adventurous. She booked a week's holiday in Marrakesh, Morocco, and was good enough to take me as her guest.

This holiday was a great success. On me, so little travelled, the visit to a country only just entering the 20th century made a profound impression. We were intensely interested in life in the old medina, in the great plain surrounding Marrakesh and in the Berber villages in the High Atlas mountains. We visited Ouzazate on the edge of the Sahara after what was, to me, a hair-raising mini-bus drive over the high mountain pass. We examined the kasbahs of the former pashas. We watched some folk-dancing but, I am bound to say, thought it pretty dull compared with our own !

This little expedition to Africa was for me a major experience. It is odd, I think, that it came so late in my life. I was 76. I found I was nervous on the aircraft !

My account of our Moroccan holiday deserves a rather long chapter to itself.

CHAPTER TWENTYTWO

MOROCCAN HOLIDAY

The extent of my foreign travel is very small. I have been out of the United Kingdom for a total of a month in all my 78 years. I have been to Holland twice, through Belgium en route, to Germany twice, through Belgium and Luxembourg on the way, and twice to Paris. Then there was the week spent with Jen in Morocco. This visit gave me much food for thought and sent me to books on the country.

We flew from Heathrow in a Boeing 727 of the Royale Air Maroc touching down, but not leaving the aircraft, at Tangiers. At Casablanca we had to wait several hours for another plane to take us to Marrakesh. We were not allowed out of the airport so we saw nothing of Casa and did not even hear the famous tune !

Our hotel was the Agdal, a new, modest and comfortable one in the Gueliz, the new town of Marrakesh. We found that breakfast was taken on the roof of the hotel. This arrangement I enjoyed. We had croissants and at least a whole litre of coffee ! The weather was perfect throughout our stay. The view from the hotel roof over the city took in the medina and the minarets of its mosques and extended over the vast plain to the mountains in the distance.

The hotel pool was a pleasant feature of the place. It was thronged with sun bathers during the day but I enjoyed a solitary swim every morning before breakfast and another before dinner in the evening. I noticed the pool was cleaned after my morning swim: whether this was a work timetable or my uncleanliness I did not inquire !

Across the road from the hotel was a seven-storey building having a cafe and bar on its roof and another at ground level extending into the sidewalk. We used both a number of times, the first for the cool breeze and the view, the second to watch life in the streets. Many older women and a fair number of younger ones go veiled and wear the caftan. The djellaba, a full length top garment, is worn by many men in the towns - it is often worn over European clothes - and is used by all the men in the Bled. No Muslim will wear a brimmed hat for the brim would prevent the wearer from touching his forehead to the ground in prayer: so many men wear a skull cap and a few wear the fez. Traffic in the fine wide avenues of the Gueliz is bustling and lively but not congested. Cars, none of British make, are numerous and mopeds are innumerable.

During our stay there was a festival, celebrated privately, involving the slaughter of a sheep. Sheep were being carried in panniers on mule back, in donkey carts and one man had a sheep on his lap while riding his moped. We saw a young soldier with a sheep on a cord. He hired a taxi, put the animal in the boot and drove off. We saw what may be described as a four-seater moped: the man had his son on his lap, his wife on the pillion and she had a baby strapped to her back. The only horses I saw were the scrawny nags used to draw the shabby fiacres waiting to be hired by tourists. The vision of hordes of tribesmen on horseback descending to the plains must be regarded as having vanished. The presence of mules implies mares but the horse has given way to the moped: the donkey is in process of doing so also. There are, however, what we called donkey parks outside every centre of activity in the town and in the country. (The country districts generally are referred to as the Bled.) During our stay we saw only 2½ camels: two adults

and a calf.

Near the hotel and a short distance out of the city there is a military barracks. The young soldiers wore rather ill-fitting khaki uniforms - a far cry I thought from the robed warriors of former years. I saw two tanks (fighting vehicles, that is). They had the worn appearance that can be noticed on the play furniture in our recreation grounds.

Mohammad V Avenue is lined with jacaranda and orange trees which are very beautiful when in leaf and bloom. While we were there the trees were being roughly trimmed to ugly stumps.

The medina (old town) is about a mile from the Agdal. We early made our way there. It is the largest medina in Africa, its walls of red adobe are eleven miles long and are pierced with eight gates. Outside the walls a very busy life goes on. Inside life in the medina has been likened to a sack full of snakes. We found it truly fascinating.

On our first visit to the medina we engaged a guide. He did little guiding. He took us to a leather merchant's souk in order to tempt us to make purchases. After a difficult haggle in a little English and less French we dismissed the guide. We got bolder in our penetrations of the medina and enjoyed it the more.

A souk is the workplace and shop of a craftsman. The Souks of Marrakesh is the area, tightly packed, of all the souks roughly arranged in their various trades - metal workers, shoemakers, dyers, carpet makers, tailors and so on. The tiny streets and alleys are scarcely eight feet wide and the maze they form is thronged with pedestrians through whom moped riders thread their way, donkeys and sheep are driven and, heaven help us, a car is occasionally inched forward. The souks are open fronted and many of the streets are

partly covered. While watching the craftsmen I tried a little bow and a murmured 'bon jour' and got a bow in return.

We came to the Djemaa el Fna. This is a great open place near the Souks in the middle of the medina. It is ringed with stalls and cafes, a number of buildings including an extremely shabby post office, lines of trucks, mule carts, donkeys and a mosque. The whole place teems with life. People stream in from the country to do business but not only to do business. There are itinerant barbers, storytellers, child acrobats, performing monkeys, water sellers, fortune tellers, dancers (some of them black Guineans with their wild drumming) - all for the watching.

Near the Djemaa is the great mosque, Koutoubia, said to be one of the three most beautiful in the Moslem world. Jen and I felt no wish to examine mosques closely which was just as well because they are closed to the infidel. I can remark, incidentally, that the Berbers have accepted alien religions, they lightly embrace the faith of Islam but never quite cut off their pagan roots. This is especially true in the Bled. There was one Berber, however, a citizen of Carthage, who was converted to Christianity as is known from his Confessions. His name is Saint Augustine of Hippo.

The Moroccan population is seventy per cent Berber and thirty per cent Arab. There is no written Berber language though it is spoken by everyone in the Bled. French, arising from the French Protectorate of 1912-1956, is the language most used throughout Morocco.

On one of our explorations of the medina Jen and I visited the Saadian tombs, burial place of monarchs and their wives and concubines. This is a beautiful place and a quiet haven in the bustle of the medina. We went from there to a modern palace and its great parade ground which was almost

deserted. Here we were taken in hand by a young man who guided us back into the maelstrom. He showed us the Jewish quarter and pointed out the area occupied by doctors and other professional people. Even these houses struck me as being red adobe hovels piled on top of one another. Our young friend talked and talked in French and poorish English. We tried to stop the flow to ask the way to a palace we had in mind to visit.

"Stop, stop," I said but he talked on. "Stop," I repeated and made a mock threatening gesture with my walking stick.

He laughed delightedly and said, "Just like my father."

A little group of children followed us, jostling us lightly. "Are you German?" they asked.

"No, we are English," we said. Whereupon they fell into a ragged line and gave a smiling military salute. I did not know what to make of this but was warmed by it. We came to the little palace, entered its garden and rested. Emerging, we found that our friend had got us a *petit taxi* and was making off, refusing a gift. The driver followed him and Jen pressed a few dirhams into the young man's hand.

Jen and I made two mini-bus excursions into the High Atlas. The first was to the very fine Ourika Valley. Journey's end was in a kasbah where we enjoyed a meal of traditional dishes and watched what I have described earlier as rather dull folk dancing. What we saw was a somewhat lackadaisical performance on an hotel terrace for the benefit of tourists and for payment. It was, I discovered, a version of the Berber Ahouache, a dance of the Chleuh of the High Atlas. What we would like to have seen was the Ahouache in its proper setting. This would have been around a great fire under the cedar trees. There would have been women, in white homespun robes

and rows of charms and necklaces, in a swaying semicircle, shoulder to shoulder, barefeet thudding on the ground, heads thrown back and eyes unseeing. Opposed to them would have been a circle of men beating out a rhythm on rawhide drums exactly like Irish bodhrans. There would have been a singer whose voice would rise in short phrases. The dancers, their tightly packed bodies undulating as one body, would have raised their clapping hands and cried out a line of the song. The dance would have gone on to a climax and stopped at a signal from the singer. The dancers, wiping sweat from faces and arms, would then return to reality.

Still in the Ourika and enjoying a walk by the tumbling river I came on an elderly Berber gentleman at his bath. Seated on a boulder he was pouring water over his feet from an old kettle ! Returning in the mini-bus Jen said to me, "We have another passenger." Indeed we had. The guide and driver had acquired a sheep, doubtless for the festival I mentioned, and it was lying trussed under the back seat of the bus.

Our other mini-bus expedition was over the High Atlas to Ouarzazate via the Tiz-'n-Tichka pass. (I gave the height of this pass as 7,000 metres. I think I read the wrong notice: later reference to a map gives the height as 13,000 feet.) After leaving the plain the road traverses the foothills where we had sight of a number of Berber villages, stopping several times to visit them. Usually the groups of reddish brown adobe houses are built into the hillside and one can walk from house to house over the flat roofs. One village we visited had its houses clinging to the steep sides of a ravine. Near the villages and elsewhere stalls were set up along the roadside from which objects were offered for sale to tourists. Everywhere on the stalls were big quantities of amethyst. Other semi-precious stones occur in the

rocks but amethyst is found in great quantities. One stallholder had a notice indicating that an amethyst, about the size of a bucket, could be taken by anyone who cared to. It was, of course, far too heavy to lift !

On this part of the trip we passed a number of kasbahs, the strongholds of former local chiefs. A kasbah can be a small castle or big enough to be a strongly fortified small town.

In due course we reached the point where the road lifted itself, through innumerable twists and bends, to reach the pass. The views over the peaks are stupendous and the road itself must be described as stupendous, also. While still climbing to the pass I got a glimpse of the car ahead of ours. It was around 500 feet higher and almost vertically overhead. Having crossed Tiz-'n-Tichka, the road, while still hairraising, descended a little less steeply. We came on villages at intervals, all the same red brown colour and with the gleaming white tower of the mosques in the middle. Leaving the foothills, we travelled about 20 miles across the flat Saharan desert. Our driver made a detour so that we could see one of El Glaoui's kasbahs seen from across the river Dades. It is now deserted and flaking into ruins. A colony of storks have their nests on the battlements.

Near Ouarzazate we paused to enter and examine a newly restored kasbah. Its wonderfully intricate Moslem decorations were as new and the courtyard had a new floor and was ringed with arc lights, doubtless for use as a stage. In Ouarzazate we had a traditional meal in the rather splendid, very Moroccan inn. The principal dish was based on mutton and semolina, dessert consisted of grapes floating in water. Our French fellow tourists offered us wine and were surprised, perhaps, that Jen and I preferred our bottled water. The water in Marrakesh and Morocco generally is clean and good but

contains certain elements disturbing to stomachs not used to them. In Marrakesh the water is supplied by the snow of the High Atlas brought to the city along deep, stone-lined conduits dug 900 years ago. We were very well in health during our stay - no stomach upsets, no midges, no insects !

Quarzazate is one of a number of oases in the area between the High Atlas and the Anti Atlas mountains. Here in modern times deposits of lead, asbestos and manganese in a very pure form have been found. The French extracted these and to bring the minerals out to the Atlantic coast built the two great roads over the High Atlas, one over "our" pass, the Tizi-'n-Tichka, and another over the Tizi-'n-Test. Incidentally the French discovered great beds of phosphates in the plain around Khouribga between Marrakesh and Casa. Morocco is now the second biggest producer of phosphates in the world.

On the drive back from Quarzazate, just outside the oasis, we saw a group of men round an overturned car. In the foothills another group surrounded a figure on a stretcher. Both these incidents were unexplained. We paused for photography in the Berber villages: Jen sought and received permission to snap women washing clothes in a stream. After the dizzy descent, through loop after loop of the zigzagging road (where I held tight to my seat !) the drive through the lower vegetated slopes and across the plain was a delight. I would not have missed this expedition for anything but I would never do it again.

If we had extended our trip beyond Quarzazate to Zagora further into the desert we would have seen a famous sign post - Timbuctoo 52 days.

Jen and I put many questions to our guide Latiffe - who was, he told us, half Berber, half Arab. Jen asked about health and medical care among the

Berber villagers and I asked when and by whom the great road was built. He was short on answers at the time but, presumably having done some homework, returned next day to say the road was built by the French in 1923.

We found that it was extremely difficult to buy postage stamps in Marrakesh. Hotel reception had none nor had the post office ! Jen went out purposely to buy stamps. Seeing a small girl who she judged to be about 11 years old returning from school, she asked her to help. The girl was delighted. Her name was Fusia, she was Arab, she was 16 years old, was at high school and was aiming for a career in medicine. Having found some stamps, she took Jen to her home. The house surrounded a courtyard wherein chickens scratched. Fusia's mother came in while Jen was there. She was veiled but removed the veil when she entered the house. She had been to the baker. Having mixed the bread dough, she put the loaves on a board and carried it on her head to the baker for the loaves to be baked.

After having had tea with Fusia's family Jen brought the girl back to the hotel and then across to the rooftop cafe. Here we talked, all of us learning a great deal from the conversation. Fusia was glad to practise her English. She arranged to call for us next day for a guided visit to the medina but we never saw her again.

There was one other Englishman at the hotel. He visited Marrakesh regularly. He suffered from a chest complaint and found the beautiful, dry climate good for his health. He rarely moved from the side of the hotel pool but joined us for dinner every evening. He had much to tell us of the country.

In ancient days the Moroccan population was Berber. In the seventh century the Arabs swept across North Africa to the Atlantic. In the next century the

Arabs, together with Berber legions, overwhelmed Spain and were pounding on the gates of Tours. Ferdinand and Isabella reconquered Spain and the Muslims together with 150,000 Sephardic Jews returned to Morocco. In the following centuries, largely cut off from European influence, Morocco was a nominal sultanate or kingdom. The king, however, had little control over the great feudal barons, called caids, who were continually at war with one another and exercised power of life and death over tribesmen, serfs and slaves. In 1912 the Sultan was bankrupt and besieged in his palace in Fez by furious armies of tribesmen. He called on the French to rescue him and so began the 44 year French Protectorate.

In the north between the Riff mountains and the Mediterranean administration was, so to speak, sublet by the French to the Spanish. In the mountains, however, a Berber chieftain, Abd el Krim, waged a war of independence against the foreigners. He had no trouble in ejecting the Spanish from their zone. It took the French five years and a vast military effort to subdue Abd el Krim. He rode on a white mule through the French lines to surrender. This he did in 1927.

The sultans in what the French called Maroc Utile were puppets. There came a time, however, when the French installed a 17 year old sultan who proved anything but a pliable puppet. He was Mohammad V. He indicated his sympathy with an independence movement called Istiqlal but restrained that movement's activities during World War II and loyally supported the Free French.

In the middle of the 19th century the House of Glaoui rose to great feudal power in southern Morocco. Their domain included Marrakesh and extended over the High Atlas to Quarzazate - exactly the area visited by Jen and me on our holiday. The Glaoui power rested on the control of great salt deposits and

they extracted wealth from the salt caravans. In this century their chief or caid was Madani el Glaoui, the Old Fox of the Atlas. He built kasbahs and installed members of his clan in them to pillage and intrigue. By extortion they amassed great wealth. So powerful did the Glaoui become that there was in effect a second reigning dynasty in Morocco. El Glaoui collaborated with the local French government. He entertained foreign notables in his luxurious kasbah at Telouiet. Winston Churchill was his guest in Marrakesh on a number of occasions. In 1953 El Glaoui sent a gift - a gold crown encrusted with emeralds - to the British Queen, Elizabeth II, on the occasion of her coronation. He expected to be invited to the coronation ceremonies. The gift was returned to him without an invitation.

After the war in Europe national sentiment grew in Morocco, especially in the towns and cities. This alarmed the French. Mohammad V was known to sympathise with these national aspirations. In 1953 El Glaoui convoked a powerful gathering of 270 rebellious caids and pashas. The local French government, plotting with El Glaoui and against orders from Paris, sent Mohammad and his son into exile in Madagascar. Two years of terror and counter terror followed. Then Paris gained control. El Glaoui was disowned by both the French and his countrymen. He was turned out of office, his lands confiscated and he was flown to Paris where he was seen on television crawling to the feet of the sultan, Mohammad V, who he had betrayed.

The French Protectorate came to an end in 1957 and Mohammad now Sultan of the united Morocco carried out many reforms and much reconstruction. He brought his country a few steps nearer a modern democracy and is the father and hero of his people. His son, Hassan II, continues his father's policies but the difficulties are now greater and progress slower.

When Queen Elizabeth and Prince Philip visited Morocco recently English papers made a fuss about Hassan's unpunctuality and about a certain amount of mismanagement of some of the ceremonies. Anyone knowing the Moroccans would not have been put out by this and, I dare say, nor did the Royal couple.

There was no unpunctuality when we left Marrakesh. We were taken to the airport for a 7am flight. After a few hours flying from Casa we flew low enough to see land and, to my astonishment, it was the Isle of Wight. Our aircraft was about an hour ahead of its scheduled time of arrival at Heathrow. We circled over London for some time. By this time I realised I was nervous about flying and while Jen interestedly pointed out landmarks like Tower Bridge and so on I just gave frightened glances downwards. I think the wings of these Boeings are not nearly big enough!

This Moroccan holiday made a great impression on me - as the writing of these notes demonstrates - and, of course, I enjoyed the companionship and the keen interest in our travels of my favourite elder daughter.

"... the ... pantaloon, with spectacles on nose."

CHAPTER TWENTYTHREE

When and how can autobiography be concluded ? How far short of death ? With old age activities become fewer, and one's life tends to be lived in the younger members of the family - and a good thing, too.

Our elder daughter, Jen, still lives and works as a nurse in Claygate. Babs and I are interested in all she does and she gives us constant help. Her two sons, Malcolm and Nigel, both still unmarried, also live and work locally. Malcolm served a four year apprenticeship with a boat builder and attended a sandwich course at Southampton Polytechnic. He now works with a house conversion and maintenance firm. Nigel is a motor fitter and a keen follower of motor racing. He is specially supportive of his grandparents.

Jen's daughter, Helen, received her secondary education at Kingston's Tiffins school and left having passed nine 'O' levels and three 'A's. She then went to Keele University for its four year course in sociology. She gained a good degree and became a social worker at Godalming. She became engaged to be married to Clive Charlton. We have known Mr Alan Charlton, Clive's father, and his family for many years. I recall teaching Clive's elder brother cricket and football when he attended Newlands College. Mr Charlton has served a term as Mayor of Elmbridge and was a Surrey County Councillor.

After Clive had taken his final examinations as a doctor and had started his years as houseman at Guildford County Hospital he and Helen were married in July 1978. The wedding was an especially happy one. Mr Charlton had a great marquee in his very pleasant garden, Babs and Jen did the most excellent catering and the weather was beautiful. Amusingly Nigel and a

friend spent the night in the marquee to prevent anything in it being disturbed.

After several years in Guildford, Clive became registrar at Reading's Royal Berkshire Hospital and the family moved to Wokingham. Their first child, Neil, was born in 1983 and their second, Victoria, was born two years later. So the album with the selection of family snapshots illustrating this my story now has photographs showing six generations.

Our younger daughter, Margot (Bujie) moved with her family from the holiday centre at Swyre Farm to their fine old Cotswold cottage at Shilton, Oxon. Parts of this cottage date from the fifteenth century. Robin, our son-in-law, pursues his entrepreneurial career. Their daughter, Dusty, worked hard and did well at school, upholding the family tradition of 'O' and 'A' levels. John, the adopted son, attended special boarding schools because of early learning difficulties. He has made very satisfactory school progress and excels at many sports and physical activities, including rugby, athletics and horse riding. Bujie herself spent many years of involvement with the peace movement at international level, travelling to Brussels, the U.S.A., the U.S.S.R. and elsewhere. Nowadays she works for the publicity department of the Oxford University Press.

Jacqueline (Jackie) the daughter of our dead son, Buster, completed her training at Middleburg in the Netherlands as a nursery teacher, and moved into a flat of her own. Her mother, Leni, died in the winter of 1985, but Jackie still keeps in touch with us.

Late in 1984 Babs' brother Jim's widow died after a long illness. We called her the Dink (an old Bristol word) although her name was Dorothy.

I kept in touch with only one of my former workmates, Cecil Steggles. Just

before Christmas 1984 he died. From correspondence I had with my union I learned that four or five of my colleagues at the Herald had passed on at about this time, all in their 80s. This suggests that telegraphists are a long-lived race.

I exchange notes with my old Eastbourne friends, Win and Arthur Smith, both over 80 years old !

I mentioned earlier that the friendship with an old schoolfellow, Ronald (Bunt) Martin, had come to an end in the early 40s. I was pleased to get a phone call from him early in 1984. His golden wedding had supplied him with the impulse to seek me out. He and his wife, Hephzibah, live in retirement in Hove. We exchange letters and visits. I am delighted that this friendship will prove lifelong after all, albeit with a gap of 40 years. Bunt is a successful artist: Jen and I travelled down to Worthing to see one of his one-man shows.

At about Christmastide 1985 two old friends died. One was Bill Tofts my friend from the very start of the Thames Valley Morris Men, the other was Eric Yates my friend from our schooldays together in Eastbourne.

Babs was for some months in 1982/3 continually unwell. An injury to her leg while cycling took her to the doctor where it was discovered she was suffering from high blood pressure. Although the condition responded to treatment, she unfortunately had to give up playing bowls. She then had an attack of shingles and also some digestive problems which still trouble her from time to time.

My arthritic knees (overmuch morris dancing ?) sent me to hospital where I was offered surgery. Dr. Clive, grandson-in-law, suggested pain killer rather than surgery and this option I chose. Round about this time I

suffered injuries from two falls. In the first I fractured my wrist. In the second, while walking in the Cheviot hills, the fall damaged ribs and lungs and I developed pneumonia. Increasing lameness and diminished need of my help at the garage caused me to leave Salters. I am able to continue gardening and do so in my own, and Jen's, and, occasionally, in a neighbour's. In early 1985 trouble with my hand took me again to the doctor. This led to my attending the National Hospital for Nervous Diseases for a carpal tunnel decompression and ulnar nerve transposition in my right arm. It is possible the same operation will have to be done to my left arm. Other signs of old age are failing eyesight and hearing !

In the autumn of 1983 I stood down from the job of bagman (secretary) of the Thames Valley Morris Men. In the following January the morris men arranged a party to celebrate this retirement and also my 80th birthday. There was champagne and flowers and many gifts. Babs was included in the ceremony. Several men travelled far across the country to attend and the thirty morris men and their families had the liveliest and happiest of parties.

I continued as chairman of the Claygate branch of the Labour Party and, when occasion arose, acted as agent for election candidates. I was honoured by the national party to receive its Award of Merit. I cannot think my services deserved such an award but, of course, my membership of the Party is longstanding dating back to 1945. I joined my union as far back as 1926. The Claygate members arranged a party on my 81st birthday and two Labour Party M.P.s travelled down from the House of Commons to make the presentation. Babs was included in the ceremony and our daughters, Jen and

Margot, attended.

Babs and my renewed friendship with Bunt and Hep Martin continued. On returning from Hove one evening I realised I was not seeing well. It was found that I had lost centre vision. After treatment, including use of laser beam, the condition was stabilised but I am now partially sighted. I had to stop car driving: I gave the Morris Oxford to grandson Nigel. I held a driving licence for 65 years. In 1922 no test was required of a driver and I have never taken a test. The licence allows me to drive any class of vehicle, including steam rollers ! I ride Babs' bicycle carefully round the village. I can read only with great difficulty and therefore stood down from the chairmanship of the local Labour Party. I did, however, allow my name to be used as a straw candidate in the local elections of 1986 and 1987. I could take no part in the General Election campaign of June 1987 but share the disappointment at the very bad result !

In May 1986 Jen and Bujie arranged a party in Wisley R.H.S. gardens to celebrate Babs' 80th birthday. Many friends and as many of the family who were able attended. The two great-grandchildren, Neil and Victoria, wore little tabards inscribed 'Happy Birthday' and '80'. It was a very happy celebration.

Sadly, one of the guests at the party, Margot Nichols, died a few months later at Christmastide. She was one of our long time H.F. friends and godmother to granddaughter Helen.

Babs loves cats but had given up having one after several had been killed by traffic in Hare Lane. When we moved to Telegraph Lane she decided to try again but with no greater success. However, for the last few months we have been 'adopted' by a neighbour's cat which spends its days with us and

returns home at night. Babs enjoys feeding it as well as the garden birds and hedgehogs.

We both watch a great deal of television. I think that while some of the programmes are poor and a few are objectionable, a remarkably high proportion is excellent. One gets out of television, as with other things, just as much as one brings to it. This is true of radio programmes, too. I seldom read a newspaper nowadays - no one pays me to do so as they used to ! I am aware of what goes on in the world from broadcast news and by reading, every week and cover to cover, the New Stateman.

Babs and I seldom go out nowadays: Babs almost never. She is very frail and tires easily but keeps up successfully with her household duties. I cannot find words to express my love for her and my gratitude to her for the care she has taken of me for almost 60 years.

CHAPTER TWENTYFOUR

The story of my activities, experiences and thoughts is of little worth: it takes on any significance it may have in that my lifetime has spanned a period of change that has occurred at an almost incredible speed.

When I stand on Fallen Sands and see in the mighty cliffs of Beachy Head the innumerable lines of flint in the chalk, each one having been an ocean floor for vast stretches of time, I think what has happened to the human race in the last millenium and then of what had happened to it during the span of my life.

The internal combustion engine and the motorcar appeared only a decade before my birth. Electricity and the telegraph came into use at about the same time. Photography is not much older and has reached an astonishing degree of sophistication in recent decades. The "wireless" and later television, almost unimaginable when I was born, started after I did. Men have learned to fly their heavier than air machines in this century. Nuclear fission and space travel are conceptions of the last half century. Armstrong, first man on the moon, could not have known about digital watches. We have gone from multiplication tables to the micro-chip and brain-scanning in half a lifetime.

Developments in long known skills and disciplines have been equally rapid. Medicine and surgery have made gigantic strides in development in this century: formerly fatal diseases have been eradicated - although some new ones have made their appearance. Man has learned to breed new plants and how to fertilise them artificially. We now have man-made fibres and that so useful but unattractive material "plastic". Man has, in this century,

advanced his knowledge far and fast but, in my view, has failed to match it with an increase in wisdom.

The things I have listed above are usually taken to be marks of progress but, I regret to say, I have to be numbered among the doomsday men. I have to conclude that mankind is a noxious species: it creeps over the world destroying it just as the "crown of thorns" creature creeps over and destroys the beautiful Great Barrier Reef of Australia. The world's resources are being squandered. The world population will double in the next half century. Our numbers in these islands remained stable for millenia but, one recalls for example, in Shakespeare's time our numbers were 8 million, when I was a child they were 40 million and now they are 55 million. Animal and plant species disappear one after another. Cousteau has noted that three quarters of the world's oceans are now deserts due to pollution. The African littoral of the Mediterranean was a granary in Roman times: now it is a desert advancing a mile or two every year. Europeans used farming methods that kept their system stable and preserved fertility for hundreds of years. Then they went to America and, in their ignorance and greed, produced the dust bowl in a decade. In North America, too, the oil drawn from fossil remains was used up in just over 100 years - towards the end of that time for fuelling the B52s flying over and destroying the teak forests and paddy fields of Vietnam.

This list is almost endless. Brazilian farmers are now forced to cease food-growing in order to cultivate sugar for alcohol to fuel motor cars. In South America, too, the vast rain forests of the Amazon are being cleared rapidly to leave new deserts. The Chinese have long since removed the forests at the heads of the Yangtse and Yellow rivers and so allowed the

soil to wash down those rivers to make the Yellow Sea.

I gather that, speaking biologically, a species that refuses to stop competing with itself, as does homo sapiens (sapiens ?) in wars and other forms of strife and does not turn to the necessary struggle with its environment, will become extinct.

A genocide is complete in Tasmania, nearly so in Australia, in progress in Britrea and there is the possibility of one if the environment of the Samid people in the Arctic is destroyed by hydro-electric schemes. The frame of mind behind the making and enjoying of film stories full of casual slaughter is, I think, appalling.

My own conclusion is that mankind will not survive. Time, measured by the flints in the cliffs of Beachy Head, suggest that, relatively, mankind has existed here for the space of time taken for the blink of an eyelid. I think its time here is nearly over. Having used up the earth's resources and having used the nuclear bomb, which it almost certainly will, mankind will have destroyed life on earth and the planet will be left, a radio active desert, trundling endlessly in space. I see no sort of chance that mankind will so much change its mind as to make efforts to avoid this fate. The lemmings appear to be wiser than we are: they send only some of their number to death. The remainder survive in their re-balanced habitat.

Could this terrible scenario have been different ? I think it could. If the members of the human race had been able to realise that each belonged to the other and that to damage another damaged oneself history might have taken a different course. This concept has long been in the minds of many men and women. The expression of it I like best is John Donne's:

"No man is an island, intire of itself; every man is a piece of the

Continent, a part of the maine; if a Clod had been washed away by the Sea, Europe is the Lesse ... any mans death diminishes me, because I am involved in Mankinde; and therefore never send to know for whom the bell tolls: It tolls for thee."

If the rulers of the world held this view they would not for a moment contemplate the manufacture and use of a nuclear bomb for any reason at all. To threaten to use it in the defence of freedom is, I think, perverse. Freedom, though valuable, must always be limited. The richest oil sheik is constrained to drive on the left side of the road in this country. In my opinion justice is a higher and much more valuable concept than freedom.

Lincoln's Gettysburg speech is, I believe, so often misquoted. The pursuit of happiness is mere hedonism and is self-defeating. To prepare a nuclear bomb can have no sort of happiness about it. To care for a family, to cultivate a garden or farm, to make some music or build a fine building are the pursuits of happiness.

The views I set out above of the dire straits to which the human race has reduced itself should, it may be thought, make me an unhappy man. It does not. I realise that, though living through so many public troubles, I have been very little affected by them. I was too young for the first world war, too old for the second and, probably, will be dead by the third. I have never been seriously ill nor have any of my immediate family. I and my family have never been hungry or without a comfortable home. I have always had a modestly well paid job. I have always been busy. I have lived for all but a decade in quite unusually pleasant places, Eastbourne and Claygate.

The very black shadow over my family's life was the death of our son Christopher (Buster).

A source of satisfaction to me is the part I have played in the life of

our community and in so doing have made a very big number of friends. I initiated the Claygate branch of the county library. I took a parents' part in the schools where our children were educated. I helped teach cricket and football to several generations of schoolboys. I helped defend Claygate by membership of the Home Guard ! I helped in local and national government by membership of the Labour Party. I took an active and leading part in my trade union. I danced with my neighbours and assisted in this by taking part in the organisation of the dancing. I founded the Thames Valley Morris Men and instruct many young men in this activity. I helped administer the law locally by membership of the Kingston-upon-Thames bench of magistrates. At work in the newspaper industry I helped keep people informed of events, large and small.

This, then, is mine: this is my story. I had thought to call it the rattle of a simple man or the story of a nobody but other people have used these phrases. I reflect that Xavier made a book of a Voyage autour ma Chambre so I allowed myself to write my trivial tale.

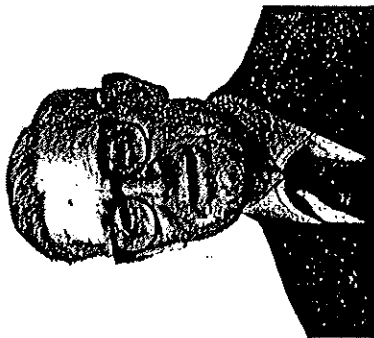
It is, perhaps, not quite finished but at my age there cannot be much more to tell ! I do not look forward to death but I contemplate it with equanimity. I find comfort in the idea of what Shakespeare called "mere oblivion".

ELMBRIDGE BOROUGH COUNCIL

ELECTIONS

THURS 8th MAY 1986

A MESSAGE FROM YOUR LABOUR CANDIDATE



Cyril Douglas Smith moved, with his wife and daughter, into Claygate in 1935. In the fifty years since then he and his family have been closely involved in the life of the village.

C. D. Smith was a Telegraphist and for 39 years until retirement worked on the old Daily Herald. Before becoming Head of his Department he was for 25 years Father of the Wire Room Chapel. For 21 years he was Chairman of the London Branch of his Union.

From 1945 for 18 years he was Chairman of the Esher Constituency Labour Party and was lately Chairman of the Claygate Branch.

In 1951 he was appointed a Justice of the Peace and for 24 years was a very active member of the Kingston-on-Thames Bench; he is now on the Supplemental List.

For more than 30 years he has led out his Morris Dancers on Boxing Day in Claygate!

To THE VOTERS OF CLAYGATE

I am asking you to vote for me as the LABOUR PARTY Candidate in the Elmbridge Borough Council Election on Thursday, 8 May 1986. I want you to do this to indicate your support of the philosophy, aims and actions of the Labour Party both locally and nationwide.

It is of great value to the Labour Party to be aware of support throughout the country.

On this occasion please do not vote tactically, that is cast a vote for a candidate you do not support in order to keep out another.

I must try to outline the philosophy, aims and actions of the Labour Party.....

**SERVING OUR COMMUNITY
VOTE LABOUR MAY 8**

Printed by the General, Municipal, Boilermakers & Allied Trades Union, Thorne House, Claygate, Surrey. Published by M. J. Beirne, 2 Rosehill, Claygate, Surrey.

THE PHILOSOPHY of the Labour Party

is based on the belief that individual welfare is best secured by linking it closely with the welfare of the whole community. This is the opposite to the philosophy of the other political parties which is that everyone should seek his or her own best interest - and devil take the hindmost.

Insecurity and unemployment are the very devil.

THE AIMS of the Labour Party

are, broadly, to arrange a just society, to secure a fair distribution of the community's wealth, to provide homes for the homeless, to make available to everyone health, education, welfare and transport services, to guard the environment and to avoid conflict in the world.

To fill all these needs and, through the markets of the world, the needs of our neighbours abroad, requires the efforts of the whole of our working community.

THE ACTIONS of the Labour Party

can be well illustrated by describing those of the Labour Group on the Elmbridge Council.

The five Labour Councillors give their attention constantly to the improvement of the services the Council provides. This includes the upkeep of roads and sidewalks, the easing of traffic problems, the provision of car parks, the preservation of green ribbon by the Thames and riverside walks along the Mole. Pollution in its various forms has to be prevented. Labour Councillors resist the selling-off of school premises and grounds and pieces of woodland to private speculators.

The Labour Group would wish to have the Council build more houses but this is barred by the present central government's restrictions. The Group is firmly against any encroachment on the Green Belt and has the strongest possible objections to the Elmbridge Mall project.

The Labour Councillors have persuaded the Council to spend relatively small sums of money in improved waste disposal and on more maintenance of public halls. They have also managed to get holiday schools going. The Council will not go further in useful public spending although, as a result of its budgetting, there is a balance of £2,500,000. So, say the Labour Councillors, let us give back this idle money to the ratepayers. They urge a penny reduction in the Elmbridge rate. The amount of money so returned would be derisory to the well-to-do, but useful to those of us who are less well-off.

In several wards of the borough there are no Youth Clubs. The Labour Group favours giving support to the youngsters' activities. Incidentally, Claygate Labour Party is the only local political organisation to give financial support to the new Claygate Village Youth Club

The kind of approach to local government problems and the efforts to deal with them by Labour's representatives on Elmbridge Borough Council should, I suggest, be supported.

Therefore, I ASK YOU TO VOTE FOR ME AS THE LABOUR PARTY CANDIDATE for CLAYGATE in the election on THURSDAY, 8 May.

C. D. SMITH

I am grateful to my younger daughter, Margot, for her suggestion that my story be word-processed, to my elder daughter, Jennifer, for her help in the final arrangement of material, to Sue Scott, of Codsall near Wolverhampton, for processing and printing it, and to Ruth (Databasics) for binding it.

October 1987.

C.D. Smith.