





*THE EDUCATION OF IRIS MACFARLANE*  
1922-1939

*Compiled by Alan Macfarlanwe*

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## **Sources and thanks**

Iris wrote a detailed unpublished account in about 1980, 'Going Back', and later a synthesis in 'Daughters of the Empire' (the longer version is used here) in about 2000. Contemporary sources include: letters, diaries, photographs, school reports, poems and pieces in the St. Catherine's school magazine. I am grateful to Richard and Rosemary Christophers for various comments on an earlier draft. I particularly thank Pam Turbett who typed a number of the documents included, and for Sarah Harrison for all her support and advice.

## Introduction by Alan Macfarlane

This is the first volume of a series of books which cover the first fifty-five years of the life of my mother Iris Macfarlane (1922-2007). They are mainly based on her letters, but also on diaries, articles and other writings. In this introduction I will briefly explain why it is worth documenting the life of a remarkable woman who has influenced me so deeply.

\*

My mother Iris was born in Quetta (now Pakistan) on 22nd July 1922, the first daughter and third child of William and Violet Rhodes James. Her father was an officer in the Indian army and Iris was left at home in England at the age of five to be educated. She went to India when she was sixteen and in March 1941 she married my father Donald Macfarlane (Mac).

Donald was born on 31st October 1916 in El Paso, Texas. The family returned to Scotland from Texas when he was twelve and he went to school at Dollar School and then trained as an engineer in Glasgow. He had gone out to work on a tea plantation in 1936, but had always wanted to go back to a land he had known as a child and young man, especially the west of Scotland where the Macfarlane family had lived for several centuries.

Iris had three children in the years between 1941-6 and mainly lived until 1965 on tea gardens in Assam, where Mac was a manager with the Assam Tea Company. Iris and Mac retired to the Lake District in 1965 and soon decided to follow their dreams, conceived during the war years in India, of owning a small house and croft in the Highlands and Islands. So, in 1968 they bought a croft with twenty acres of land, including two small lochs, peat-digging rights and a bay for the lobster boat my father would buy. The final volume ends with the death of my father there in 1977.

\*

Iris' character was deeply shaped by her childhood and early schooling, left in England at five when her parents returned to India, and unhappy at a series of six schools. She often felt a failure and an outsider with her polio-damaged leg, yet also quietly confident of her mind and spirit. Her experience made her particularly sensitive to the poor and outcaste, but also filled her with a rebelliousness, an unusual critical and left-leaning view for a girl of her middle class, Raj, background.

Iris' own talents are evident enough from her writings. She was a gifted poet, a small collection of her poetry which I discovered after her death and published as *Love's Legacy* (2013) attests to this. Iris was a historian. She had written a pioneering early account of the myths surrounding the supposed atrocity of *The Black Hole* (1975) of Calcutta. She had written a number of articles on Indian history for *History Today*. This interest in history was encouraged by her collaboration with me, for I studied history for six years at Oxford University.

She had been part of the revolution in local history and the reconstruction of historical communities, as well as helping to polish and re-shape my first book, *The Family Life of Ralph Josselin* (1970), and later to edit the very full *Diary of Ralph Josselin* with Sarah Harrison for the British Academy (1976).

Iris was a good linguist and loved language. She later learnt Assamese sufficiently well to translate the folk stories published as *Myths and Legends from India* (1965). She learnt Gaelic well enough to do a popular translation of J.F. Campbell's *Folk Tales from the West of Scotland* in her *The Mouth of the Night* (1973) and her interest is shown in many of the articles.

She loved children and entered their world in play, and in her two children's books, the second, an autobiographical study of her own lameness, written on the island and published as *The Summer of the Lame Seagull* (1970) and the first about her daughters' childhood on an enchanted Assamese tea garden, *The Children of Bird God Hill* (1968). She also wrote an unpublished children's book, *The Sleepers in the Cave* set around the possibilities of oil extraction off the island.

Iris adored animals, finding in them the unconditional love which she had sought all her life. She described them, and her relationship to them, with an eye for detail and a tender humour which is unusual. Iris loved the natural world, flowers, grasses, rocks, clouds, mountains, mists, seas and sunsets, and this comes through in much of her writing.

Iris was very interested in religion and philosophy. She had tried to be a devout Christian in her school days, but later during her time in India she began to find deeper meaning and satisfaction in Hinduism and especially Buddhism.

In her seventies, widowed and poor, she took a degree in philosophy at the Open University, and soon mastered Kant, Hegel and David Hume, gaining a first-class level in the exams for the third year of the course, which they had accidentally sent her in the first year.

Iris loved literature, reading omnivorously, especially her favourite authors such as George Orwell, Thoreau, Virginia Woolf and others mentioned in the articles.

Above all, Iris had great curiosity, combined with a strong sense of the ridiculous, pomposity, cant and pretentiousness. This was fortified by an excellent memory and an eye for microscopic detail.

So this is the first volume, which then proceeds into others. It continues in *Indian Infancy 1939-1947* (2020) and then *Twenty Years in Tea 1947-1965* (2020). It is elaborated and expanded in the numerous letters and other materials in the nine volumes of my own autobiography (available as pdf downloads under 'Life' on [www.alanmacfarlane.com](http://www.alanmacfarlane.com)). Inevitably some of the contents in this volume are jeujeune and childish, and some of the memories which are included from later writing are distorted by time and the demands of literary presentation, nevertheless this appears to me to be a crucial first step. They record with the remarkable honesty and wit which was characteristic of her whole life, a world on the cusp of war as seen through the eyes of a highly observant and intelligent young person.

## 1. Birth and Infancy, aged 0-5, 1922-7

Iris Macfarlane was born in Quetta, India (now Pakistan), on 22 July 1922. She describes these first five years in an earlier unpublished draft of her *Daughters of the Empire* (2006).

After two sons, my arrival was welcome. My father was ill with dysentery in the hospital in Quetta where I was born four months after their arrival from Burma, and as my mother said goodnight to him and returned to her room, she promised him a daughter by morning. She kept the promise, with some pain and difficulty; but the stories of all her labours were colourful, with addenda like, "And the doctor said I must never have another". She had five children in fact, with only minor problems afterwards.

The only other verse about Quetta was the one about my christening. I had started out for the church with the name Anne decided, but the sight of wild irises growing in a Mahommedan graveyard inspired my mother to call me after them. Strangely this charming whim, which gave me a name I hated, was proved to be a figment of her always fertile imagination, because I later found my christening certificate which showed that I was a year old and in Sidmouth when I was baptised. Being July, it was unlikely there were wild irises there, but, for whatever reason, I got the name and missed being called after my adored grandmother.

My father's persistent dysentery gave him sick leave eight months later, and the five of us set off on what was to be the most significant boat trip of my life. Half way through the voyage I was "a bit seedy" said my mother, and my right leg appeared "sort of shrivelled". Not a lot was made of this however, and on our arrival we went into a hotel in London and my mother departed from there for a week in hospital to be "tidied up" after my birth. A letter from my father to her describes me as being adorable and in the care of a nursemaid. The whole thing seems initially to have been treated very lightheartedly, strangely so since infantile paralysis was a well known ailment, with possibly devastating effects.

We all went back to India at the end of that leave, and presumably during the next four years the truth became apparent as my right leg failed to fill out and was a couple of inches shorter than the other. The subject was never discussed in the family; a sort of embarrassment hung over it. My mother hated disfigurement of any kind, and it must have been a sore trial, perhaps even a Curse, that her only daughter was disabled. Treatment of polio then meant leg irons even in bed, and, a little later on, surgical boots. Luckily, her three sons (Monty was born a couple of years after me) were handsome and a credit to her.

Half of my growing up was filled with the assurance that my leg would get better, "When I'm about thirteen," I told my friends with complete confidence. What was going to happen at that magical age to allow me to take off my splinted boots and watch the muscles return to lift the dropped foot I don't know. I just knew that a miracle would occur, that a sort of drawbridge would be let down over which I would walk without a limp into the second half of my growing up. The rather unpleasant treatment, when rubber bands were buttoned round my calf and electric currents passed through, helped towards this happy moment, and would also end at thirteen.

There was never an exact moment when I realised this miracle would not occur, and that I was stuck with my leg for life. The specialists and the treatments quietly petered out, and after thirteen my life became dedicated instead to trying to hide my Bad Leg from the public gaze. To cross a room became an exercise in camouflage. Even in the

hottest summers and the summers of the thirties came very hot I carried a coat over my right arm, to drape itself down my side and conceal my leg. Neither my mother or aunts thought of dressing me in slacks, which would have greatly eased the situation. I dreamt and schemed of buying myself a pair, but pocket money was inadequate and dress allowances unthought of.

My nickname in the family was Jane, short for Plain Jane, so by the time I was educated and ready to be taken out to India to find a husband, my chances were considered, especially by me, to be poor. A third crippling disadvantage was a good brain. Men hated clever women, my mother never ceased to point out, and even quite old, very clever men in the Indian Civil Service would prefer not to have the silence in their remote outposts disturbed by intelligent conversation. Their presence as potential husbands for me nevertheless cheered us all.

Looking back, my polio could be considered as one of the great character forming experiences of my early years, like living with Aunt Margery and being sent to boarding school at six. My son says that nothing in his life has ever approached the horrors of prep school, but perhaps these periods of pain and fear strengthen some deep centre of a young spirit and could be likened to initiation ceremonies when young African boys are sent into huts to be isolated and humiliated. Perhaps that is why my toughness now is often compared to that of an old boot. Certainly, boots have been an important part of my life, and long periods dedicated to lacing them up.

When we came home for the second time, my two elder brothers, Billy and Richard, and I were left there at school, aged ten, eight and six. Monty who was four was taken back to India, there to die. He was the third small boy sacrificed to the East; he died of dysentery, not diphtheria like the other two. Glen, though he died in Blackheath, could still be considered a sacrificial victim, since his parents presence might well have saved him. It might well not, though the "if onlys" echoed on and on in the minds of all the desolated parents.

I'd been sending money home  
And Thomas Cook was supposed to meet us  
At Bordigera. Not a sign.  
So we had to leave the boat.

This disembarkation half way home on Christmas Eve became one of my mother's best stories. Her version that she had been sending regular sums of money to Thomas Cooks, and their agent was supposed to have it in his hand for them at Bordigera, but never turned up takes some believing. Whatever the reason, we couldn't afford to carry on to England, and the first half of our leave was spent in Italy. I remember streets like stone staircases and women washing in troughs in a public square. What could have been a disaster turned into an interesting holiday. The boys were sent to a local school and my parents joined the English community in walks and outings. When we eventually got home to Sidmouth pictures show us in woollen bathing suits drooping round our calves, our wet hair blown by a sandy wind, makes one wonder why they ever bothered to leave Italy.

The main purpose of the return was to settle us in school. My father departed back to India, and I only saw him twice more during my childhood; a passing stranger for whom my feelings were completely neutral. My mother stayed at home, and we rented a house in Berkhamstead. It was very small but we had a cook general and her daughter as a daily to help run it. She was called Mrs Carver, appropriately as she was a quick tempered lady who hurled bone handled knives at her daughter when

annoyed. I was terrified of her. Bank statements of the time show my mother to have been overdrawn by £200 on the average, a tidy sum, but she still talked in her letters about the necessity of a living in governess. The kind of poverty of which we were always being reminded in our childhoods, that kept our pocket money to the minimum and meant wearing school clothes in the holidays, never envisaged anything so drastic as doing without servants.

## PHOTOGRAPHS



Iris (centre left) in Simla, aged one, in 1923, with her mother and Richard and Billy.





The family in Sidmouth, summer 1923, from left, Billy, Violet, Iris (on knee), Richard, Will's father, standing on right, with his mother (furs and hat) in front.



Iris in Sidmouth, summer 1923, aged just under a year.



Iris aged about two with brothers



Iris aged about four, Bordighera, Italy, Winter 1926



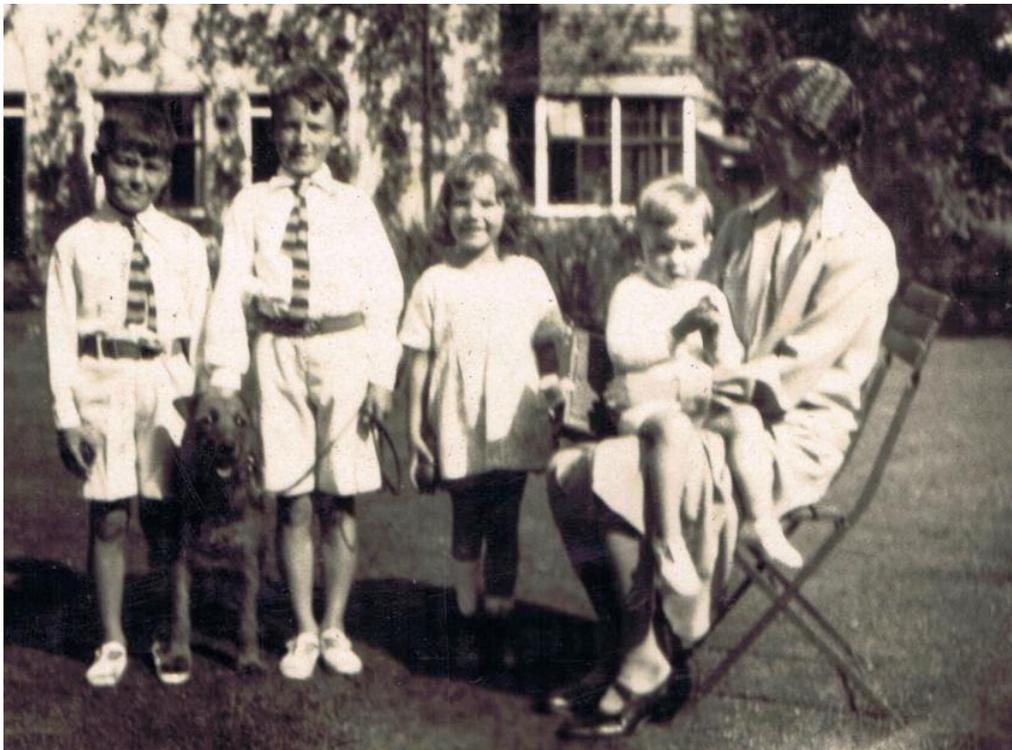
Will and children by sea in England – c. 1927



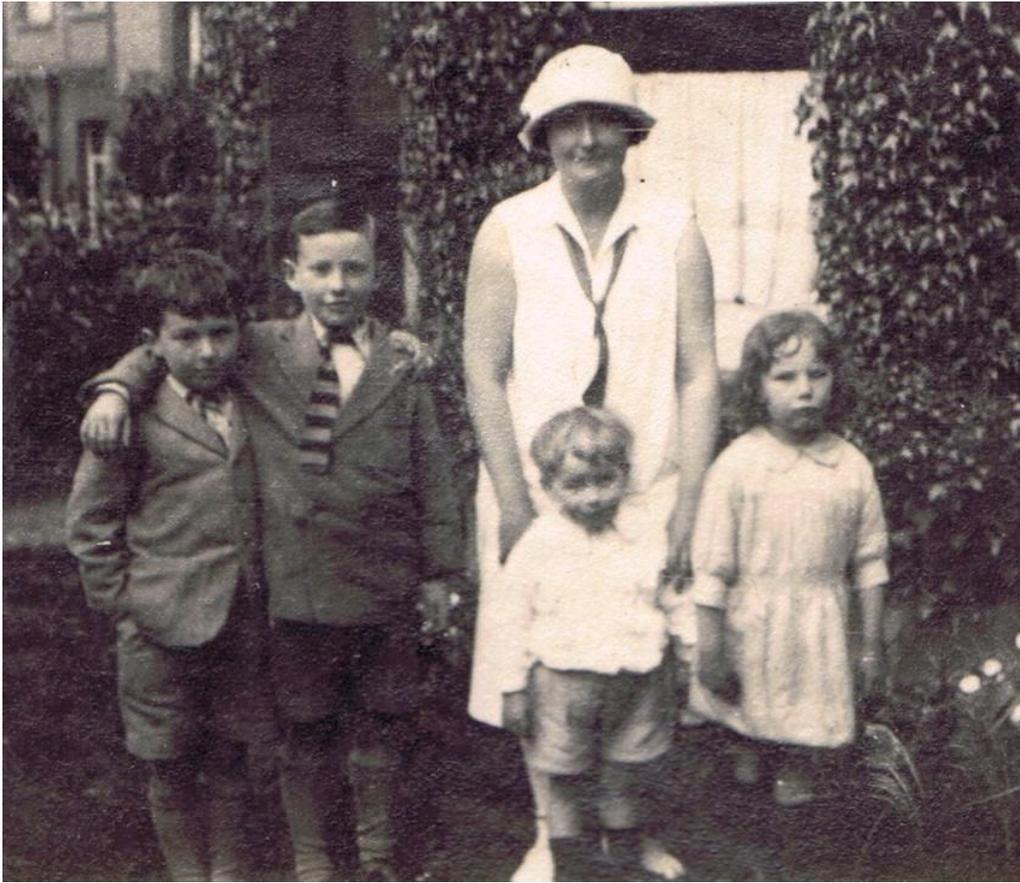
Iris aged about four in fancy dress



Iris (aged five) and Monty Photographed in Sidmouth, 1927



Iris aged about five at Sidmouth with brothers, with Aunt Irene



Iris aged five with brothers and Violet



Iris aged about five at sea with two boys and perhaps grandmother Anne

## 2. Corran and Potten End, aged 6-7, c.1928-1930

During this period Violet and Monty (aged four, quite soon to die of dysentery) returned to India, leaving Billy (ten), Richard (eight) and Iris (six) at school in England.

In the earlier version of 'Daughters', Iris described her memories.

I went to my first school in Berkhamstead, and a letter written by my mother sent my father the comforting assurance that he need have no thought for my education; she had been told by the headmistress that I was the brightest child she had ever had under her roof; a small one admittedly. Instead of pondering how best to train their little prodigy they both, it seems, heaved sighs of relief that she would need only a passing pat on the head as she went on her clever little way. In fact it became their ultimate care to try to damp down my fires of intellect and to steer me away from becoming a blue stocking. I was sixty before my mother told me that I had been offered a scholarship to Oxford, but of course she had taken me to India instead.

Berkhamstead is a blur from which emerge sharp and disconnected pictures: of getting lost on the way back from school and wandering unfamiliar streets with a panic I can still feel; of sitting on the doorstep shelling peas and suddenly remembering I should have been going to tea with a friend and being overwhelmed with shame and horror; these feelings were disproportionately stronger than the events which caused them. There was ecstasy too, when my mother brought home a tortoise, and agony when it disappeared. There was no sense that this was the end of the beginning, that the family was about to break into pieces and never really assemble again.

When my mother went back to India, my brothers went as boarders to Berkhamstead School, and I to a school in Watford. I was six and a half. I remember, on the evening that she left, sitting by the window of the Common Room with the laurels tapping against the glass; night, and rain and aloneness of a kind so desolating that all other separations have taken me back to feel that coldness against my cheek, and the night wind shaking the wetness from the leaves in the huge blackness of the world. I remember the tune that was running through my head, "Massa's in de cold, cold ground". I hummed it mournfully, as I still do whenever melancholy envelops me.

I was, I think, the youngest pupil in the school, which was called Corran, and so always the one accused of making smells and being banished to the lavatory; and never getting within yards of the thick grey iron radiators which were never more than tepid even when I got to touch them. I was also young enough to be taken in by stories told to me by the older girls of eight and nine, about the instruments of torture kept in the room of Miss Norris the headmistress. Thumb screws and lighted tapers were the very least you could expect if ever summoned to her presence, and there were some offences so terrible that they led to having earwigs introduced into one ear, to chomp their way across your brain in order to get out of the other.

One of these was to use the front staircase, which in fact led to the hall outside the headmistress's study. A delicious shiver of fear shook us as we stood at the top of the stairs and dared one another to run down them. Luckily I had found out about Jesus being a friend of little children, and asked him every night, Never, Never I beg of Thee allow anyone to push me down the Staircase. But there came a day when I had no

choice but to use it. The varnish under Proust's little fingers made no greater impact than did those banisters under mine.

The eight year olds had been chasing me, with frightful threats that made me feel my only escape was down the Staircase. I stood trembling at the top, weighing up the terrifying alternatives, stroking the glossy wood, imagining Miss Norris waiting like a spider outside her front door to drag me into her web and torture me. In the end I went down, jelly slithering from a spoon. No Miss Norris; only when I got back to the Common Room an inquisition. How had I got back without being seen? Had I gone down the Staircase? Had I? Had I? I'll start at the beginning, I said, but they didn't want the beginning, they wanted to know about the stairs and if they could Report me. I'll get to that, I said; and then the bell rang for chapel. I used every second of the time on my knees making pacts with Jesus; my whole entire life was offered in lieu of a lapse of memory on the part of my persecutors. And He heard me. Not another word was said about the stairs. It was a miracle to compare with the loaves and fishes. Not my entire life, but the next six years were spent in being grateful and reasonably dedicated to His service.

One other memory returns very clearly from the Watford school. I was out on the playing field jumping up and down while the other girls practised shooting at netball. Like a dog waiting for a stick from an absentminded master's hand, I hoped for a ball to be thrown my way. Suddenly I saw Matron plodding across the field towards us. I can see her still as a matter of fact, stiff and upright with her starched cap blowing in the breeze. With a solemn face she told me that the headmistress wished to speak to me, and led me away. No prisoner on her way to the gallows could have felt more terrified.

Miss Norris only saw you for torture or things like Being Expelled. Matron took me into her room wordlessly, and left me standing in front of her desk. She was resting her beige woollen bosom on the blotting paper in front of her, and beckoned me forward. I was so stiff with terror I couldn't even turn my head to look for thumb screws. She had a letter on the desk, and told me it was from my mother. My little brother in India had been very ill, so ill in fact that in the end he hadn't been able to live. I still remember that she couldn't use the word "died"; his inability to live sounded less final, a slow sliding away in easy stages. The news, in whatever guise, came to me as excruciating relief.

There was a puzzled look on Miss Norris's face, not expecting the broad grin that greeted her news. Now there were to be no lighted tapers beneath my nails, no earwigs plodding across my brain. Back at the netball post I told the girls that my brother had died and they crowded round patting my back and saying, "Rotten luck" and "Gosh you're being brave". For several days they allowed me near the radiator, and offered acid drops. I wondered if I had no other relations I could offer up to prolong this lovely amnesty. It was the first of several occasions when I felt an inappropriate inability to grieve.

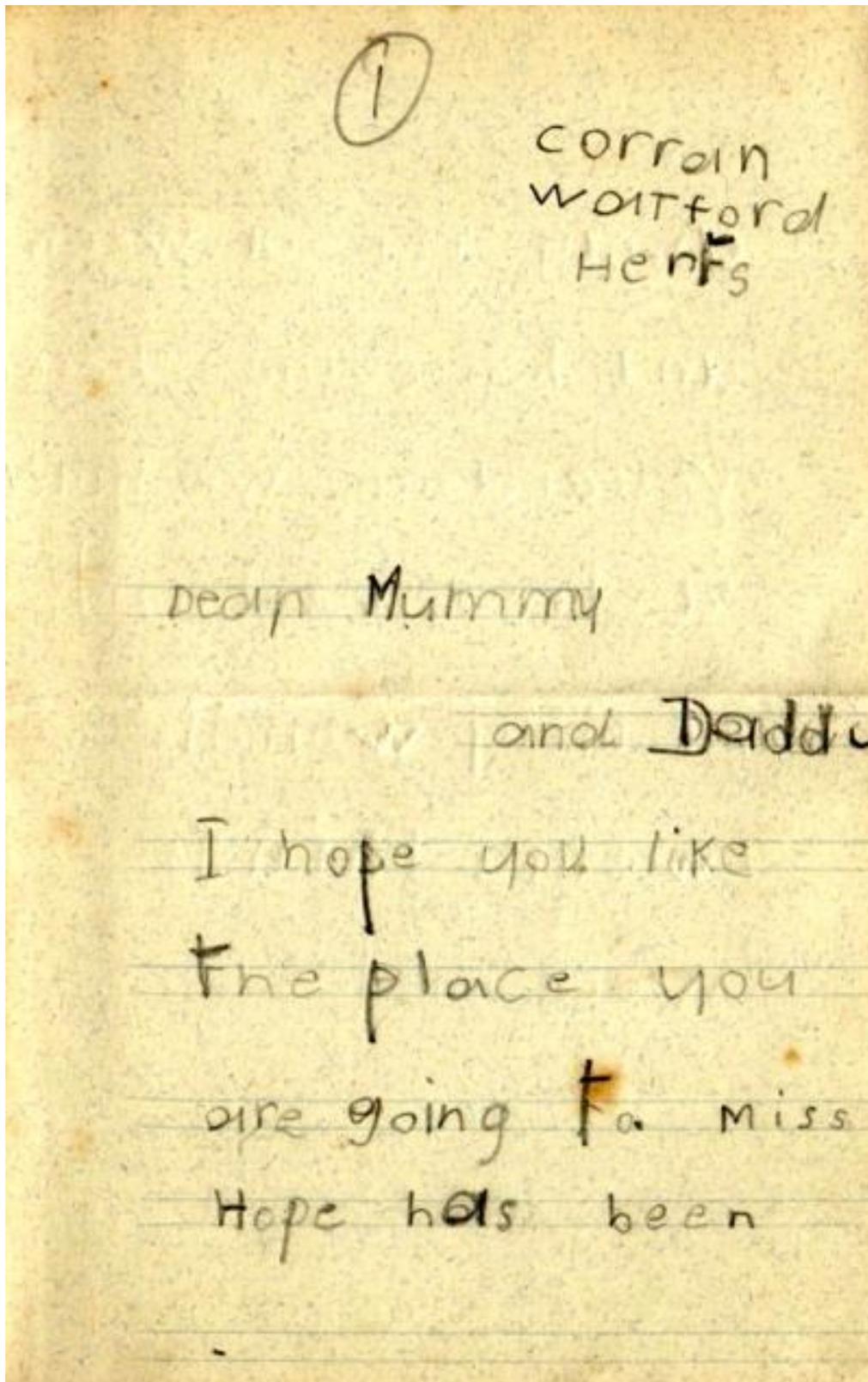
In the holidays, my brothers and I went to the vicarage at Potten End, which was run as a Holiday Home for children abandoned in the interests of Empire; these proliferated in much the same way as old people's homes have done in the last decade. The vicar was a very old man with a long beard which spent most of its time resting on the sheet in front of him, dusted with crumbs; he always appears in my memory in bed in a room that was dark and unaired and full of the smells of his illness, whatever that was. I can't remember his wife, but he had a daughter, Kitty, who once did a handstand at the bottom of his bed, revealing white serge knickers stained with blood. It is a curious picture; the sick vicar, Kitty's stout legs swaying in the yellowish air to amuse a six year old who was not amused; only worried at whether to point out to Kitty that she had cut herself.

We roamed the vicarage grounds, my brothers and I and several other orphans of the Raj, and the moor behind which was threaded with little paths which I made into the roads of a private kingdom. This I shared with Jesus and a collection of animals, whose daily job it was to hunt and bring back into bracken dens fruit cake and thick slices of spotted dick, my favourite suet pudding. Jesus in his white nightdress and the tigers and bears and green-eyed wolves sat in the bracken and we all ate imaginary meals, to try to fill the gap left by the sparse vicarage fare. Presumably, they could only make a profit by keeping us short, which I never questioned, but the bitter smell of bracken still brings back hunger and a circle of nonexistent animals.

Once we went on an outing with the Women's Friendly Society to Hampton Court, and were allowed to eat as many cucumber sandwiches as we liked; oh the bliss of a stomach absolutely full of damp bread filled with green slime. When I wasn't on the moor with Jesus, I was planning how not to be seen going in and out of the lavatory, which was a shed in the garden. The shame of being seen to use it could not be borne, so I scouted round the bushes and dived in when the coast was clear. Coming out was more difficult, and meant standing on the seat and peering out the back window; even then there was always the risk of bumping into the gardener as you slid out. When my young friends worry whether they can leave their six year olds for a weekend with Granny without causing traumas, I am reminded of that small figure tiptoe on the lavatory seat, or crouching in the bracken eating dream meals.

## CORAN LETTERS

These are not always dated, so the order is approximate



away for a week  
and has come back  
yesterday. we had  
a treasure hunt  
and Billy won it  
twenty things  
were hidden. and  
I got twelve  
and Richard got

13

~~got~~ Love from

Iris

(2)

Corrain  
Walford  
Herts



My Dear Mummy  
and Daddy

I hope you  
are quite well

Thank you  
for your letter

we had a

lovely Easter,

and I had

lots of Easter

eggs. I had

a lovely one

that Uncle

Ernest sent me.

love from

xoxo Iris o x o x o

③

Corran  
Watford  
Herts.

---

MY DEAR MUMMY

Thank you very

much for the

lovely letter

you sent me I

like it very

much. we had

a lot of Party's

Here. we had

a lovely time

at Peter Pan.

we saw the

mermaids Lagoon.

The part I

like best is

The nursery.

and Nana

Love from

Iris

o o o o o o o o o o

x x x x x x x x x x x x x x



(5)

Corran

Watford

Herts.

England

Dec. 24<sup>th</sup> 1928

My dear mummy

We are

having nice

holidays. Father

Christmas is

coming tonight.

I am going to hang

up my stocking.

I hope you are  
quite well, and

are having a

good time with

love from

Iris

o o o o x x x x

⑥

Garran  
Watford  
Herts.

Dear Daddy & Mummy  
Thank you  
very much for  
The Lovely Book  
you sent me I  
like it very  
much.

⑥

Garran  
Watford  
Herts.

Dear Daddy & Mummy  
Thank you  
very much for  
The Lovely Book  
you sent me I  
like it very  
much.



(7)

CORRAN.

WATFORD.

27.1.29.

Dear Mum + Dad

WE have been back to  
school a fortnight now  
but poor MICHAEL is still  
in bed here with a bad  
cold. Jean and Nannie  
send you their love and  
hope you are well.

we Love having your  
LETTERS. They are so  
interesting.

Heaps of Love from  
ooooooooooooo Iris ~~xxxxxxx~~

⑧

"Corran"

Watford  
Feb: 11

Dear Mummy and Daddy

Thank you for my letter  
and the drawing daddy sent me  
we liked to read about the brick-  
making fancy you standing on such  
a hot spot. nannie says she  
would like a brick to put in her  
bed at night it is so cold so  
I am getting a big girl  
now and am growing out  
of my clothes the canal  
is frozen so was the  
water bottle.

Last night we had such  
a fright all the lights  
in the house went out.  
I was in my bath and the  
big girls were at supper  
all the maids and the  
staff went to fetch candles  
About half an hour  
after the lights went on  
again.

Love  
from  
Iris

X O X O X O X O

(9)

"CORRAN"

WATERFORD.

4. 1. 29

DEAR NANNIE + DADDIE,

I had a nice Letter from You this morning. Thank You very much.

MRS EDGE sent me a lovely BOOK a fortnight ago. Wasnt that nice of her?

Thank You for the snaps, Daddy, You sent me, I liked them very much. I hope ~~you~~ You are all quite well. I am getting quite fat.

(9b)

Nannie sends her love to You She  
thinks You must be having a jolly  
time playing tennis in the sun.

Give my love to Monty I should  
so like to see him Now it is  
Jean's bath time and I am going  
to watch her being bathed

From your best little girl

Iris xxxxxx oooooo xxoox

(10)

CORRAN

H

WATFORD

6.8.29

Dear Mummy and Daddy,  
Thank you very much  
for your letter I went  
for a walk in the park  
to-day. It was very  
nice. Faith has been in  
the sun this week.  
On Monday the staff  
played a net-ball match  
against the girls and  
we won. It is Speech-  
day on Saturday. I'm  
wearing a white silk frock  
with some new ribbon.  
My tiny tooth has  
come out. So now  
I've got a gap.  
I grew out of all my  
boots so have two

That time and we hope  
you arrived at Poona  
safely. Do you like  
my letter Mummy and  
Daddy? It has taken  
me a long time to write.  
Excuse my letters being dirty,  
we are having a nice  
time in the nursery.  
With Love from  
Darling Iris

XXXXXXXXXXXXXXXX

new pairs. They are  
nice and comfy.  
Nanny still takes me  
to the Clinic on Tuesdays  
and Thursdays. We catch  
a bus at the Junction  
We break up on the  
10th of April so shall  
be out school for Easter  
Uncle Ernest invited me  
to stay with them at  
Easter but I have  
not heard from him  
since Christmas when  
he sent me a Pip and  
Squeak Annual.

Manny had a cake  
for her birthday in  
February with 25  
candles on it when they  
were burning it was  
quite hot. ten of us  
had crackers after  
tea and had such  
fun we ate up the  
goodies for supper  
too without being  
sick.

Give my love to  
Monty. we were sor-  
ry to hear you and  
Monty fell off the bike

(11)

2  
Corran  
Warford  
Herts

Dear Mummy and DADDY  
we had a lovely Easter  
and lots of Easter Eggs  
Mummy many happy returns of  
May 25 Billu Richard went to  
Stratton Park last week, Pat and  
Eden have gone away so I'm  
the youngest in the school. I'm  
in St Faith this term. with  
Joan Rauson Ruth Clementy Smith  
and Angela Allen. There are  
no new girls in our form this  
term we have just had  
Love from

Iris

Oxoxoxoxoxoxoxoxoxoxoxoxoxoxox

---

(12)

Corran  
Watford  
Hearts

My Dear Mummy and Daddy

Thank you ~~so~~ very much for  
your lovely ~~letter~~ letter I like  
it very much. Antony and Kitty  
came to see me yesterday and  
I liked it very much. It  
is one of the new girl's birthd-  
ay to-morrow and I hope she  
will have great fun and lots  
of presents. We are carelek-  
ing lots of nuts and storing  
them for the winter and in  
the winter we are going  
to carelekta sweet chestnuts  
and eat them as well as  
the beach nuts. I hope you  
are having a lovely time and  
nobody is ill.

With love from

IRIS x

ooooooooo x

oxttttt + x

(13)

Corran  
Watford  
Herts

Dear Mummy and Daddy  
Thank you very much  
for your lovely letter  
I like it very much  
I am so sorry that  
I did not send you  
a letter last Sunday  
but but I did not  
finish it and so it  
never came to you  
But I will send it to you  
today ~~today~~ so you  
will have two letters  
to make up for it.

Yesterday we stayed  
up and had lovely games  
because it was Saturday  
and we had nuts-and-  
may and musical-cushions  
and musical-bamboos and  
all sorts of other games.

with love

OXO  
+ from XO





Corran  
Walter

Dear Mamma + Daddie,

We are having scorch-  
ing weather now. I spend  
most of my time catching  
caterpillars in the garden  
and have all my meals  
there. Thank you very  
much for the parcel of  
stuffs and the cotton -

wool. I shall make a cushion for my dolly's pram. Fancy a frog eating a beetle. Spiders we find eat caterpillars. I am very pleased to hear that Monty is better. I wish he could climb trees for caterpillars with me. He would love it. Have you received my photograph yet?

I am longing to hear what you think of your "chubby girl"

Lris.

ooooooooooooo xfxxx 7xx xx x xxxxxx

(15)

Corran School  
Langley Rd.  
Watford

My dear Mummy and Daddy Thank  
you for your letter I liked it very  
much. A girl took some photos of  
me and some of the other girls and  
Nannie, has taken the proof to ~~be~~ be  
enlarged and I will send you a post-  
card one as soon as it is ready.

Please excuse our awful scabby and is written on the garden  
seat. Nannie the sun is shining and we are  
so hot that we have our stockings turned right  
down to our ankles. it is ~~whit~~ Sunday  
ro-day but we are not having a  
holiday but a picnic instead as soon as  
the weather is hotter.

NANNIE took us to the woods on Wednesday - we  
picked some lovely blue bells - violets which we  
gave to Nurse as a surprise. We were very  
amused to read about the dogs having their  
hair cut. I am longing for you and Daddy to come  
home & have some more picnics. The eggs we have  
been watching in a nest in the kitchen garden  
are now hatched They are little hedge Sparrows.  
I am your loving Roby did I like

## Potten End letters

①

Potten  
End  
Hicarage Herts

Dear Mummy and Daddy Thank you  
very much for the £1 for my Birthday.  
I like it very much. Billy and Richard  
and me are at Potten end together.  
We have some baby puppies and we went  
to a show and they won a prize.  
Their names are Rip Van and Winkle.  
Rip has gone so there are only Van and  
Winkle left. I am glad that Monty is  
well again. I am very happy ~~here~~ here.  
I hope you are very well. It is raining today  
so we have to stay in. Thank you very much  
for your letter. I like it very much.

With Love Iris  
FROM

(2)

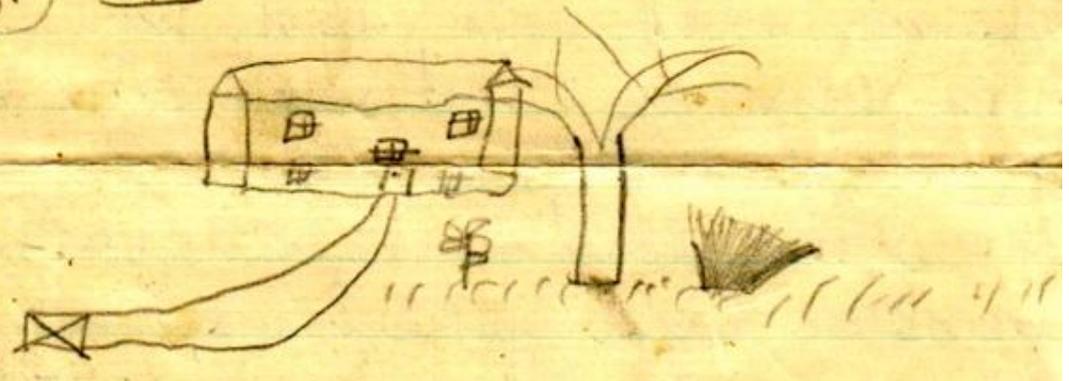
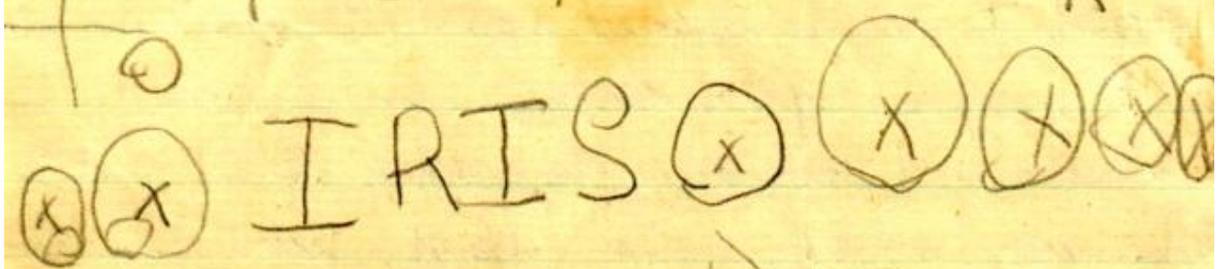
Porten  
End

My Dear Mummy and Diddy  
Thank you very much for  
your lovely letter I like it very  
much. Thank you very much  
for the printing postcards  
and I will send you some soon.

I hope you are quite well  
again and nobody else is  
ill. We went to tea with  
the Davies and we saw  
Margie and Nancy and Ruth  
Maurice and a few others. Mrs  
Webster has asked us out to  
tea one day soon. I am going  
back to school on Wednesday.  
We went for a walk to-day.  
Winkle is lame on his left back  
foot and has six toes as well  
and has got to be killed.

This is ~~the~~ Wednesday  
and I am going back to school  
to-day by the 5-11 PM TRAIN

with love  
from  
to  
IRIS

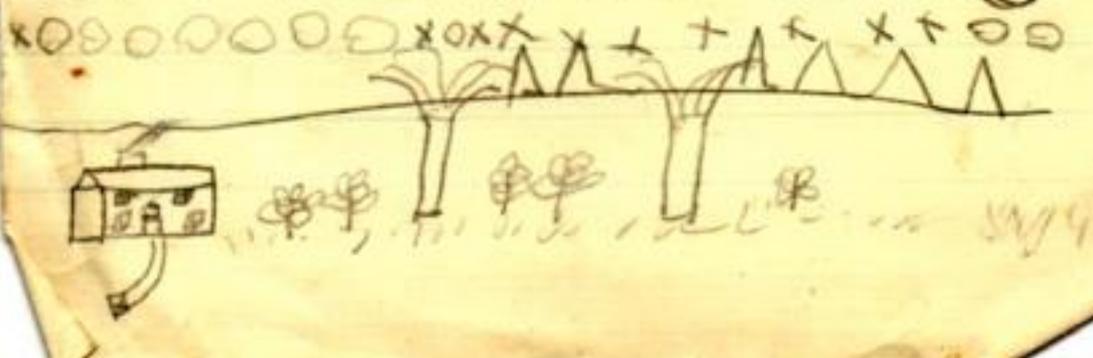


Porter  
Eenal

(3)

Deer Mummy and Daddy thank  
 you for your lovely letter I like  
 it very much. we had a picnic  
 a few days ago. Mary and  
 her little friends have stoped  
 camping. Joan Trellet came to  
 stay with us and she was  
 camping to. Mary has gone  
 away for a few days. Joan  
 has gone away to. there  
 is another boy come to  
 stay with us and his name  
 is Dick. I am so glad you  
 are better again. I went  
 for another picnic yesterday  
 with the maid Elizebeth.

There is only one puppy left  
 WITH LOVE FROM IRIS



Porte End  
vicarage

④

Dear Mummy and Daddy

Thank you very much for your very  
lovely letter. I like it very much. There  
was a cricket match yesterday  
and we had a lovely time. There was  
a little girl named Muriel and  
a boy named Henry and we had  
games together. After cricket they  
had dancing and I watched them  
out of my bedroom window.

Thank you very much for the  
painting book you sent us we like  
it very much. I went to a party  
where there was a funny little  
dog. With love from  
Iris

(9)

POTTEN  
END

POTTEN END

Dear Mummy and Daddy  
thank you very <sup>much</sup> for your  
lovely letter I like it very  
much. We went to Hapton-  
Court on Saturday and  
we had a lovely time. Then  
we had tea. After tea we went  
round the maze and we  
couldn't find our way out  
at first. After we went on the  
river and saw all the house  
boats and all the boys fishing  
on the side of the river. I  
hope you are very well. We  
stayed up till nine o'clock in  
the night and I went to sleep  
in the shar-a-bang because

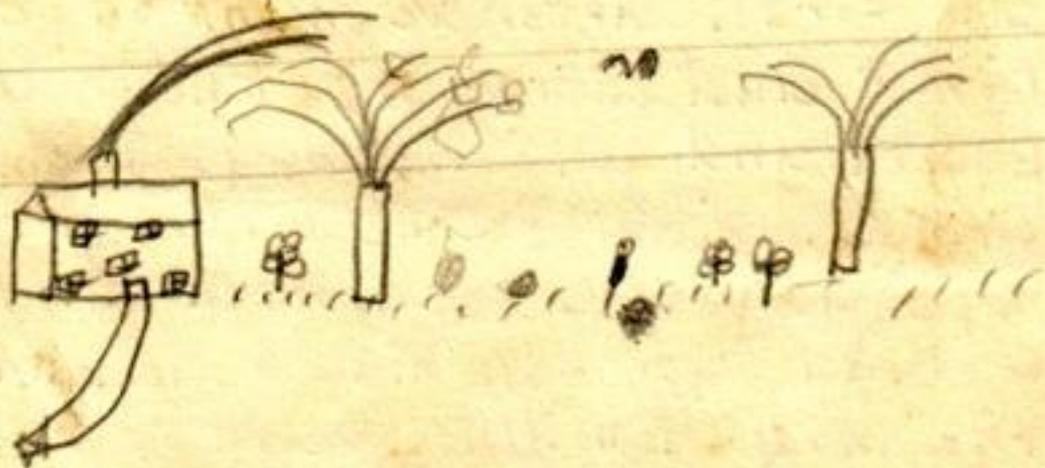
I was so tired but I was  
allright in the morning. I thin  
we are going for a picnic  
to-day. With love to

you both and  
MONTY for

oooooooooooooooooooo

XX XX XX

XXXXX



(6)

POTTEN  
END

Dear Mummy and Daddy.  
Thank you for your letter.  
I like it very much. Mary  
went away to stay with  
some friends and came back  
with presents for us all. &  
Billie's present was a lovely  
big walking stick pencil  
and Richards and Juline  
were there. The Belmont was  
a little sailing boat. ~~and~~  
Mary's sister had a lovely grey  
belt. Kitty went away and  
came back on Friday. Miss Hope  
came to see me today and  
I went to the clinic there  
and Miss Hope had a puncture  
on the way there and had  
a new tyre put on. The  
boys went bathing but I  
couldn't not because I was  
with Miss Hope. We are

having only whether heard  
we went for a picnic and  
ate a few blackberries  
I am reading a lovely  
book called knock three  
times and its all about  
a grey pumpkin.  
with

LOVE

from

IRIS



HARISCOT

[In Pops' photo album  
a photo of 'Harrisot']

DP

Harrisot  
Feb 23<sup>rd</sup>

My Darling Paddy

Yesterday I went to see Miss Hawks  
and she could just walk but only very  
slowly and she nearly fell over sometimes.  
Granny bought me a lovely little toy  
Cocker Spaniel and it is exactly  
like a real one and it has ~~lovely~~  
lovely ears. I call it Binkie. I  
took Binkie with me to see Miss

Hawkes. I call my little dog Binkie  
because of something in Just So Stories

"But I like Binkie my dog, because  
he knows how to behave;  
so, Binkie's the same as the first  
friend was, and I

And I am the man in the cave."

In Shakespear we are learning  
something which begins like this

"Once more unto the Breach, Dear  
Friends, once more!"

Granny got some new records for

P.2)

Mummy and one of them is called "Bye and Bye" I am going to lay down dis weary load and another one "Hear My Prayer." I know the second lesson in French now. Once when I was playing Netball this Term I got 9 goals.

With Lots of Love and kisses from Iris



Hariscot

DP  
??  
[In Ed's photo album  
a photo of 'Hariscot']

Hariscot  
Feb 23<sup>rd</sup>

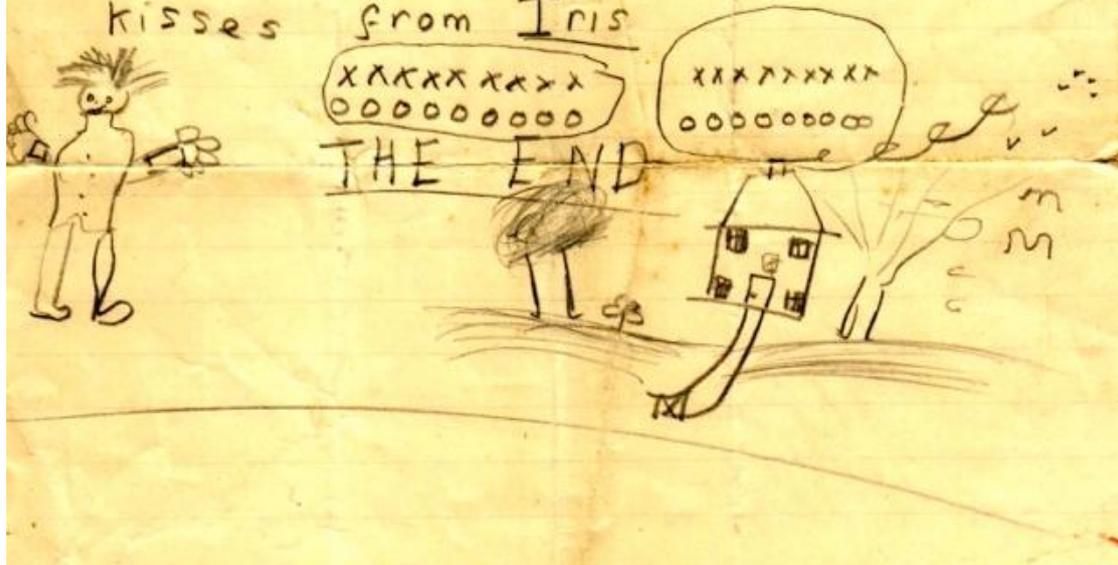
My Darling Daddy

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With Lots of Love and kisses from Iris



# SCHOOL REPORTS

## Corran Watford, Herts School: 1928-9

The first school report is for the Autumn Term 1928, when Iris was aged 6 yrs 5 months old, in a school where the average age of the class was 7 yrs 2 months. This was her first term.

**CORRAN**  
**WATFORD, HERTS.**

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**PREPARATORY DEPARTMENT. REPORT.**

Autumn TERM 1928

NAME: Iris James AGE: 6 yrs 5 mths NEXT TERM: 15<sup>th</sup> January 1929.

FORM: Kindergarten AVERAGE AGE: 7 yrs 2 mths (BOARDERS) 15<sup>th</sup> January 1929.

SUBJECT	TERM EXAMINATION			REMARKS	SIGNATURE
	Standard	%	Position		
SCRIPTURE				Very Good.	M. Turner.
ENGLISH					
READING				Very Good.	M. Turner.
DICTION					
HISTORY				Very Good.	A. Cozon.
GEOGRAPHY				Very Good.	M. Turner.
NATURE STUDY				Good.	M. Turner.
ARITHMETIC				Good.	M. Turner.
WRITING				Fairly good, Iris finds this subject difficult.	M. Turner.
AURAL CULTURE				Very good - takes a keen interest	W. R. Norman
PIANO					
Class Singing				Very good	W. R. Norman
DRAWING					
BRUSHWORK				Good on the whole.	A. Cozon.
HANDWORK				Fairly Good.	M. Turner.
NEEDLEWORK					
GYMNASTICS				She has worked very well indeed.	W. R. Norman
DANCING					
GAMES					

Absent: 1 Returned Lessons: -

Late: - Conduct Marks: -

Term STANDARD: ..... Examination Position: ..... No. in Form: 7

PROGRESS: Good - Iris has done very good work this term.

CONDUCT: Very Good

M. Turner FORM MISTRESS

HOUSE REPORT: Very good - Has tried hard & done well for her first term.

Weight at end of Term St. Lbs.

P. Muirhead Hope  
G. L. J. Cowan PRINCIPALS

**CORRAN  
WATFORD, HERTS.**

**PREPARATORY DEPARTMENT. REPORT.**

..... Spring ..... TERM 19.29

NAME Iris James ..... AGE 6 yrs 8 mths ..... NEXT TERM 1<sup>st</sup> May .....

FORM Kindergarten ..... AVERAGE AGE 7 yrs 2 mths (BOARDERS) 30<sup>th</sup> April .....

SUBJECT	TERM		EXAMINATION		REMARKS	SIGNATURE
	Standard	%	Position			
SCRIPTURE					Very good	M. Turner
ENGLISH						
READING					Very good.	M. Turner.
DICTATION						
HISTORY					Good.	M. Beasley.
GEOGRAPHY					Good	M. Turner.
NATURE STUDY					Very good	M. Turner
ARITHMETIC					Good. Iris has worked steadily	M. Turner.
WRITING					Fairly good, improved	M. Turner
AURAL CULTURE					Very good	CO. R. Norman
PIANO						
Class Sign VIOLIN					Very good - Iris continues to work well	CO. R. Norman
DRAWING					} Fair - a slow worker.	M. Beasley.
BRUSHWORK						
HANDWORK					Fairly good	M. Turner.
NEEDLEWORK						
GYMNASTICS					his continues to work very well indeed.	Kathleen Smith
DANCING						
GAMES						

Absent..... 6 ..... Returned Lessons..... - .....

Late..... 0 ..... Conduct Marks..... - .....

Term STANDARD..... - ..... Examination Position..... - ..... No. in Form 6 .....

PROGRESS Very good .....

CONDUCT Very good .....

..... M. Turner. ..... FORM MISTRESS

HOUSE REPORT Very good indeed R.C. .....

Weight at end of Term St. Lbs.

2 13

..... P. Muirhead .....  
.....  
.....

PRINCIPALS

**CORRAN**  
WATFORD, HERTS.

**PREPARATORY DEPARTMENT. REPORT.**

Summer TERM 1929.

NAME Iris James AGE 6 years 11 months NEXT TERM September 19<sup>th</sup>

FORM Kindergarten AVERAGE AGE 7 years 7 months (BOARDERS) September 18<sup>th</sup>

SUBJECT	TERM		EXAMINATION		REMARKS	SIGNATURE
	Standard	%	Position			
SCRIPTURE ...					Good.	M. Turner.
ENGLISH ...						
READING ...					Very good.	M. Turner.
DICTATION ...						
HISTORY ...					Fairly good.	M. Beasley.
GEOGRAPHY ...					Good. Iris is very keen and works well.	M. Turner.
NATURE STUDY					Good.	M. Turner.
ARITHMETIC ...					Fairly good.	M. Turner.
WRITING ...					Fair. Iris has improved this term.	M. Turner.
AURAL CULTURE					Good - has excellent rhythmic sense, makes good leader of band.	W. R. Norman
PIANO ...						
Class Singing					Very good indeed	W. R. Norman
DRAWING ...					} Fairly good, shows improvement.	M. Beasley.
BRUSHWORK ...						
HANDWORK ...					Good.	M. Turner.
NEEDLEWORK..						
GYMNASTICS ..					Generally very good.	V. Cuthbert Smith
DANCING ...						
GAMES ...						

Absent 11

Returned Lessons —

Late —

Conduct Marks —

Term STANDARD —

Examination Position —

No. in Form 6

PROGRESS Iris has worked well and made good progress. Her work shows originality and wide interests for her age.

CONDUCT Good.

M. Turner FORM MISTRESS

HOUSE REPORT Iris has been a very good girl and most helpful R.C.

Weight at end of Term 2 St. 13 $\frac{3}{4}$  Lbs.

P. Muirhead Hope  
PRINCIPALS

PHOTO-GALLERY



Littlehampton







Iris aged eight in 1930



1930



Sheila  
Sheila  
Hemson

Richard

Dinah

Iris

Blushell  
Gray

Olive  
Gray

Billy

Wan  
Gray

at.

Harris Cot

Hillhampton



Adults and children by sea, c. 1930



Children on bicycles, c. 1930



Children on tree-trunk c. 1930

### 3. Furzedown, Littlehampton, aged 9-11, 1931-3

From *Daughters* early version:

Monty's death brought my mother home a year early, and we were at the vicarage when she arrived. She must have been heartbroken, but showed us no sign of it; courage of a kind that was typical of her. She rented a house in Littlehampton, and I thought this was to be home. Cousins came in the summer to play with us on the beach and go for cycle rides on the downs. I went to a new school as a day girl, and to reach it crossed an enchanted fairy-filled wood. On a recent visit I discovered this to have been a traffic island.

When she returned to India, I was left as a boarder at the school, and at eight years old started the era of unknown holidays: to aunts, to a farm in Suffolk, and, when my prayers were answered, to my grandmother. As we grew older, my brothers and I saw less and less of each other. Potten End put the lid on Holiday Homes; my mother had found us half starved when she arrived there.

The real business of living took place at school, and the school in question, run on P.N.E.U. lines and called Furzedown, had as its head a brilliant if eccentric headmistress, and taught me nearly everything I ever learnt. Nothing could have been less like Miss Norris than the energetic, artistic, charismatic, emotional and exotically pious Miss Fidler. She was an inspired teacher, which was just as well since she taught us everything except Maths and Netball, for which subjects she brought in a Miss Thom.

Miss Fidler was the maypole round which the whole school danced. During lessons our aim was to be called to stand at her side, her arm around us in a blissful embrace, which became full petting if she slid you onto her lap. How often you were petted settled your status; how many times, for how long. What Freud would have made of it I hate to think, but for small girls sent to boarding school she provided the warmth and the physical closeness we were missing.

In the afternoons we went for walks in crocodiles along the promenade, dressed in mud brown coats with woollen "bomb caps" in brown and orange on our heads in winter, in summer straw bonnets in the shape of Salvation Army hats. Neither did much for my pasty face, lidless eyes, putty nose. At the time I was unaware of my looks, nor bothered about the boot on my bad leg. I couldn't understand why I wasn't chosen to play the Angel Gabriel in the Nativity Play in my last year, and the part was given to a girl three years younger with long yellow hair and rose petal skin. It rankled terribly since I had learnt the part in the assurance of being chosen.

Half way through our afternoon walks Miss Fidler's voice would rise above the sea wind to cry "Break crocodile!", and all of us would turn and hurl ourselves at her, like rugby players near the line. The fortunate ones got hold of her hands, and were allowed to hold them until we turned for home. I can still feel the squared stones of the esplanade beneath my feet, the gritty wind in my face, and the blessed brown warmth of Miss Fidler's fur glove enclosing not only my hand, but my whole being. I had a fur glove fetish for years.

Her hold over us, sickly as it now seems, was part of her excellence as a teacher. She literally held us spellbound when she read poetry or told us about the past or took us for nature rambles. She was artistic and marvellous with her hands, and we dented pewter

and sawed plywood to please her; once I sawed my way through my desk in my anxiety to finish my toast rack and give it to her as a present; she wasn't pleased but her anger was acceptable, since it led to forgiveness and a possible petting. She encouraged us to be as imaginative as we naturally were, and laid on a lady once a week to teach us Eurythmics, when we became without effort bluebirds or fields of corn.

It was all heady stuff, but the best part of all was Miss Fidler's Faith, which centred on the church and its vicar, the very high church Father Orr. It was his highness that caused Poor Sheila to be removed from a nearby school and in the end I too was taken away from his dangerous influence; but for the couple of years before the terrible truth was discovered, I revelled in incense and candles and confession once a week, when Father Orr, who was about ten feet tall, laid his violet-scented hands on my head and forgave me for the sins I had spent the previous six days saving up for him.

Confession was made easier for us by little red books listing all the sins it was possible to commit, which we ticked our way through, putting a question mark by adultery. We made our bedside lockers into chapels, with altars from matchboxes, on which were placed tiny chalices of silver paper. On the bottom shelf of the locker we kept caterpillars in cardboard boxes, so that our little chapels smelt of dried leaves and droppings, a smell I rarely encounter now but when I do I find potent and faintly metaphysical.

Jesus was no longer the barefooted white-robed figure of the moorland picnics. He was not unlike Father Orr, tall, sweet-smelling, and rather demanding. We brought home thistles to flagellate ourselves with after Lights Out, and laid ourselves on the lino to sleep, hoping to curry favour with these austerities. If any awful crime was committed in the school, such as leaving dirty finger marks on the roller towels, we Owned Up en masse and revelled in the punishment that followed; porridge without milk or sugar for a week was a common one. Each gluey mouthful was forced down for Father Orr and, at one remove, for Jesus.

The only fly in this rich ointment was Matron; she of the stockinged feet who prowled the corridors at night to catch us at some unlawful activity; she of the morning lavatory patrol whose sharp judgment, "That's not enough, go back and try again", forced me to the deceptions with bits of wood. Matrons now seem to me a sad species; women down on their luck, widows with a pittance on which to rear families, who went their thankless round of stacking sheets and smelling vests to see if they had been changed, in return for house and board. This one had a freckled son called Dampier who went to Christ's Hospital and spent his holidays with her in the school. His appearance in his navy robes had us in a flutter of excitement which we thought might be adultery.

Leaving all this for holidays with Aunt Hilda in her house backing onto a railway line, or Aunt Evelyn in her freezing villa on top of a one-in-four incline, was an anticlimax. These aunts were my father's sisters, who had left their husbands to carry on without them in India, and settled with their children at home. My mother thought this a very selfish choice, but made good use of them all the same. I never thought about it at the time, or questioned why my cousins had homes to live in permanently and we didn't. The choices made by adults were way outside my frame of reference until a great deal later.

Aunt Evelyn, like the Potten End vicar, spent a lot of her time in bed it seemed to me, with a disease that gave her yellow fingers and hair. In fact she was a chain smoker, and bed was probably the only warm place in that arctic house. I slept with various cousins in the attic, warmed through the round holes of a paraffin stove. I had chilblains all my childhood, on my bad leg from ankle to thigh. As I forced my scratched leg into my surgical boot I asked Jesus if He couldn't bring forward my magical cure, make it in my eleventh rather than my thirteenth year. No luck though.

Aunt Evelyn didn't really need to get out of bed to organise us, because our routine was fixed and unchanging: mornings playing on a deserted tennis court behind the house, afternoons going for walks down a Roman road, a wintry road in my memory, ice where it wasn't mud. In the evenings we played Racing Demon on a green baize table cloth, and last thing at night Aunt Evelyn visited us in bed to kiss us goodnight. This simple act terrified me. I was quite convinced her yellow stained fingers were going to grip me round the throat. Since she was a kind, if absent, figure there is no explanation for this fear. Perhaps I invented it to enliven the dull routine. not unlike my mother.

Holidays with Aunt Hilda were spent in a shed working on dance routines for a grand entertainment we spent every waking moment preparing. My cousins were members of ballet schools, and said to have promising careers ahead. With my booted leg, my part in the performances consisted of holding parasols above their heads as they pirouetted on their pink stuffed toes. How long the years till thirteen seemed, till I too could put my strong foot into a pink satin shoe and tie laces round a strong calf. I read a lot of books on ballet so that I would be ready when the time came, and positively pestered Jesus.

My cousin Barbara, whose ears were stuffed with cotton wool after nearly dying from a mastoids operation, was very impressed by my holiness, and the pair of us made a pact that we would try to get ourselves crucified in return for what Jesus had done for us; considering my leg and her ears not a lot, but we were humbly grateful all the same. It wasn't easy to achieve in Boxgrove Avenue, Guildford, in 1932 but we whispered about it in the attic, our breath freezing in the icy air. Many, many years later Barbara committed suicide, which was perhaps her way of keeping that long ago compact.

One or two holidays I spent with my godfather, a schoolmaster who had once been in the army in Burma and vaguely courted my mother. He was a kind and genuinely Christian man, my Uncle Ernest, straight of back and ruddy of skin, who took a cold bath every morning and then ran round the back streets of Bromsgrove to keep in good "fettle". Twice he took me to Cornwall, and as we walked along the cliffs talked of box wallahs and tamashas and badmarshes beside the Irrawaddy. Nothing exciting had ever happened to him since Burma, but my full attention was not on his stories, because I was panting to keep up with him, who marched along as if in pursuit of bandits up a Burmese mountain.

Once or twice I went to Suffolk, [is that where Washington was?] to a farm run by some friends of my brothers. The days were long, the fields were flat, the farmer's wife a placid person who provided meals and then let me fill in the time as I wished. One holiday I remember well. I had progressed by then from surgical boots to special shoes, and because they were very expensive I only had one pair, for school and holidays, scuffed but more or less imperishable. When we went to the market town, or to church, I was told to go and change my shoes. There was no way I could tell the truth, so sleepless nights were spent trying to make one pair of shoes look like two, or even three. I thought of dyes, and decorations like bows glued on. I invented lies about how I had lost "my other pair" and pleaded stomach pains when expeditions were planned. The shame of being the possessor of only one pair of scuffed shoes was too terrible to admit.

When I later asked my mother how she could have sent me to spend so many holidays with her sister, Aunt Margery, she vowed there was no alternative. She knew her sister's erratic moods and the mess she was making of her own children, but hoped, I suppose, that a few weeks would be endurable. And I never complained, because in the thirties children didn't. Who was there to tell anyway? Even if I had reached impartial ears, my Godfearing aunt in her disinfected house would have seemed above reproach. She would certainly have had the church on her side. Though she did me a great deal of damage, I was saved by my other aunts, and most especially by my grandmother. When

I found a letter from her suggesting that I live with her all the time, and go to school daily from her flat in Kensington, I was engulfed by a great wave of retrospective longing to go back and relive my life as it might have been.

My grandmother's flat smelt of sandalwood and mothballs and a sort of leathery, woody, dusty aroma arising from her bookcases and lacquer chests, her display cabinets, brocade sofas and albums. A dark corridor ran the length of the flat, only just passable because of all the cupboards that lined it, ending in the sitting room and bedroom, with kitchen, bathroom and a tiny room for me opening off it. It was cramped, five storeys up, without a garden or even balcony; absolutely wrong for a child, absolutely heaven to me.

The day started with the arrival of the daily, Mrs Cooksley, (except for the odd occasion when she had been beaten senseless by her husband) and the carrying in of my grandmother's breakfast tray: a boiled egg under a knitted cosy, toast and tea. Afterwards as she sawed her teeth with strong cotton and read the Morning Post, we planned our day round the royal movements as set out in the Court Circular.

When the tray had been take away, my grandmother unwound her long hair from the pieces of cotton which had confined it during the night, and it sprayed over her shoulders in pale orange corrugated waves. When I heard my mother complain of the common colour my grandmother dyed her hair, I was astounded and disbelieving. My grandmother's hair rippling under her silver-backed brush had seemed to me exquisitely beautiful, and I longed for mine to be like it. She made great efforts on my behalf, wrapping my rat brown tresses round a hot poker, and then carefully slipping the poker out, leaving me with hollow tubes of hair and a faint smell of singeing.

Her ideal of feminine beauty being Queen Alexandra, she even tried a clothes peg on my drooping nostrils in an effort to approach it, but she must have realised it was a waste of time. The long neck, the flaring nostrils, the heavily-lidded, deepset eyes would need a lot more than clothes pegs or even prayers to achieve. God had made me plain for his own good reasons, and even ordained that I wear iron bars across my prominent teeth.

My grandmother was vain of her own looks, and protected her skin with spotted veils, and her white hands with shammy leather gloves. Hands were barometers of ladyhood and hers were daily oiled, the nails polished, the skin gently pushed back each morning to reveal a perfect half moon. The manicure set with its little ivory tools is in my drawer and still carries a sort of mystique, as if it held the secret to a lost world; a snobbish, segregated world, but sweet for me because my grandmother inhabited it.

You could always tell a lady by her hands was one of her frequent pronouncements, meaning that it was not at all respectable for them to look as if they had been used. Thick blue worms crawled all over the backs of Mrs Cooksley's hands and she hardly had any nails, let alone moons on them. This struck me as perfectly in order; though she was almost as old as my grandmother and might have been expected to be resting both hands and thick swollen legs, it was natural that instead she used them in our service. When she wept over the sink, describing the previous night's beatings from her drunken husband, I played hopscotch on the lino tiles and thought nothing of it. The lower classes always had drunken husbands, my grandmother said.

After- breakfast and the hundred brush strokes, my grandmother would dress; a long drawn-out affair, ending with the piling of her amber hair on top of her head, secured by copper-coloured hairpins. It was while she was brushing her hair and dressing that she talked of Burma, which came to smell to me of the creams and oils she rubbed into her precious lady's skin and the cologne she sprayed from the syringe shaped like a crinolined lady. Finally, she drew on, finger by finger, her shiny gloves, easing them over

her rings, perched on her gold head a hat with a spotted veil, and, when cool, wound round her neck the glossy fox with glass eyes, permanently swallowing its own tail.

Before setting out we must remember to take with us the template of newspaper cut to fit a lavatory seat. It was very dangerous to use a public toilet, and ladies were especially vulnerable to the diseases lurking there. Though we only went to the most respectable places, the Tate Gallery, the Natural History Museum, William Whiteley's, one could never be too careful. The nature of our danger was unmentionable, one of the many delicious mysteries surrounding women. Another was a hot water bottle with a long rubber tube attached to it that hung behind the bathroom door. I gazed at it reverently when I took out my plate to clean my teeth. It would be part of that post thirteen world of several pairs of shoes, one of them pink satin for ballet, when my nostrils would start to flare, my hair turn gold and a man with violet smelling hands book me to join him in the mission field.

The days my grandmother and I spent carrying round our templates in our gloved hands were quite tiring for my bad leg, but just to be with her was a delight. She had the knack, which she passed on to my mother, of turning every event into an adventure, every chance conversation into the source of a hilarious story. When I dragged my aching leg back through the park, the Serpentine became as magical for me as the Irrawaddy, lit by her funny fantastical inventiveness. We always stopped at the same baker's shop and chose a cake each for tea, which we put on the plate Mrs Cooksley had left on the silver tray, with the orange and gold cups turned face downwards in their saucers. The fire was laid on a bed of paper rolls we had prepared the previous evening. These paper sausages didn't always get the fire going, and then we had to hold a sheet of the Morning Post in front of the smouldering grate and snatch it back just before it caught fire and rose like an exploded airship up the chimney.

With the curtains drawn and the smell of burnt paper in our nostrils, we ate our cakes very slowly, and then played patience, or looked through albums at the pictures of her pale brown sisters, Minnie and Flo and beautiful Beatrice of whom she talked, though now I have forgotten what she said. Morning and evening we prayed in front of the sofa, my nose resting on its scratchy surface and breathing in that smell of sandalwood and mothballs that permeated her flat. On special occasions we opened the display cabinets and took out the shiny Chinese boxes that fitted into each other, the ivory globe with endless other carved globes within it, the mother of pearl counters for unknown eastern games. Before I went to bed my grandmother rubbed my bad leg with warm oil, and a last prayer included a petition that Jesus would make it better. I added a silent postscript that he would stop the bedroom cupboard creaking.

That cupboard was the only small cross I had to bear when I stayed with my grandmother Annie. The rest of the room was perfect: wallpaper with purple grapes hanging in bunches over trellises, an eiderdown covered with roses and forgetmenots and lots of bright green leaves which my fingers walked across as through an enchanted garden. On the wall hiding some of the grapes was a huge copy of Holman Hunt's "The Light of the World"; the familiar Jesus of the white nightdress and poor scratched forehead who had sat with me on the moor at Potten End. But every night I was woken by the sound of the cupboard door slowly opening and something unspeakably horrible about to step out. During the day I confirmed that the cupboard held only some padded hangers with coats on them, and below a row of shoes stuffed with tissue paper. And yet somewhere in the folds of the fur coats something else lurked, a night creature whose dark shadow would fall over me, and whose yellow claws would sink themselves into my neck, Aunt Evelyn metamorphosed into a monster. It would have been simple to tell my grandmother of my fears, and get her to lock the cupboard. I couldn't, and didn't,

loving and understanding as she was, the great gulf between the world of adult and child couldn't then, probably cannot now, be logically bridged.

My grandmother was a very literary lady, and members of the Poetry Groups and Lamb Societies came to the flat for readings and tea. On these occasions she bought a Fullers walnut cake and Mrs Cooksley donned a frilly apron, to carry in the silver tray tricked out with embroidered napkins and flashing with polished sugar tongs and slop basins. Her eyes and neck always drooped like those of a St Bernard, so that under her starched cap she looked like one of the performing dogs at Bertram Mills Circus. I handed round the plates, my singed corkscrews tied back with a ribbon, feeling pretty and graceful because at that stage I wasn't bothered about my boot.

On certain Sundays the Curate came and gave my grandmother Communion; why, I don't know since we walked miles round museums and art galleries every day so getting to church should have been within her strength. Men of the cloth mesmerised me at that time, and this one was dark and handsome and wooed me from my allegiance to Father Orr. I awaited his arrival with beating heart and bobbing ringlets, and put him top of the list of the men I would bewitch when I was thirteen.

In preparation we covered the dining table with a white cloth and placed on it candles and the family Bible; he brought the bread and wine. I wasn't allowed to witness the sacred rituals, not being confirmed, and sat in my bedroom staring at the Light of the World and expanding like a gas balloon with holy thoughts. My grandmother often read me poetry, and Walter de La Mare's traveller knocking on the old oak door while his horse in the silence did something I could never remember on the forest's ferny floor became mixed up with Jesus outside the door of my heart. The grapes on their trellises, the curate chanting mysteries with my grandmother persuaded me that I was melting like the candlewax and turning into an ethereal being.

For two summer holidays my grandmother took my brother Richard and me to Seaford, where we stayed in a hotel and spent our days with the Children's Special Service Mission. Each morning would find the three of us on the beach building a stone altar, round which we wrote "God is Love" in seaweed, and beside it a sandcastle onto which sprang young men and women in blazers to lead us in choruses of praise and exhort us to open the doors of our hearts to Jesus. This stout wooden door, with the patient figure carrying the lantern and a horse nearby on the forest's ferny floor was easy for me to visualise, and when we were asked which of us had opened our hearts that morning, my hand always shot up.

In the afternoons we went for treasure hunts, the clues of which were Bible texts, and in the evenings there were sausage suppers round a camp fire when we all got very emotional and made more and more colourful versions of our conversions. Then we sang sad choruses, "Break thou the bread of life dear lord for me," we intoned in a circle under the stars and the balloon filled once more with love for Jesus and for one of the young men in blazers. My daydreams were of the pair of us going to Burma together as missionaries; I saw us, he in his navy blazer, me with my flaring nostrils and pale gold hair, floating up the Irrawaddy towards the red-gold palaces. My grandmother, ageless, would be waiting for us.

FURZEDOWN LETTERS

①

Furzedown  
Littlehampton  
Sussex  
Oct. 23<sup>rd</sup>  
(1932)

My darling Mummy

Thank you very much for the letter you sent me. I hope you like it on the boat. We are having lovely weather here. I think I am going to be enrolled for brownies not this week but the next. Grannie said she might take me up to London for half term and take me to Madame Tussaud wax works. For Brownies we are learning a new Indian song and it is lovely. I hope you are having nice weather. Please give my love to Daddy. They have got three things up on there History Chart, one is drawn by Gillian and the other two are done by Nancy. I expect it is very hot in India. Have you met Daddy yet?

With lots  
of love  
from

o o o o Iris o o o o o  
xxxxx xxxxx

(2)

Turzedown  
Littlehampton  
Sussex  
24/9/32

My Darling Mummy and Daddy

Thank you very much for the lovely letters that you sent me. Yesterday afternoon we had a very nice General Knowledge paper. There has been four new people this term, two boys and two girls. I have got my fret-saw and things now, and we are going to learn fret-saw for handierafts this term. There is going to be an election class, I wish I could learn. ~~I am~~. There is a new mademoiselle now and she can speak English and French both beautiful. I like her much better than the last one we had. We are going to read a book called "The Chemical History of a candle" By "Michael Faradays" I think it will be very nice.

With Lots of  
love and kisses

from

oo oo oo oo oo Iris oo oo oo oo oo oo oo  
x x x x x x x x x x x x

(3)

17/6/33

Turzedown  
Littlehampton  
Sussex

My darling Daddy

Thank you very much for the lovely letter that you sent me, it was simply lovely getting one from you. It is half term on Monday, and Jeans Aunt is very kindly bringing Granny down in her car to see me, which will be topping. There are thirty three people at Turzedown. I bathed yesterday, for the first time, and it was simply lovely. It will be lovely seeing you next year. ~~We~~<sup>am</sup> are reading <sup>some</sup> a lovely books this term called Hans Brinker, and another called The choir of Westminster Abbey. I think I like Raspberries better than Straw berries! I'm not sure what I'm going to be when I grow up. I have learnt a poem called "Drakes Drum", and <sup>it</sup> is a lovely one. ~~I~~ had a <sup>very nice</sup> lovely ride this morning. It is sad the dogs cant come back, but I know it would be too expensive if they did. Sorry I cant write any more. With heaps of love and kisses from your everloving

(4)  
Furze down School  
Littlehampton  
Sussex

18/3/33

My Darling Mummy & Daddy

Thank you very much for the lovely letter that you sent me. Yesterday there was a match against Rosemead. I was a shooter in the team. We won 11.5. The first half of the game it was pouring with <sup>rain</sup> and we all got drenched playing in it. The second half it cleared up. Afterwards we had a hot bath. This morning I went for a ride, and I rode a horse called Jasper. We saw a squashed hedgehog and it looked disgusting. I do hope the dogs puppies will all get prizes and will all sell. It will be lovely if they do. It is a much nicer day to-day, than it was yesterday. Of course it would rain when we were going to have a match. This evening ~~at~~ the Musical Society Miss Last is going to play the cello and Miss Toms is going to accompany her with the piano. I believe Mrs Manning is going to sing too. I expect your Glee <sup>club</sup> singing is great fun. The Daffodils and Crocuses are coming out, and also the primroses. I wish we could all go primros<sup>ing</sup> together.

With lots of love and kisses from  
your overloving Cris

50

Furzedown  
Littlehampton  
Sussex

9/6/33

My darling Mummy & Daddy

Thank you very much for the lovely letter that you sent me. This evening Miss Last gave us a talk on Hiawatha. On Whit Monday we went to a Scouts Rally in Ham Park, and it was very interesting. Ham Lord Hampton was there, and he gave a talk. Afterwards we went and had a picnic tea under a tree. One of the caterpillars has turned into a moth. We Mrs Clayton has just sent me a letter, and heaps of lovely stamps, which is very kind of her. To-day is Buttercup Day, and we have just bought our buttercups. It rained yesterday, the first time for a long while, and it does not look a very nice day to-day. Yesterday we

went to Hiawatha, and it was wonderful. We arrived in London at about half past Twelve, and we went to a Restaurant to have Lunch, I had fish and chips, and jelly and cream. After Lunch we went round took a bus to the Albert Hall. We had very nice seats. All the bottom of the hall was <sup>used</sup> <sup>for</sup> <sup>the</sup> <sup>acting</sup> taken up. It had lovely scenery. In the background were some mountains, then in front of them a lake with some pine trees. There was a little water-fall, and two wigwams. The colouring was simply lovely. In the beginning all the Indians rushed in, and started dancing round, and singing. Then Hiawatha glided in, on the lake, with Minnehaha. They were in a canoe. The beginning was the Wedding Feast of Hiawatha, and Minnehaha. The Indians sang all the words. They asked Pau-Pau-keewis to

(55)

3

dance to them, and he did. of course it was all Indian kind of dancing. Then they asked Chibiabos to sing to them. He sang a most lovely love song and he had a very good voice. They did a lot more than that, and but I can't exactly explain it. The second scene Act <sup>is</sup> the death of Minnehaha. Everything was very dreary, and there was snow, made by tight effects. Minnehaha <sup>is</sup> very ill, and <sup>is</sup> delirious. In her delirium she <sup>sees</sup> <sup>(see)</sup> Famine, and Fever. Famine was dressed in black, with horns, but he had a green light on him, so it made him look green. Fever was the same only red. They looked <sup>terrible</sup>. In the end Minnehaha died in delirium. Hiawatha rushed back, and sat down by her bed. The wigwam <sup>was</sup> closed, ~~and~~ to show that seven days <sup>were</sup> ~~are~~ elapsing. After, ~~it~~ it <sup>was</sup> opened



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and Minnehaha <sup>was</sup> taken out  
very slowly. The third act  
opened with the Spring Ballet.  
This <sup>was</sup> almost the best  
part of the whole thing. Out  
of the Wigwam, <sup>came</sup> the  
Herald of Spring. She  
danced simply beautifully. Then  
lots of ~~the~~ quite small  
children ran in and did a  
lovely dance. Then it's <sup>was</sup> all  
about the white men coming,  
and Hiawatha's Departure. At  
the very end, the first Hiawatha  
and Minnehaha, came on the  
stage, then the Conductor,  
then Mr Fairburn the producer.  
After that we took  
a bus to Victoria station,  
had a bun and a cup of  
tea and took a train back.  
Altogether we had a lovely time  
With heaps of love and  
kisses to you and Robert  
from your everloving  
oooooX Iris ooooo

(D)

## **Letters from Grand-mother Annie to Violet**

21 Campden Hill Mansions, Kensington W. 8 April 6. 1932 Letter from Grand-mother Annie

*My own darling Violet,*

*.... I am so terribly sorry to think how worried you are about expenses, but don't worry dear, things will come all right. I shall always love to have Iris & nothing would give me greater pleasure than to have her for her schooling as well as holidays but for her health's sake I think we ought if possible keep her at the sea & must think twice before removing her. Wouldn't Miss Maurice reduce her fees a little. I would be able to do more if I were not constantly helping Lawrence.... don't worry about money. We must try & keep the children at their present schools – they are doing so well & they are such darlings. ...*

21 Campden Hill Mansions, Kensington W.8 April 6, 1933 from Annie

*.... If the doctor does not want this extra three guineas I will use it for the boarding fee which I regret much I shall have to charge for Iris whilst she is with me. This will cover three weeks at £1 a week & the 3 shillings I will spend on something Iris may fancy... Ever your loving Mother.*

## School Reports

### Furzedown School, Littlehampton.

Report for.....Xmas.....Term, 1932  
 Name Iris Rhodes-James  
 Form III B Next Term begins Jan 17<sup>th</sup>

SCRIPTURE .. ..	7. good.	D.W.F.
READING .. ..	Very good indeed.	D.W.F.
WRITING .. ..	Fair.	D.W.F.
DICTION .. ..	V. good.	D.W.F.
COMPOSITION, ORAL	} Very good.	D.W.F.
COMPOSITION, WRITTEN		
RECITATION .. ..	V. good.	D.W.F.
ENGLISH GRAMMAR .. ..	V. good.	P.T.
LITERATURE .. ..	V. good.	D.W.F.
ENGLISH HISTORY .. ..	Good.	D.W.F.
FRENCH HISTORY	} 7. good.	D.W.F.
Geography		
GENERAL HISTORY	Good.	D.W.F.
CITIZENSHIP .. ..	7. good.	D.W.F.
NATURAL HISTORY .. ..	V. good.	D.W.F.
GENERAL SCIENCE .. ..	7. good.	D.W.F.
PICTURE STUDY .. ..	V. good. works v. well.	D.W.F.
FRENCH .. ..	Bien.	E.B.
ARITHMETIC .. ..	V. good when not careless.	P.T.
GEOMETRY .. ..	Could be good - but so untidy	P.T.
ALGEBRA .. ..	Has made a very good beginning	P.T.
DRAWING AND PAINTING .. ..	Could do much better.	D.W.F.
MUSIC .. ..	Works very carefully - but much too	J.L.
SINGING .. ..	stiff produces her voice well - but is	J.L.
HANDICRAFTS .. ..	often out of tune.	J.L.
SEWING .. ..	Fair	D.W.F.
DRILL .. ..	Fair	A.F.
DRILL .. ..	V. good.	P.T.
GAMES .. ..	Excellent.	P.T.
ATTENDANCE .. ..	Good is working well.	P.T.
LATIN		

CONDUCT—

V. good on the whole. She is rather forgetful still - but much less so than she was.

D.W. Fisher.

Principal

# Furzedown School, Littlehampton.

Report for ..... Xmas ..... Term, 1933

Name Iris Rhodes-James

Form III A Next Term begins Jan. 17<sup>th</sup> 1934

SCRIPTURE	.. ..	V. good indeed.	D.W.F.
READING	.. ..	Excellent.	D.W.F.
WRITING	.. ..	V. good on the whole.	D.W.F.
DICTATION	.. ..	Excellent.	D.W.F.
COMPOSITION, ORAL	.. ..	V. good.	D.W.F.
COMPOSITION, WRITTEN	.. ..	V. good.	D.W.F.
RECITATION	Geography	Good.	D.W.F.
ENGLISH GRAMMAR	.. ..	Has worked well.	P.T.
LITERATURE	.. ..	Excellent.	D.W.F.
ENGLISH HISTORY	.. ..	V. good.	D.W.F.
FRENCH HISTORY	Latin..	V. good indeed.	P.T.
GENERAL HISTORY	.. ..	Good.	D.W.F.
CITIZENSHIP	.. ..	V. good.	D.W.F.
NATURAL HISTORY	.. ..	V. good.	D.W.F.
GENERAL SCIENCE	.. ..	F. good.	D.W.F.
PICTURE STUDY	.. ..	Excellent.	D.W.F.
FRENCH	.. ..	lecture bien, grammaire laisse à désirer	L.W.
ARITHMETIC	.. ..	V. good.	P.T.
GEOMETRY	.. ..	good.	P.T.
ALGEBRA	.. ..	V. good.	P.T.
DRAWING AND PAINTING	.. ..	Fair.	P.T.
MUSIC	.. ..	Good when she remembers not to be stiff	F.L.
SINGING	.. ..	Good. Her intonation has improved.	F.L.
HANDICRAFTS	.. ..		
SEWING	.. ..		
DRILL	.. ..	Good.	P.T.
GAMES	.. ..	Excellent. Has made a v. good captain	P.T.
ATTENDANCE	.. ..		

CONDUCT—

V. good. She is much less resentful of authority than she was. We shall all miss her very much indeed—

Dorothy W. Zidler,  
Principal.

## ODE TO AUTUMN

((Written at about age 12, from handwriting))

Oh! Autumn how I envy now your wealth  
Your lovely colours and your cool sharp wind  
That stirs the leaves from sleepiness and blows  
Them from their beds, so now they have to find  
Another resting place the ground below.

Your leaves are coloured gold and bronze & brown  
Which makes the trees more lovely than in Spring  
And all the time the leaves that flutter down  
Sound very like a distant whispering  
Of insects or of birds, but not like leaves

Thou knowest that winters icy fingers soon  
Will spread around this cold and dreary world  
Yet thou dost cheer us with thy colours bright  
For now thou beauty's banner have unfurled.  
Thou art like sunset before coming night.

(Moral)

Oh Autumn! Give me half thy hope and cheer  
That I like thee may comfort all around.  
That I may smile when troubles do draw near  
And may not dread what yet I have not found  
And by being cheerful, cheer my fellow men.

THE END

**PHOTOGRAPHIC GALLERY**





Iris with Robert, New Milton, 1935, aged eleven





Richard Will Billy Iris



## 4. Wadhurst College, age 12-13, 1934-5



Wadhurst College c. 1990's - deserted

From *Daughters* early version:

When my mother returned after three years, she came as rather a shock. Her absence had made me fantasise about her, and when a small stout woman appeared, wearing a brown coat and carrying a paper bag of toffees as a present, I was mortified. My friends had been regaled with stories of her gracious appearance, and predictions of the gifts she would come bearing. I wished that she had stayed away, or at least our meeting had been somewhere where nobody knew me. She couldn't have been very impressed with me either, my mouth full of metal, my body expanding sideways rather than upwards.

She took me away from Furzedown and Father Orr and the heady delights of petting and caterpillar-scented lockers, and before she left for India again sent me to the school where I spent the happiest year of my childhood, Wadhurst College. Its headmistress, Miss Mulliner, had already made a name for herself at Sherborne, and chose as the setting for her new venture a beautiful house set in rolling fields and woods, through which we could wander at will. She was quite old, but very modern in her ideas. She believed in freedom, good food, encouragement, warmth and fun, with a minimum of rules.

She provided teachers as relaxed as herself. The botany mistress wore boucle two pieces threadbare under the arms from the constant clutching of her mildly agitated hands, accompanied by muted cries of, "Ladies! Ladies!" when the classroom noise grew deafening. Matron was ancient and her bright brown wig was held down by her white cap. It was the aim of our lives to dislodge it, but this only happened once, when her cap got screwed down into a bottle of Radio Malt. She shuffled very slowly round the dormitories on her vest-smelling routines, and was provided with an under matron to do the real work.

Miss Mulliner started our happy days by sweeping down a wide staircase to morning prayers dressed in brightly coloured smocks over ankle length skirts, yards of beads round her neck, and on her head an enormous hat. On Speech Days she drifted round the grounds in this costume looking for Rudyard Kipling who lived over the hill and was always advertised as our special guest but never came. In his honour we dressed up as sailors and peering over our hands demanded of our slightly bewildered parents in the audience where all the big steamers had gone to.

Like everything else in the school, religion was a relaxed affair and the door of my heart became quite rusty on its hinges. On Sundays Miss Mulliner drove me to church in her Morris Minor because it was a long walk. When her hats and skirts were arranged behind the wheel she became a different person, not the respected headmistress of two famous schools but the Fastest Woman on Wheels this Century. We shot round the bends, cornering on one wheel, and arrived with a screech of brakes, just missing the vicar as we ground to a halt. It was very embarrassing having to follow Miss Mulliner up the aisle just in front of the choir.

Everything about that year was charged with electric happiness. I had friends, food, warmth, laughter and teaching that stretched and encouraged me. I had a close relationship with two trees outside my dormitory window and a passionate involvement with the woods through which I was allowed to wander when the others went for walks. The One World Soul flowed through me every time I sat with my face against the bark of a tree trunk, and a great deal of poetry found its way into the backs of exercise books to celebrate my discoveries.

When I asked my mother why she took me away from Wadhurst after a year, she said it was because I had unsuitable friends and was doing badly at work; not very convincing since I was two years younger than the average age of my form, and

Wadhurst boasted girls from impeccable backgrounds: Avocet and Auriol Burdett Coutts for example, solid girls, not at all birdlike. I suspect my parents simply ran out of money. I spent a summer doing nothing in New Milton with my mother and new baby brother, Robert, who had arrived in my twelfth year. It was a watershed, the end of childhood, the beginning of selfconsciousness and boredom and frustration.

It was the beginning of judging my mother too, and of course finding her wanting. We judged one another. Her sulky pasty-faced daughter, often plunged into deep pools of silence with the cat unaccountably in possession of her tongue, was not at all what she had hoped for. She, on her round of bridge clubs and sherry parties, was very different from Marmy in "Little Women" who was my role model for mothers. A gulf began to stretch between us which we never really bridged.

# WADHURST COLLEGE.

Christmas Term, 1934

Name Iris Jones

Age 12 yr. 5 m.

Form M. 1a

Average Age 14 yr. 1 m.

SUBJECT.	REMARKS.	TERM.			EXAMINATION								
		%	No.	Posn.	%	No.	Posn.						
Holy Scripture <i>St. Luke</i>	Good examination <i>weak</i>	79	13	3	52	13	6	B. C. Mulliner					
Holy Scripture <i>Acts.</i>	Very good.	81	13	2	70	13	7	A. Gilbert.					
Literature ...	Very good.	83	13	2	62	13	11	C. M. Fraser					
Composition	Good but written work must be more careful & tidy.	79	13	2	84	13	1	C. M. Fraser					
Grammar ...	Good.	87	13	3	80	13	6	C. M. Fraser					
History ...	Good & intelligent work.	88	13	1	66	13	4	M. Coulson.					
Geography ...	Has worked well. Examination disappointing	79	13	2	51	19	14	M. I. Harding.					
French ...	Fairly good. Examination ought to have been better.	69	13	8	43	13	9	A. Gilbert.					
German ...													
Latin ...	Good, has improved greatly during the term	67	10	6	63	15	3	R. W. Bartlett.					
Botany	Good on the whole. Her book is better than it was	75	13	4	48	13	8	J. T. Pollard.					
Arithmetic ...	Very promising	68	6	2	61	6	3	L. L. Gardie					
Algebra ...	Fairly good.	75	5	2	52	12	7	M. Coulson.					
Geometry ...		74	4	1	58	10	1	M. Coulson.					
Science ...	Fairly good. Diagrams checked & care.	63	13	13	50	13	6	J. T. Pollard					
Drawing ...	Good.	73	13	5				F. E. Dawson.					
Painting ...													
Pianoforte	Shows promise. Has worked well							Olive Kinsey					
Violin													
Cello													
Harmony													
Elocution ...													
Handwork ...													
Needlework	Very fair.							F. E. Dawson.					
Gymnastics	Fairly good.							M. F. Shaw.					
Weekly Class		1st week	2nd week	3rd week	4th week	5th week	6th week	7th week	8th week	9th week	10th week	11th week	12th week
		III.	II.	II.	III.	II.	III.	III.	II.	I.	II.		

Absent 0 days

Conduct at School Iris has made good progress. She must learn to be more actively helpful and exert her influence for good. A. Gilbert.

Conduct at Boarding House Good on the whole - I do want to see Iris always reliable - Improving

General Conduct There is a great deal that is promising - I want to see Iris a steady influence for good.

Beatrice C. Mulliner  
Signature of Head Mistress

The School will re-open on Thurs. Jan. 17<sup>th</sup> 1935 at 9.0 in the morning. Boarders must be in the House on the PREVIOUS EVENING

There is one letter from this period. The envelope is date stamped from Slough, Bucks on 21 July 1935. It is addressed to Mrs. Rhodes James, White Hart Hotel, Sedbergh, Yorks. Violet had clearly gone up for Billy and Richard's Speech day. It looks as if Iris was coming back from school.

June 1935  
July

Teendale,  
Barr's Avenue,  
New Tilton,  
Hants.

My darling Tommy,  
I hope you got to Sedbergh quite safely, and without any mishap on the way. I had a perfectly awful journey, and have spent all my money! Instead of getting out at N. Tilton I got out at Brockenhurst, thinking it was Tilton. I telephoned Teendale, telling them that I would be back till about 4. At last I got into a taxi, but <sup>an</sup> ~~one~~ of a ~~Porter~~ Porter said that N. Tilton was the next stop, but on getting out I found it was Sway! Well! I simply couldn't wait till 5.15, so I took a taxi, which cost me 6/-!!!

Everything came to pieces, and my case broke open several times, and showed pyjamas and washing things everywhere, much to the astonishment of my fellow passengers! Altogether I had a hectic time, but still, "all's well that ends well".

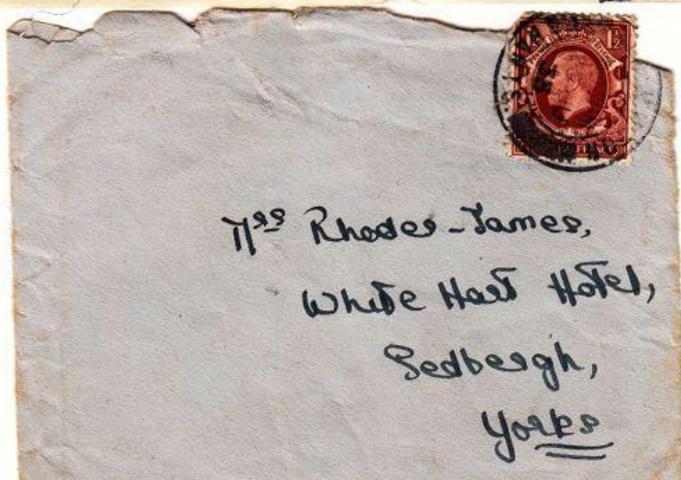
There's nothing much to say as I haven't been here long. Give my love to the boys and tell Billy that I'll write to him as soon as possible.

I hope you appreciate my effort at writing to you so soon? Excuse <sup>my</sup> writing but I'm a rather a hurry.

Everything's the same here here as when I left. (Which, I suppose, is only natural!)

Good-bye! for now.  
I hope you enjoy speech-day.

All my love, Iris





Violet and Iris

## 5. St Catherine's Bramley, aged 13-16, 1935-8



c.1910



c.1950



Girl's dormitory, c. 1905

**From the first version of *Daughters of Empire*.**

And then to crown it all she (mother) sent me to my penultimate school near Guildford, which was as different from Wadhurst as it was possible to be. Its headmistress, Miss Syme, a tanklike figure with the profile of a Roman emperor on an old coin. Parents thought her striking, "such a strong face", but I longed for Miss Mulliner's relaxed cheeks and laughing mouth full of slippery teeth which sometimes fell out, but only into her amber beads. Miss Symes would never have lost her teeth, or anything else about herself.

She ran the school as a Roman emperor would, with masses of rules whose only purpose was to keep the slaves in their place, and give the upper ranks, the prefects, something to do in seeing they were obeyed. There were rules about sitting on radiators, running in passages, placing hands in pockets, talking in the cubicles, tucking in of sheets. There were endless rules about the lavatories which we called the Alps, presumably because of their iciness, and a thin crackly Matron with steely eyes was provided to patrol them. We spent a lot of time in the Alps, using them as a rendezvous since so much of the school was out of bounds or couldn't be talked in; but they had half doors like stables back to front, so that Matron could keep an eye on us, albeit on hands and knees.

Perhaps it was a cheap school; certainly they saved on food and heating. We had stringy stews and pale grey puddings the consistency of moist cement. The long tables at which we ate had numbers attached to them and we had to pick little discs off a plate as we entered the dining room, which gave our place number. C.L. I dreaded, since it landed me up next to the Maths mistress with whom I had not one word to exchange. She must have hated the sight of my sullen, silent presence equally.

The dormitories were absolutely arctic, with a fresh wind from Siberia blowing the cubicle curtains about and the sheets as hard and cold as virgin snow. My chilblained leg lay on them like a halfcooked sausage, red and pulsating. It was of course forbidden to

use a hot bottle or climb into a friend's bed for mutual comfort. Even to enter another cubicle was a heinous offence, and prefects were posted like secret police to prevent us doing this or anything else comfortable and pleasant such as talking, playing games or bouncing on our beds to set our icy blood circulating.

St Catherine's was a Church school still is as far as I know so much time was spent in chapel and on the playing fields, places where mind and body could be occupied and kept under surveillance. The whole structure of rules was based on keeping us in sight and in a state of chilly numbness. Unwatched we would be immoral at worst, at best comfortable and happy, unchristian conditions. Sundays were unspeakably dreary: cold pork and beetroot for lunch, letter writing and mending in the evening, and in between a long walk which I was excused, so I sat alone in the Common Room under a rug instead. I always remember it as winter, the grey light fading outside, my tongue exploring the roof of my mouth for fragments of pork fat. I tried to write novels under the rug, but it was risky because all writing, including letters, could be confiscated and read, and if found subversive could lead to expulsion. Being expelled was such a terrifying prospect, a shame that would haunt forever, that we were kept in submissive fear at the prospect.

Yet as the years passed we grew rebellious, my friends and I, and refused to play lacrosse, or if we were forced dropped the ball on purpose in order to be sent off. We even refused to obey the prefects on occasions, and got locked up in the practising rooms all day, only emerging for assignations in the Alps. The plays and novels we scribbled endlessly we hid under our gym tunics which made us crackle as we walked. My best friend and I had long ago planned to be famous authors within months of leaving school. Miss Symes hated us for pretending to have permanent periods to get off games and gym, and also for being too clever by half. We got nasty remarks in our reports about our good marks coming from natural ability rather than hard work. However, she still offered to guarantee me that scholarship to Oxford.

### ***From Going Back***

As she stirred tomato puree and onions in the frying pan she thought back to the origins of feeling different. It all stemmed back, she thought, to the year of the third school, the year she started to live with Aunt Madge and got her curse [period or menstruation]. That was when the ground turned stony and sharp cactus sprouted where there had been flowers before.

Her aunt, that autumn, had packed her school trunk with cream-coloured shirts instead of white *Viyalla*, lace up shoes not buttoned, and three identical check dresses to be worn in the evenings. These items had been culled from church jumbles, and she had carried an old trunk (it had done journeys to the east, it was covered with torn labels which proclaimed it shabby and unwanted) into buildings which were full of dark yellow light, cold and dim, but not dim enough to hide her wrongness.

Presiding over the coldness was Miss Timms. Miss Timms had the face stamped on old Roman coins; hooked nose, high cheek bones, eyes like arrow heads. These beady eyes were fixed on her pupils from the moment they crept out of bed and dipped their hands into freezing water, through the crawling into scratchy stockings and the forcing of chilblained feet into shoes too tight for them, into and out of icy classrooms, hard-seated chapels, wet tarmac paths which led to sodden games fields. Miss Timms's God was the same as the one Aunt Madge worshipped, suspicious and punitive.

He, with Miss Timms as his commanding officer, ran the school as a military regime with a structure of rules, the breaking of which would bring down vengeance altogether out of proportion to the offence. Under Miss Timms again was a posse of prefects who were posted behind doors and behind cubicle curtains to see that hands were not put into blazer pockets, bottoms placed on radiators. They must not run in corridors, talk after lights, use certain lavatories at certain times, slam desk lids, omit knicker linings, scape back chairs.

Not knowing the rules, fear became part of the iciness of the long corridors and the unknown rooms. Maria didn't know where to go, and daren't ask anyone to tell her. Bells clanged for events that everyone else streamed towards or away from, which should she do? Every minute of the day there was a place she should be in, carrying the appropriate books or sticks for hitting balls about, but she didn't know where, she didn't know where. She was adrift in her yellow shirt, both conspicuous and lost and always cold.

The evenings were the worst, when she had changed once again into the same check dress and sat alone in the centre of a room, outside the circles round the radiator. Other new girls were invited to join one or other of the circles and sat knee to knee under tartan rugs, blessedly befriended. She prayed and dreamed of a friend, anybody at all, the spottiest, dullest most unwanted girls in the school would have done. In her icy aloneness she sat and wrote letters, to her parents in India hinting of unhappiness but knowing that they wouldn't understand or care; and to the friends at the last school, telling them lies about how many new friends she was making. She dared not write either a diary or stories, but read all the time, and amongst fallen leaves or chill linen imagined herself into fame and love and acceptance. Rupert was gradually being replaced by an older man, bitter and scarred by misunderstanding, smouldering with a passion that he had saved a whole lifetime to pour over her.

Since she had no distractions she worked hard and came top in all the exams, which made her more unpopular than ever. She returned to her aunt and to the mongrel for the holidays as to a haven. A man in a long over-coat in one of the houses down the road looked a little like Mr Rochester, and she began a fantasy about him. She wrote nothing down but sat with her nose against the window pane watching and dreaming. Her oily cousin had been sent away on a training course so her wrists were free from twisting.

\*

When the new term approached the thought of the three identical dresses obsessed her. She told her aunt that a lot of girls took skirts and jerseys but was told not to be so selfish, her parent had enough expenses with her two brothers at Public School without buying a lot of unnecessary clothes. She decided that she would have to steal a skirt and blouse. On one of her walks with the dog she would simply choose an outfit and slip away without paying. It would have to be a Friday morning when her aunt did the church flowers and was away till lunch time.

The next Friday, she tied the dog to railings outside the draper's shop she had chosen, and went in feeling extremely sick. The skirts were on the second floor, and as she walked towards the lift she could hear the dog howling. Her finger on the lift button was slippery, and the sourness of fear was rising from her whole body. The lift didn't come, she would have to climb the stairs. She had to get

back with her stolen clothes and have them hidden before her aunt had finished the altar.

Sticky-kneed she started up the stairs, but before she had reached the top there was a yelp and a crash and the dog was clattering up the stairs,umping up and down in the hot plush shop, whining and panting. Maria unlocked his paws from around her waist, and as the revolving doors closed behind them she knew she would never have the courage to try again. Her only course was to run away to her grandmother's.

She would have to steal money for the fare, but her grandmother would understand and would save her from going back to the school. But when she asked her aunt, casually, about addresses she was told that her grandmother was away for a spell in hospital having injections, so there was no escape in that direction. Wildly she thought of India, but when she pictured the arrival; the rows of men in topees whom she would not recognize – would they in fact know her with her large bust and stomach? – she knew that was no solution.

On the last weekend she returned to the regiment dream. The Colonel would look like Mr Rochester, he would adopt her and give her brassieres and shoes with heels and eventually, in a few years time, they would be married. She tried to find out if there was a regiment anywhere within ten miles, but she knew, with a weary hopelessness, that she would be going back to school with the same dresses this term and as far into the future as she could see. That was when the gulf had first yawned.

\*

Yet sometime in that second term a miracle had happened. A girl called Betty who was at the centre of one of the common room circles had waved at her and called, come on over. Over the gulf, and into the warm circle she had gone in her hated check dress, and Betty had become her best friend and given her a jersey and skirt she had never worn. Betty's mother was divorced from her very rich father, who supplied her with more clothes than she could ever wear.

Yet as soon as she started to be happy, she grew uneasy. If her aunt, or her parents or Jesus sensed her contentment they would do something to end it. Jesus she could not outwit either, and if she annoyed him he would kill her grandmother. Betty scoffed at the idea of God, but Maria's heart had opened to him so often that she couldn't yet accept the implications that it was only a ghost or a dream, knocking and knocking in his nightshirt and then becoming involved in complicated compacts with her.

Betty knew so much more about the world that Maria felt a child beside her. She had spent her early childhood in Trinidad where, she assured Maria, girls ripened as fast as the golden juicy fruit. Betty hinted of experiences like the one Daphne Evans had had in the bus, but admitted she had never actually done It, and they speculated endlessly about what It was like, and wrote interminable novels likening it, for want of information, to storms and blinding lights. They shared the ideal image of a heavy-lidded, hawk-nosed man of such experience, and wondered where they could find two such passionate paragons. Their rough notebooks filled up with poetry beginning with "Sick with my love for you I wait" or "This is the best, my love, this is my life's true dawning", but they only had the curate to draw on for inspiration.

\*

At the end of that miraculous term, as if to assure her that he was not a ghost but a true worker of miracles, Jesus sent her to her grandmother's for Christmas. To find her grandmother recovered and still surrounded by the scent of sandalwood seemed to Maria proof that all her heart-openings hadn't been in vain. She knelt again to pray – under the spell of Betty's sophisticated disapproval she hadn't made formal contact with God all term – and to promise allegiance for the rest of her life. She asked forgiveness for her doubts, and her eyes watered against the moth-smelling brocade, so abject did she feel.

Her grandmother continue to work and hope for beauty for her, ignoring the fizzy, rat-brown hair under the brush, and talking often of her lovely sisters, and of her even lovelier mother, after whom Maria had been called. The beautiful saintly faces under the piled hair looked out once more from the photograph albums, and at night Maria lay in bed and wondered once more about the flaw, which had kept all but Beatrice from the altar. Even she had ended up in one room in direst poverty, in spite of a rich husband in Buenos Aires.

She asked her grandmother about marriage and having children and whether it was nice.

“Some parts” said her grandmother, “weren't supposed to be nice. Having babies in Burma with Burmese doctors wasn't nice. Imagine, to be looked after by a native.”

Maria's imagination was unequal to this challenge, she could never bring herself to think of having babies under any circumstances, and when she asked about the flaw her grandmother said, “Repeated and repeated, from generation to generation” and sounded so biblical and remote that Maria couldn't question her further. One day she said, she would explain it all to Maria. The silver peacocks slid down her hair, mysterious but comforting.

During the day they made expeditions to museums, and sometimes friends came round and they sat in a circle reading poetry and plays, the ladies talking in gruff voices since no men had joined the literary group. Maria became intoxicated with words and showed her grandmother some of her writing, and was praised and encouraged. Clever, potentially beautiful, loved, she left the flat at the end of the holidays and returned to school aglow with confidence. She would become a famous writer and prove her grandmother's faith in her, and made he forget the flaw once and for all.

But when she had been back at school a couple of weeks she got a postcard from her aunt to say her grandmother had died. She took the card up to the dormitory, and drew the cubicle curtain, and started at it through the clanging of bells and the sudden hush as everyone disappears for tea. When Betty came to find her she couldn't speak. Betty made her get into bed, and later Matron brought her a hot bottle and asked her if she felt sick. She shook her head, though her teeth chattered.

She slammed the door on Jesus then, but always she was conscious of a patient arm holding up a lantern somewhere outside reality, in a lost, briar-filled forest she had once walked through. The lantern lit up a gold head bending above an album in which four sad faces stared up, victims of a flaw that would never be explained. Her aunt said she had given the silver hairbrush to the church to be sold to provide flowers. The sandalwood elephants and the photograph albums were put away in a trunk, and Maria was glad. She couldn't have borne to see

Aunt Madge's hands on them. Something about those hard, white hands – plaster white and brittle, like claws – filled her with revulsion and fear. She found herself watching her aunt's hands with a horror that held a premonition of even more horrors to come. Whatever was the flaw, Aunt Madge's fingers would surely have a part in it.

\*

They took a house in Surrey that year when Maria was fourteen; her mother very small and plump, her father thin with a military moustache, both of them besotted about her brothers. The Boys were provided with tennis rackets and golf clubs and fishing rods and joined gangs of other young people to use these, and to go on to dances where they fox-trotted in gaily decorated barns while Maria leant against the wall in her too-tight taffeta and wished she were dead. For her sluggish body and its unco-ordinated actions her whole family despised her, and so did their friends.

For two weeks they left Surrey for Cornwall, where the Boys found a whole lot of new friends to play cricket with on the beach and go on to the flicks at Perranporth. Maria went for walks on the moors and sat in clefts in rocks above the beach (her bust was far too big to be seen in a bathing costume) and read and dreamt and was happy. In the silence and sea-washed air her imagination ran riot. After sun-drenched days petted and feted and adored by the Colonel and his regiment, she tottered back to their bungalow for high tea, drained but at peace.

“Had a nice sulky day again?” they asked her, but she chewed stewed rabbit and refused to be ruffled. In the end they left her alone, and her mother stopped comparing her to all the other nice, cheerful girls of her age who were having such a good time around her. They gloomed about her future, her mother and father, but India fortunately was full of men in lonely stations, clever elderly I.C.S. men keen on wives who could amuse themselves in the hot weather. Maria was not the daughter they had dreamed of in their stucco bungalow, any more than they were the parents for whom she had craved when living with Aunt Madge. India, thankfully, would be the saving of them all.

\*

The boarding house in which they stayed was run by a Captain and Mrs Bent. Mrs Bent ailed in a variety of rather noisy ways; her bones told her when it was going to rain, and her stomach talked back at her, and her very rich blood boiled up like hot springs, fizzing and bubbling into boils and unhealing sores. Her finger tips also turned blue and numb from November to march, but in spite of all these afflictions she was hardworking and cheerful, and it was left to Captain Bent, in a faded blazer, to loll about with oiled grey hair and tell them about his sea faring life and what a rare old lark it had been.

Maria's parents and brothers found him a bore, so it was Maria who sat and listened politely to his stories, and sympathised with his wife about her bones and blood. Sometimes she stayed all day at the bungalow, helping with chores and laughing with Captain Bent about the tricks they had got up to crossing the equator. She was flattered that anyone should want to talk to her about anything, and bought a little powder compact and a round pot of rouge.

Powdered and pinked she sat on the cement steps in the flat sea light and laughed very loudly at Captain Bent's yarns.

Could he, she asked herself, staring into the tiny mirror behind the compact, could he find her attractive? It was a pity he was such a bore, even her most determined fantasy would fail to turn him into a possible lover. The hairs on the backs of his hands made his fingers look like caterpillars, and hair also sprouted from his nostrils, and his breath smelt like bread that had been left in the tin till it was green. Maria wondered how Mrs Bent could work so hard to support a man like that, but she powdered her nose for him nevertheless, since he did her the honour of noticing her existence.

After they had been in Cornwall a week, she woke up one morning feeling dreadfully ill. Almost at once she was sick, and then lay all morning in a darkened room with her eyes closed against the bland but blinding light. Her head ached from behind her nose to the tip of her spine, and she lay in a half sleep, dreaming of horses carrying her blindfold to the edges of cliffs. Each time she woke with a start from a dream she was sick.

Her mother put a jug of barley water by her side and went off with the Boys to the beach. By lunch time the sickness had subsided, and when Mrs Bent brought in a tea tray with lightly buttered toast, she raised her sticky head from the pillow and ate and drank with pleasure. Mrs Bent knew what it was to have a rebellious stomach, hers had been in a state of revolt since she had her First. She couldn't wear a corset because of the pressure on her groaning gall bladder or cantankerous kidneys. She brushed Maria's tangled hair and left her with the wireless and some magazines.

Maria felt peaceful as she listened to Henry Hall and tipped up the tomato coloured eiderdown so that crumbs ran down its creases. It would have been pleasant to have parents like the Bents and live, cherished, in this cottage by the sea. She was just beginning a dream about how they asked if they could adopt her when Captain Bent came in to see her and ask how she was. She smiled at him very sweetly, and he called her Poor Little Lady and took one of her hands and stroked it. She didn't much like the touch of his caterpillar fingers but she smiled on, glad to be cherished, half closing her eyes so that she could rearrange his features and make him look like Mr Rochester.

He began one of his interminable stories and the September light began to retreat from the bedroom walls. In the faintly lavender light Maria didn't notice that one of Captain Bent's hands had left hers, and was beginning to stray. When she did realise what was happening, she was held in a paroxysm of shyness. Encouraged by her apparent acquiescence, Captain Bent's hand, under the eiderdown, began to stroke her legs, moving upwards. At the same time he leant over and kissed her full on the mouth. His tongue ran along her closed lips like a snake seeking its hole. His old-bread breath suffocated.

She needed little strength, at least, to push him away, and he left with a grin and a tweak of her ear. She lay in a daze of shock. What had he done? Where had he touched her? The more she tried to remember the passage of the hairy caterpillars the hazier it all became. She was shaken by shivers out of proportion, she knew, to what had happened; and then by sobs because of some deep despair at things ever turning out right. Inevitably, inevitably the great mystery, the lovely revelation would have to come to her smelling of green bread.

Inevitably too the last week of the holidays was spent avoiding Captain Bent.

She crouched behind doors before entering or leaving rooms, and ran as if shot at when the front door closed behind her. The damp brambly moors became her refuge once more. She spent the last few days of the holiday trailing across their cobwebbed contours, trying to dream herself out of her plight. On the second day she found a ruined cottage and sat with her back to the wall, looking out over the pale sea wondering if it was still Jesus being spiteful, using his power on small vengeful acts until – until when? What was the utmost he could exact in retribution?

And then as she sat with the stone at her back, the world became very quiet, her thoughts, her breath, her whole self dissolved into the grey and distant sea and the ground beneath her feet. She slid down and rolled onto her face, pressing her mouth against the grass so that she could feel the great heaving, pulsing world like a furry animal beneath her, one with her. The sensation, unexpected and exquisite, slowly receded, but she lay on, her fingers clutching the back of the animal on which she had ridden. Was this It? The vision she had known as the boundaries of land and sea melted and embraced her in a vast compassion was so sweet that there could be nothing better to be experienced. That must be It, that must be what you felt with a man. Why had it come to her alone in this bleak landscape, and could she bring it back?

\*

She found that she couldn't, but that every so often during the next few years out of nowhere it returned. When the holiday was over and her parents had returned to India and she to school she tried to describe the feeling to Betty. Betty said it was either sex or religion or perhaps a bit of both. Maria had told of Captain Bent's advances, lopping twenty years off his age and all the hair off his hands, and Betty said her sex instincts must have been unwittingly aroused and she was having a sort of delayed response.

Maria said but he had revolted her but Betty said that didn't mean a thing, revulsion and response could go together. She herself was always being attracted by people she disliked, sometimes even by women. Maria who had long harboured a mild passion for the history mistress, said that was quite different. The feeling on the Cornish moor had answered all the questions about life and God and everything, though the answers had retreated with the sweetness. Betty said her mother had a copy of Havelock Ellis and she'd try to get hold of it next time she went home.

Maria knew that her feelings had nothing to do with Jesus or Havelock Ellis, but during a walk back to school in a particularly brilliant sunset she had an idea that it might have been her grandmother, trying to communicate with her. She told Betty and they started table tapping in the common room, using a glass and cut out alphabets. It started a craze and soon everyone was sitting round tables screeching and getting in touch with spirits. When the headmistress had this reported to her she forbade the occupation forthwith. Maria, her questions unanswered, spent her time when she wasn't reading Swinburne, rubbing sulphur cream into her spots.

\*

When she returned to Aunt Madge for Christmas her aunt confirmed that

she was fat and ugly, and that it was lucky she was going to India after school as anyone could find a husband there. Maria found some old liberty bodices and flattened her chest into them, so that it escaped, less obviously, from her armpits. She told her aunt she never wanted to get married, and Aunt Madge said neither had she, she had wanted to be a missionary or a nun. Her parents had insisted though, and her honeymoon tramping about amongst pagodas at the hottest time of year, eating evaporated milk on guavas, had been the most horrible experience of her life.

Maria's imaginations were often set in Burma, though she managed to expunge her aunt from the scene. Rupert – older now and with a ravaged face – walked with her along the riverbank and through the palaces, twining scented blossoms through her hair which was long and silky and the colour of honey. She dreamed these dreams through another cheerless Christmas with her aunt and the mongrel, and through the coldest of the school terms.

Betty had invited her to spend the summer holiday with them in Scotland, where an uncle owned a large house near the sea. There they would embark on the novels that were to make them famous. The thought of tramping heathery hills with Betty, and returning to peat fires and note books filling with her great work filled Maria with delight that warmed the iciest dormitory. Inevitably, inevitably Betty came into her cubicle one morning waving a letter from her mother to say that Maria's parents had refused permission for her stay. No reason was given except that other plans had been made.

Maria wished on her parents terrible tropical fevers, tornadoes, annihilating earthquakes, the bites of cobras and rabid dogs. She didn't sicken, and she spent the summer in a boarding house in Filey with her aunt and the mongrel. Maria shared a bedroom with her aunt and they undressed under their dressing gowns facing the wall, and washed in china basins with towels round their shoulders. The mongrel slept in a basket near the door to prevent anyone breaking in and assaulting them. The sight of her aunt in iron curlers would, Maria felt, have been a sufficient deterrent.

Her aunt read her a portion of Scripture aloud every morning, and they took a "message" from the reading. This holy writ they carried along the linoed passages, into the cabbage dining room, along windswept promenades and boulder-strewn beaches. With the Curse hanging over her head Maria thought it had something to do with the oily cousin – Aunt Madge was forever wary. She felt that the texts she repeated through the day would act as charms against God's unremitting, testing vengeance.

They shared a table in the dining room with a couple who had a daughter of Maria's age. June, proclaimed constantly by her parents to be the apple of their eyes, was pretty, slim and self confident. She wore sweaters and slacks and canvas shoes with laces up her calves like ballet shoes. Maria in her liberty bodice, homemade cotton dress, crocheted cardigan and brogues, felt for June a deadly envy. This was increased when she went with June to Boots Lending Library and saw her being immediately picked up by an undergraduate in a tweed jacket. The library became their rendezvous and Maria spent many jealous hours watching them through the empty spaces in Juvenile Fiction.

Her aunt had chosen Filey because it was one of the places that the C.S.S.M. visited, and they went every morning to where a stone altar had been built where the east wind whipped most persistently off the sea. Maria sang and thumped, but felt nothing now but coldness and nostalgia, and a creeping

embarrassment about being asked whether her heart was open or shut, and whether it contained Jesus. Perhaps today, perhaps this very hour shouted the young men against the wind, spit flying, perhaps this was the actual moment Jesus had chosen to enter someone's heart! Wasn't it a wonderful thought they demanded, that he, the great creator of the world, was yet so humbly waiting on this beach to be let in?

\*

After one of the services a red nosed girl came up to Maria and asked her if she had given her heart to Jesus. Maria mumbled that she had, and then, unable to refuse, said she would go along to the girl's rooms the following evening to talk about this experience and become real friends and pray together. Drops on the end of the pink nose of the earnest lady quivered in anticipation of this pleasure.

There was a fine sea rain falling when Maria set out next day for this appointment. Her galoshes slapped against the stone of the sea front and a sand blister on her heel caused her to limp dispiritedly towards what she knew would be an embarrassing evening. Talking about Jesus was almost as bad as discussing her S.T. problems with her aunt. She had had to borrow some from June, and planned at the week's end to fling her bundle out to sea, hoping the wind would be right.

When she reached the front door to which she had been directed, she stood in front of it, her stomach churning. Doors menaced her all through her growing up. Behind them crouched headmistresses, or her aunt, or her parents talking about her and wishing she was someone else. In her dreams they often opened onto chasms over which she dangled, hanging onto slippery handles. The door of her heart which had once presented a homely image, was now totally grown over. This door in front of her smelt of varnish, and she almost turned and ran home.

When at last she knocked, and was let in, she found the beach lady dressed in a soft woollen dress of a becoming shade of blue, and smelling of scent. The fire was lighted and one lamp cast a cosy glow. For some reason this warm and scented welcome increased her embarrassment.

"Ah, Maria my dear." The lady came forward to kiss her on the cheek. "How nice to see you. Take off your wet things dear. Here, put on my slippers."

The kneeling down in front of her of the beach lady, the removing of her galoshes and slipping on of fur-lined slippers, sent shivers of foreboding up Maria's spine. She saw these actions as part of the oiling of the door of her heart, so that Jesus could once more be persuaded to enter. The cup of cocoa that was prepared for her was part of the same sinister process.

"There" said the blue-clothed beach lady, putting down a tray on which was spread a tray cloth embroidered with forget me nots, bearing two cups of cocoa and a plate of biscuits. "Now the rain can fall and we can forget about it and just get to know each other."

Maria's body steamed with a warm anxious aroma similar to that given off by her galoshes.

"Let's start with our names. Yours I know is Maria, mine's Janet. Hallo Maria."

"Hello"

“Janet”

“Hallo Janet.”

They clasped hands above the cocoa, Maria blushing deeply. What was she going to say about Jesus? Should she confess that he had been and gone, or should she maintain that he was still insider her, though somewhat overgrown amongst the brambles? In the steamy scented atmosphere the truth seemed too cruel, not even desirable.

“Well let’s start with me. I’ll tell you all about myself and then it’ll be your turn. I’m twenty-three and training to be a teacher. I hope very much to go abroad when I’ve done my training, to India perhaps, or Africa, where I can spread the word of the gospel as well as do my job. I live in Surrey and have two brothers and a sister and a very wonderful mother. My father died some years ago and mother brought us all up in a ripping way. One of my brothers is going into the church, the other is still at school but he hopes to be a witness for the lord too. My sister is a nurse and like me wants to go east and nurse poor natives and bring them the good tidings.”

Maria who had burnt the tip of her tongue on the cocoa, ran it along her lips and thought about all these witnesses going to India at more or less the same time as she would be there. She doubted if they would meet, since she would be off to remote places being paraded in front of elderly white men in the hope of pleasing one of them. Except that she would have completed her first book by then, and able to arrange her own life.

“Now” said Janet, leaning over and pressing Maria’s knee. “It’s your turn.”

“Well my parents are in India and I go to boarding school and stay with an aunt in the holidays, and my brothers stay with other aunts I think. That’s about all.”

“No, that’s not all,” gurgled Janet. “I want to know about you. About your thoughts and dreams and intimate feelings. If we’re to be friends we mustn’t have secrets from one another.”

Maria searched for an intimacy that could satisfy the woolly scented lady.

“I hope to be famous,” she said. “I hope to do something really – well I don’t know – important.”

“Ah” Janet leant forward and stared brightly at her, nodding her head in a confirmatory way. “That’s just what I thought. I knew there was something special about you. I saw a lot in you from the start. ‘That is someone Jesus wants for his work,’ I said to myself. ‘Someone he has chosen for a great purpose.’”

“I want to write really” said Maria stiffly. She knew from past experience that nobody really wanted to know her feelings, all they wanted was to “find out” what her thoughts were, and then use the knowledge against her.

“You have been chosen” Janet insisted. “Jesus wants you. He wants you as he wanted me. He called me at a meeting I went to five years ago. I was just a silly little flibberty jibberty then, with not a thought in my head but boys and clothes, and he came and stood beside me and said ‘Janet I want you. Let me come in, open your heart I am waiting.’ Since that day my life has been completely changed. I know the road I am taking, Jesus is at the steering wheel.”

Maria had a picture of Jesus and the beach lady bowling along in a two seater with a dicky at the back, like the one her parents had bought for their leave. Jesus’s beard was blowing in the wind but his face wore the unchangingly serene expression it did in pictures, and his crown of thorns was not even askew.

“He is always beside me, inside me” said Janet, staring hypnotically at Maria, her mouth slightly brown from the cocoa. “It’s such a wonderful feeling. Now

tell me when you took him in.”

“It was at a meeting on the beach.” The subject was one they were bound to reach, but Maria would rather have talked of Captain Bent’s caresses than of that hardly-remembered moment of years before.

“Go on dear,” Janet leant forward and pressed her knee again encouragingly. Maria’s confusion became acute. There was something about the gesture that reminded her of Captain Bent, though she knew there could be no possible connection.

“I heard his voice” she improvised wildly. “I just felt he was there, so I said ‘Come in’ and he came.”

“Ah” breathed Janet. “That moment of entry. So wonderful isn’t it? He just penetrates to every part of one doesn’t he, fills one’s mind and heart, and even body. That warmth, that quietness, that knowing. There’s nothing on earth like it. Shall we get to our knees now, and say thank you to him together, for what he has done for us, and Åfor bringing us together?”

Maria sat glued to the cretonne, so Janet came over to her.

“Kneel down beside me dear,” she commanded.

Maria slid to her knees, and put her head into her hands. Beside her she could feel that Janet was breathing very fast, and the pulsing blue wool of her sleeve felt like caterpillar fingers. As soon as the prayer was over she could get up and leave, and run and run all the way home. Behind her hands she could see her legs pelting along the promenade in the clean, reviving rain.

“Dear loving Jesus” intoned Janet in a breathless sing-song. “We kneel before thee this evening, thy handmaidens, Maria and I, to lay our hearts once more open to thy love. So many times thou hast entered into us and filled our hearts and lives, and we thank thee for thy great kindness. Now this evening we beg thee again to vouchsafe us a visit from thyself. On this evening of all evenings, we beg thee most humbly to come into this room, and lay thy hands on our heads, and fill us with they blessing. Now at this moment, dear lord Jesus, enter us once more, and sanctify thereby our friendship and love for each other.”

Janet took one of her hands from under her eyes and put it round Maria’s shoulders. Clasped thus together in clammy reverence, there was no escape. Maria dared not open her eyes or move away. She was paralysed with fear, but of what she could not say. Janet’s hand stroked her shoulder, and she knew that it would move. Hands were traitors, they crept through the undergrowth while the sun shone down and birds sang in high branches. Their secret purposes were disavowed by those who sent them on their errands.

“Now you speak to Jesus,” breathed Janet. Her breathing was coming very fast now, and Maria’s, in terror, matched it.

“Dear lord Jesus,” she gasped. “Thank thee for everything. For coming into my heart and everything. Dear Lord Jesus, please help me. Please help me.”

And then for once her prayer was answered. There was a frantic scrabbling at the door, and a loud howling which Maria recognised with enormous relief.

“Scamp” she exclaimed, leaping to her feet so abruptly that Janet was rocked back onto her heels, and then onto her back. Maria was aware of lisle stocking waving in the air above a pair of peach coloured bloomers as she dashed to the door and grabbed the mongrel.

She said, “Oh he’s sopping, he can’t come in here, I must take him straight home” and without looking back she dashed from the room, down the stairs, and out into the rain. Only then did she remember her coat and galoshes, but

nothing on earth would have sent her back for them.

Next day Maria had a temperature and her aunt went to collect her clothes. She returned tight lipped and sharp-eyed. Maria had behaved very discourteously to Miss Martin, she must go back when she was better and apologise. Maria's fever lasted for the remaining three days of the holiday, so she didn't see any of the beach ladies or gentlemen again. Her faith in Jesus was slightly restored, since he had sent help in answer to her prayer, in the shape of a sopping mongrel, to rescue her. What she was being rescued from she couldn't exactly decide but she had recognised danger. Her grandmother and her aunt were right when they told her that a woman's defences must always be up. At fourteen she felt extraordinarily wise.

\*

At fifteen she weighed ten and a half stone, but although her body was graceless even Miss Timms had to allow her a good brain, though reluctantly. She consistently came top in all exams except Geometry, but her good results drew no applause from her parents. Betty said to hell with parents anyway, look what a bloody mess they made of their own lives, who were they to give advice, or anything else?

Maria, consoled and holstered by Betty, was unsurprised when she returned to school for the last term, when they were to take their School Certificate, and found Betty had left. She wrote to say there had been another upheaval in the family, and that she was to return to Trinidad to her father. She hoped Maria would visit her there, but they both knew that it was unlikely. In fact they never met again. Maria missed Betty almost as much as she had missed her grandmother, and found herself once more abandoned, but this time was less surprised. She was beginning to recognize the pattern.

Her mother was to return in the Easter holidays of 1938 and after a summer being "finished" at a London school, they would return to India together. If she had to go to India – and the inevitability of it had been with her so long that she accepted it without questioning – Maria decided it would not be to the embraces of elderly civilians. She would use the experience to write her first novel, and then be free. In spite of Jesus' relentless quest, she believed absolutely in her eventual freedom. She might have to flee from him down the arches of these years, but eventually she would turn and trounce him.

St Catherines, Bramley, Surrey Nov: 28<sup>th</sup>

*My darling Mummy & Daddy,*

*Thank you very much indeed for your lovely letter.*

*I think this will reach you just about Christmas, so I will wish you a very very Happy Christmas. I am awfully sorry about the presents, which I am afraid will arrive late, but I didn't realise I had to send them and yesterday I only had about half hour and I was sure I wouldn't be able to choose anything in that time. So I hope you'll forgive them arriving late, because its not nearly so nice if a thing doesn't arrive on the Day, I don't think. Anyway, I hope you have a lovely time. It's rather difficult to get a Christmas spirit in a horrible cold bare form-room!*

*Last Wednesday was St Catherines Day. We had to get up quite early, and go to service. After breakfast, at 10 o'clock, there was a match, but as it was terribly cold we only watched for half time, and then came in and read in fr1936*

LETTERS 1936

20 11  
October 14<sup>th</sup>  
St Catherine's,  
Bramley,  
Surrey.

My darling Mummy and Daddy,  
Thank you very much  
for your lovely long letter. I can't  
find it anywhere so I'm afraid I  
can't make any comment on anything.  
How are the pups? I hope they're  
all doing fine, and won't get any  
illnesses or anything. I do wish  
I could see them, and help you,  
as you must have a job with them  
all.

As I told you last week, I moved  
up. All my friends have moved up  
too, which is nice. For English  
we are reading "Variety Year", which  
looks as if it's going to be jolly

rice, though awfully long drawn out.  
We are reading Browning's poems. Some  
of them are lovely, such as the  
one we have just learnt "Oh! to  
be in England", but some of them  
are quite impossible to understand.  
In our Shakespeare play we are  
reading "Macbeth" which sounds cheerful.  
I am in the same dormitory,  
only I am up the new end of  
the dorm, which only has about  
nine people, and I like it miles  
better.  
Last Wednesday we had a  
cooking lesson. I only have to  
pay 2d a week out of my  
pocket money, and its jolly well

(15)  
with J, as we eat everything we  
make, and I must learn how  
to cook sometime. You wait till  
you come home! You'll probably  
all be poisoned but still last  
time we made chocolate tarts &  
apple chutney, & the others made  
cheese straws, apple straws, scones  
& short-bread. Altogether J is  
marvellous fun.

Last Monday night there was  
was quite a thrill, all the lights  
fused. (Yas exciting - I don't think)  
Anyway J seemed quite exciting  
at the time, as we had candles  
and sat up late.

yesterday Aunt Hargery took me,  
out to lunch, and in the after-  
noon we went to see Shirley Temple  
in 'Captain January'. She was  
perfectly sweet, and sang and danced  
beautifully. I am going out to lunch  
and tea with Aunt Hargery  
to-day.

Well good-bye for now, and  
lots of love to Robin,  
from your  
everloving  
Lis

(1/19) (3a)

Dec: 11<sup>th</sup> 1936.

St Catherine's,  
Bramley,  
Surrey.

My darling Mummy and Paddy

Thank you very much  
indeed for your lovely long letter.  
As usual I haven't got your letter  
with me, so I can't make any  
comment on it.

Last Sunday evening we had  
a jolly decent house-party in  
the evening. We had asparagus,  
prawn and crab sandwiches, lemon-  
ade, chocolate biscuits, cocktail  
biscuits, and tons of fudge. Jolly  
good for school! We had good  
fun playing games too. Lightly

funny games, and by the end we  
were all weeping through laughing  
so much. There is a new mistress  
in Red called Miss Harrison,  
who is about 3ft high, but  
seemingly funny. She is one form  
mistress, and really awfully  
nice.

Yesterday I went out with  
Auntie Margery and saw darling  
Jack again in "When knights  
were bold". He really is marvellous.  
I have seen him for about  
a week after I see him  
and then cost of a bit. The  
way he holds his hands, and  
his smile etc. are so fine.

Anyway <sup>(33)</sup> this is all being you  
so I'll leave the subject. Anyway  
it was a dashed good film  
I'm rather lucky as I've  
won 3 prizes, and am allowed  
to choose some books valuing 5/-  
to 7/6. IT is a jolly nice prize  
really, only I can't think of  
anything, because I want such  
millions of books. If I  
win the Scripture Essay Prize  
(which I want) I can get a prize  
worth a guinea. The prizes are  
years work, Latin, and Junior English



Nov: 28<sup>th</sup>  
(20)

1986

85 Catwines,  
Branley,  
Surrey

My darling Mummy + Daddy,  
 Thank you very much indeed  
 for your lovely letter.  
 I think this will reach you just  
 about Christmas, so I will visit you  
 a very very happy Christmas. I am  
 awfully sorry about the presents,  
 which I am afraid will arrive late,  
 but I didn't realize I had to send  
 them and yesterday I only had  
 about 1/2 hour and I was sure I  
 wouldn't be able to choose anything  
 in that time. So I hope you'll  
 forgive them among late, because  
 its not really so nice if a thing  
 doesn't arrive on the Day, I don't  
 think.

Anyway, I hope you have a lovely  
time. It's rather difficult to get a  
Christmas spirit in a horrible  
cold bare form-room!

Last Wednesday was St Catherine's  
Day. We had to get up quite  
early, and go to service. After  
breakfast, at 10 o'clock, there was a  
match, but as I was terribly  
cold we only watched for  $\frac{1}{2}$  time,  
and then came in and read a  
portion of the fine. In the afternoon  
Pam & Betty & I lay on our beds,  
and spent some of the time as  
well trying to beautify ourselves.  
at 6.15 in the evening we had  
chapel (we had high tea at 5.15)  
and then we started to change  
The look is simply lovely, the bluey

green material, and beautifully made



This is very good but  
I couldn't imitate the  
rest

I had a white snow affair,  
which made me look ridiculous  
I thought, but other people said it  
looked better than usual so I danced  
it. The dancing was quite nice,  
but my feet ached like anything  
at the end. The dance was a  
number dance, and we were the  
one the last course in, and  
it was awful as we had to  
dance round by ourselves in front  
of everyone, which I did not  
enjoy!

The dance ended at about 10.30. IT  
was quite fun, though I didn't like  
the <sup>actual</sup> dancing much.

Yesterday I went to "Mary of  
Scotland". The scenery and photography  
were beautiful, and the acting was  
good, except that I didn't think  
Lorraine Depour was very suited  
to the part of Mary, as she was  
terribly emotional and on the verge  
of tears all the time. Queen Elizabeth  
was made out to be rather a  
villain too.

We had a chap to talk on  
the League of Nations the other  
day, and he was awfully interesting  
He talked about the propositions  
England had made to the League  
to make the League better, or  
something like that.

(20) My music-mistress's father has just  
died, and she has had to go  
home. I am not looking forward  
very much to her coming back, in  
case she breaks down on anything.  
It's rather hard luck on her  
I've had an awful time this  
week, I've had to sit next to ~~the~~  
Miss Tukey, an awful mistress, at  
breakfast. I upset her tea, and  
dropped her head, and she is  
a horrible sarcastic pig at the  
best of times, so you can imagine  
what it's like when she's ruffled!  
I hope your 'flu is better,  
Mummy & that Robin won't get any-  
thing. Give my love to him please.  
Does he still remember me?  
I am afraid there is no  
more time, so I must stop.

I'm awfully sorry about the presents

Tons & Tons of love,

and again a very happy  
Christmas,

from your everloving

Lis

# SCHOOL REPORTS

Physical Measurements.						
YEAR.	SPRING TERM.		SUMMER TERM.		AUTUMN TERM.	
	HEIGHT.	WEIGHT.	HEIGHT.	WEIGHT.	HEIGHT.	WEIGHT.
1935					5ft 0 $\frac{1}{4}$	7st 1 $\frac{3}{4}$
					Absent	
1936	5ft 0 $\frac{3}{4}$	7st 2	5ft 1	7st 6 $\frac{1}{2}$	5ft. 1	7st. 8 $\frac{1}{2}$
	5ft 0 $\frac{3}{4}$	7st 5	5ft 1	7st 3	5ft. 1	7st. 9
1937	5ft 1	7st 9 $\frac{1}{2}$	5ft. 1 $\frac{1}{8}$ in.	7st. 11 $\frac{1}{2}$ lb.	5ft. 1 $\frac{3}{8}$ in.	7st. 11 $\frac{1}{2}$ lb.
	5ft 1 $\frac{1}{8}$	7st 8 $\frac{1}{2}$	5ft. 1 $\frac{1}{4}$ in.	7st. 11 $\frac{1}{4}$ lb.	5ft. 1 $\frac{3}{8}$ in.	7st. 10 $\frac{1}{4}$ lb.
1938	5ft. 1 $\frac{1}{2}$ in.	7st. 12 $\frac{3}{4}$ lb.	5ft. 1 $\frac{1}{8}$ in.	8st. 0 $\frac{3}{4}$ lb.		
	5ft. 1 $\frac{1}{8}$ in.	8st. 1 lb.	5ft. 2 $\frac{1}{8}$ in.	8st. 0 $\frac{1}{2}$ lb.		

S. CATHERINE'S SCHOOL,  
BRAMLEY, GUILDFORD.

**REPORT.**      Christmas Term, 1935....

Name..... *Iris Rhodes James* .....      Number of Times absent..... *5* .....

Lessons Refused..... *—* .....

SUBJECT.	Class for Term.	Examination per centage.	REMARKS ON THE TERM'S WORK.	SIGNATURES.
Old Testament ...				
New Testament ...	<i>B</i>		<i>Good</i>	<i>A.S.</i>
Prayer Book ...				
Church History ...				
Arithmetic ...				
Elementary Mathematics ...	<i>B+</i>		<i>Promising. Thoughtful &amp; accurate</i>	<i>O.V.L.</i>
More Advanced Mathematics ...				
History ...	<i>A-</i>		<i>Very good</i>	<i>B.E.B.</i>
Geography ...	<i>A-</i>		<i>Very good.</i>	<i>S.M.P.</i>
English Composition ...	<i>A-</i>		<i>Very good.</i>	<i>L.R.G.</i>
Literature ...			<i>Very good. Appreciative and accurate</i>	<i>L.R.G.</i>
Reading ...				
Writing ...				
Dictation ...				
Latin ...	<i>A-</i>		<i>Extremely promising.</i>	<i>S.P.H.</i>
French ...	<i>A-</i>		<i>Very good.</i>	<i>S.M.P.</i>
Oral French ...				
German ...				
Oral German ...				

SUBJECT.	Class for Term.	Examination per centage.	REMARKS ON THE TERM'S WORK.	SIGNATURES.
Botany ... ..				
Nature Study ... ..				
Physics ... ..				
Chemistry... ..	B+		Very good.	F.T.
Hygiene ... ..				
Drawing ... ..			Very fair.	S.P.H.
Painting ... ..			Very good modelling done. Her painting is rather hesitating.	R.H.S.
Elocution ... ..			Works intelligently. Must acquire greater variety of tone.	T.N.S.
Music—Piano ... ..			Should do well when she has more confidence.	I.T.G.
Violin ... ..				
Violoncello ... ..				
Organ ... ..				
Ear Training			Shows promise.	D.H.T.
Class Singing			Very fair.	I.T.G.
Solo Singing				
Needlework ... ..			Good.	L.H.P.
Handwork ... ..				
Domestic Science				
Gymnastics ... ..			Very promising.	B.L.
Dancing ... ..				
Games ... ..			Good - needs more practice.	B.L.

Form... IV a ... No. in Form... 24 ... General Report... Has made a very good beginning ...

Age... 13.5 ... Average Age... 13.4 ...

Class { Term... .. Examination... ..

Form Mistress... B.E. Booth ...

Next Term begins on... January 17<sup>th</sup> ... and ends on... April 2<sup>nd</sup> ...

... A. Symes ... Head Mistress.

S. CATHERINE'S SCHOOL,  
BRAMLEY, GUILDFORD.

**REPORT.**

Spring Term, 1936.....

Name..... *Iris Rhodes James*..... Number of Times absent..... *3*.....

Lessons Refused..... *0*.....

SUBJECT.	Class for Term.	Examination per centage.	REMARKS ON THE TERM'S WORK.	SIGNATURES.
Old Testament ...				
New Testament ...			<i>good</i>	<i>A.S.</i>
Prayer Book ...				
Church History ...				
Arithmetic ...				
Elementary Mathematics ...		<i>58</i>	<i>Examination not up to her usual standard</i>	<i>O.S.L.</i>
More Advanced Mathematics ...				
History ...		<i>77</i>	<i>A very good term's work.</i>	<i>B.E.B.</i>
Geography ...		<i>68</i>	<i>Has worked well.</i>	<i>L.M.P.</i>
English Composition		<i>84</i>	<i>Very good.</i>	<i>R.G.</i>
Literature ...		<i>90</i>	<i>Very good indeed.</i>	<i>R.G.</i>
Reading ...				
Writing ...				
Dictation ...				
Latin ...		<i>75</i>	<i>very good.</i>	<i>G.S.H.</i>
French ...		<i>70</i>	<i>Very good</i>	<i>Bayn</i>
Oral French ...				
German ...				
Oral German ...				

SUBJECT.	Class for Term.	Examination per centage.	REMARKS ON THE TERM'S WORK.	SIGNATURES.
Botany ... ..				
Nature Study ...				
Physics ... ..				
Chemistry... ..		67	Good steady work.	S.W.
Hygiene ... ..				
Drawing ... ..			Good.	G. P. H.
Painting ... ..			Has done some good work, but needs more self-confidence	R. M. V.
Elocution ... ..			Satisfactory	T. N. S.
Music—Piano ...			A distinct improvement this term.	I. P. G.
Violin ... ..				
Violoncello ...				
Organ ... ..				
Ear Training			Good.	D. N. T.
Class Singing			Must learn to breathe deeply.	I. P. G.
Solo Singing				
Needlework ... ..			Good.	L. M. P.
Handwork ... ..				
Domestic Science				
Gymnastics ... ..			Very good.	B. L.
Dancing ... ..				
Games ... ..			Has had very little practice this term.	B. L.

Form IX A' No. in Form 18 General Report Has done a very good term's work

Age 13.8 Average Age 14.2

Class { Term ..... Examination 74% II

Form Mistress B. L. Booth

Next Term begins on April 28<sup>th</sup> + 29<sup>th</sup> and ends on July 28<sup>th</sup> + 29<sup>th</sup>

A. Symes Head Mistress.

S. CATHERINE'S SCHOOL,  
BRAMLEY, GUILDFORD.

**REPORT.**

*Summer*

Term, 1936....

Name *Iris Rhoads James* ..... Number of Times absent ..... 0 .....

Lessons Refused ..... 0 .....

SUBJECT.	Class for Term.	Examination per centage.	REMARKS ON THE TERM'S WORK.	SIGNATURES.
Old Testament ...				
New Testament ...			<i>Very good</i>	<i>A.S.</i>
Prayer Book ...				
Church History ...				
Arithmetic ...				
Elementary Mathematics ...		<i>70</i>	<i>Very good</i>	<i>O.J.C.</i>
More Advanced Mathematics ...				
History ...		<i>77</i>	<i>A Good Tennis work,</i>	<i>B.E.B.</i>
Geography ...		<i>64</i>	<i>Good work has been done.</i>	<i>J.M.P.</i>
English Composition		<i>86</i>	<i>Very good.</i>	<i>R.G.</i>
Literature ...		<i>81</i>	<i>Hard working and appreciative</i>	<i>R.G.</i>
Reading ...				
Writing ...				
Dictation ...				
Latin ...		<i>77</i>	<i>Very good.</i>	<i>S.E.H.</i>
French ...		<i>70</i>	<i>Good in the whole. Bon commencement - bonne volonte</i>	<i>Bry h</i>
Oral French ...				<i>SC</i>
German ...				
Oral German ...				

SUBJECT.	Class for Term.	Examination per centage.	REMARKS ON THE TERM'S WORK.	SIGNATURES.
Botany ... ..				
Nature Study ... ..				
Physics ... ..				
Chemistry... ..		84		
Hygiene ... ..				
Drawing ... ..			Very fair	S. & H.
Painting ... ..				
Elocution ... ..				
Music—Piano ... ..			Very satisfactory progress.	I. N. G.
Violin ... ..				
Violoncello ... ..				
Organ ... ..				
Ear Training			Fair.	D. M. T.
Class Singing			Improving.	I. N. G.
Solo Singing				
Needlework ... ..			Good.	L. M. P.
Handwork ... ..				
Domestic Science				
Gymnastics ... ..			Good.	B. L.
Dancing ... ..				
Games ... ..			Lawn Tennis. Shows great promise. Cricket. Fairly good. is a promising bowler.	N. A. B.

Form... IV A' ..... No. in Form... 21 ..... General Report... Work very good -  
Age... 14.0 ..... Average Age... 14.7 ..... not always very reliable  
Class { Term.....  
Examination... 76% II ..... in behaviour .....

Form Mistress... B. C. Booth .....

Next Term begins on... September 22<sup>nd</sup> ..... and ends on... December 17<sup>th</sup> + 18<sup>th</sup> .....

..... A. Symes ..... Head Mistress.

S. CATHERINE'S SCHOOL,  
BRAMLEY, GUILDFORD.

**REPORT.**

Christmas Term, 1936....

Name..... *Iris Rhodes-James.*

Number of Times absent..... *0*

Lessons Refused..... *0*

SUBJECT.	Class for Term.	Examination per centage.	REMARKS ON THE TERM'S WORK.	SIGNATURES.
Old Testament ...				
New Testament ...				
Prayer Book ...				
Church History ...	<i>B</i>		<i>good</i>	<i>A.S.</i>
Arithmetic ...	<i>A-</i>		<i>Has definite ability and works well.</i>	<i>M.H.</i>
Elementary Mathematics ...	<i>A-</i>		<i>works with method and accuracy.</i>	<i>M.H.</i>
More Advanced Mathematics ...				
History ...	<i>B+</i>		<i>Iris has completed the term with an excellent piece of work.</i>	<i>B.A.B.</i>
Geography ...	<i>B.</i>		<i>Good work. Writing often illegible.</i>	<i>L.M.P.</i>
English Composition ...	<i>B+</i>		<i>Very good.</i>	<i>R.G.</i>
Literature ...				
Reading ...				
Writing ...				
Dictation ...				
Latin ...	<i>A-</i>		<i>Generally good - she has ability.</i>	<i>S.M.</i>
French ...	<i>B+</i>		<i>Should do well.</i>	<i>B.M.</i>
Oral French ...				
German ...				
Oral German ...				

SUBJECT.	Class for Term.	Examination per centage.	REMARKS ON THE TERM'S WORK.	SIGNATURES.
Botany ... ..				
Nature Study ...				
Physics ... ..				
<del>Chemistry</del> ...	B-		Good in written work, but her attitude in class leaves much to be desired.	S.W.
Biology ...				
Hygiene ... ..			Fair.	S.C.H.
Drawing ... ..				
Painting ... ..				
Elocution ... ..			Good.	R.S.
Music—Piano ...			Stilt lacking in confidence.	I.H.G.
Violin ... ..				
Violoncello ...				
Organ ... ..				
Ear Training			Very fair.	D.N.T.
Class Singing			Might exert herself more.	I.H.G.
Solo Singing				
Needlework ...				
Handwork ... ..				
Domestic Science			Fair	lll
Gymnastics ...			Quite good.	R.J.S.
Dancing ... ..				
Games ... ..			Very fair at lacrosse. Netball good - is not always as helpful as she might be -	N.H.B.

Form  $v^b$  ..... No. in Form 21 ..... General Report... Her work is good...  
 Age... 14 yrs 6 mths ..... Average Age 14 yrs 10 mths ..... Her attitude towards authority leaves much to be desired  
 Class { Term .....  
 Examination .....  
 Form Mistress... M. Hanigan .....  
 Next Term begins on... January 7<sup>th</sup> & 15<sup>th</sup> ..... and ends on... March 24<sup>th</sup> & 25<sup>th</sup> .....  
 A. Symes ..... Head Mistress.

S. CATHERINE'S SCHOOL,  
BRAMLEY, GUILDFORD.

**REPORT.**

Spring

Term, 193.8...

Name Mrs Rhodes James

Number of Times absent 2

Lessons Refused... - Commended 5

SUBJECT.	Class for Term.	Examination per centage.	REMARKS ON THE TERM'S WORK.	SIGNATURES.
Old Testament ...				
New Testament ...				
Prayer Book ...				
Church History ...				
Arithmetic ...		53	} Very fair	K. E. P.
Elementary Algebra Mathematics ...		35		
More Advanced Geometry Mathematics ...		39		
History ...		61	Good - should be very good but sometimes hasty.	M. L.
Geography ...		63	Good, a tendency to be too verbose.	L. M. P.
English Composition		68	Good; sometimes very good.	R. G.
Literature ...		60	Good.	R. G.
Reading ...				
Writing ...				
Dictation ...				
Latin ...		79	Term's work careless - Very good exam.	A. S.
French ...		63	} Good; is sometimes careless.	B. G.
Oral French ...				
German ...				
Oral German ...				

SUBJECT.	Class for Term.	Examination per centage.	REMARKS ON THE TERM'S WORK.	SIGNATURES.
Botany <i>Biology</i>		63	good.	S.W.
Nature Study ...				
Physics ...				
Chemistry...				
Hygiene ...				
Drawing ...				
Painting ...				
Elocution ...			Very good work. Greater care necessary with articulation of H. & J.	T.P.S.
Music—Piano ...				
Violin ...				
Violoncello ...				
Organ ...				
Ear Training			Works well.	L.B.
Class Singing				
Solo Singing				
Needlework ...				
Handwork ...				
Domestic Science				
Gymnastics ...			Fairly good.	J.K.C.
Dancing ...				
Games ...			Netball is promising. Lacrosse is only fair	J.K.C.

Form. V.A. .... No. in Form. 24 ...

Age. 15.7 ... Average Age. 16.1 ...

Class { Term. ....  
Examination. 58% ... III ...

General Report. Her examination results should have been better - writing is often almost illegible

Form Mistress. R. Groom

Next Term begins on. May 6<sup>th</sup> ... and ends on. July 27<sup>th</sup> ...

Half Term June 3<sup>rd</sup> [ 7<sup>th</sup> - 8<sup>th</sup> ] ... A. Symes Head Mistress.

S. CATHERINE'S SCHOOL,  
BRAMLEY, GUILDFORD.

**REPORT.**

Summer Term, 1937...

Name Iris Rhodes James Number of Times absent 2

Lessons Refused 0 Commended 5

SUBJECT.	Class for Term.	Examination per centage.	REMARKS ON THE TERM'S WORK.	SIGNATURES.
Old Testament ...				
New Testament ...			} <u>Good</u>	<u>A.S.</u>
Prayer Book ...				
Church History ...				
Arithmetic ...		<u>47.</u>	} <u>Has worked steadily, and well.</u>	<u>M.H.</u>
Elementary Mathematics ...				
More Advanced Mathematics ...				
History ...		<u>67.</u>	<u>Good, has worked very well.</u>	<u>Mrs</u>
Geography ...		<u>60.</u>	<u>Has done good work.</u>	<u>L.M.D.</u>
English Composition		<u>63.</u>	<u>Good, but Iris must aim at simplicity</u>	<u>R.G.</u>
Literature ...		<u>70.</u>		
Reading ...				
Writing ...				
Dictation ...				
Latin ...		<u>70.</u>	<u>very good.</u>	<u>S.P.H.</u>
French ...		<u>67.</u>	<u>Good; might be a little more ambitious</u>	<u>B.J.L.</u>
Oral French ...				
German ...				
Oral German ...				

SUBJECT.	Class for Term.	Examination per centage.	REMARKS ON THE TERM'S WORK.	SIGNATURES.
Botany - BIOLOGY		65.	Good.	S.W.
Nature Study ...				
Physics ...				
Chemistry...				
Hygiene ...				
Drawing ...				
Painting ...				
Elocution ...			Articulation satisfactory. Tone-production still needs care.	T.P.S.
Music—Piano ...			A satisfactory term's work.	I.T.G.
Violin ...				
Violoncello ...				
Organ ...				
Ear Training			Very fair.	D.N.T.
Class Singing				
Solo Singing				
Needlework ...				
Handwork ...				
Domestic Science				
Gymnastics ...			Fair work well.	J.K.P.
Dancing ...				
Games ...			Fair - Both tennis & cricket had practice.	J.K.P.

Form... <sup>V<sup>13</sup></sup>..... No. in Form... 23..... General Report... Very good but inclined to be self-centred & dogmatic

Age... 5 years..... Average Age... 15 yrs 5 mths.....

Class { Term..... Examination... 63% II.....

Form Mistress... M. Hanison.....

Next Term begins on... September 21<sup>st</sup> - 22<sup>nd</sup>..... and ends on... December 17<sup>th</sup>.....

..... A. Symes..... Head Mistress.

S. CATHERINE'S SCHOOL,  
BRAMLEY, GUILDFORD.

**REPORT.** Christmas Term, 1937...

Name *Miss Rhodes James* Number of Times absent *5*

Lessons Refused - *Commended 4*

SUBJECT.	Class for Term.	Examination per centage.	REMARKS ON THE TERM'S WORK.	SIGNATURES.
Old Testament ...				
New Testament ...				
Prayer Book ...			} <i>quite good</i>	<i>A.S.</i>
Church History ...				
Arithmetic ...		<i>45</i>	} <i>Very fair.</i>	<i>K.E.P.</i>
Elementary Mathematics <i>Algebra</i> ...		<i>30</i>		
More Advanced Mathematics <i>Geometry</i> ...		<i>33</i>		
History ...		<i>39</i>	<i>Term's work very good - examination most disappointing, unless</i>	
Geography ...		<i>67</i>	<i>Has done good work, but could do very good work.</i>	<i>L.M.P.</i>
English Composition ...		<i>70</i>	} <i>Good.</i>	<i>R.G.</i>
Literature ...		<i>63</i>		
Reading ...				
Writing ...				
Dictation ...				
Latin ...		<i>69</i>	<i>Good</i>	<i>A.S.</i>
French ...		<i>48</i>	} <i>Could be much better.</i>	<i>Byk.</i>
Oral French ...				
German ...				
Oral German ...				

SUBJECT.	Class for Term.	Examination per centage.	REMARKS ON THE TERM'S WORK.	SIGNATURES.
Botany <del>Botany</del> <i>Biology</i>		58	Has worked well.	S.W.
Nature Study ...				
Physics ...				
Chemistry...				
Hygiene ...				
Drawing ...				
Painting ...				
Elocution ...			Satisfactory.	T.P.S.
Music—Piano ...			Disappointing — has not worked well.	I.M.G.
Violin ...				
Violoncello ...				
Organ ...				
Ear Training			Very fair.	D.M.T.
Class Singing				
Solo Singing				
Needlework ...				
Handwork ...				
Domestic Science				
Gymnastics ...			Fairly good. Iris works steadily.	J.K.P.
Dancing ...				
Games ...			Good on the whole — but needs more practice at both games.	J.K.P.

Form...VA..... No. in Form...24... General Report...So inclined to rely more on her natural ability than on careful work

Age 15:5. Average Age 15:11.

Class { Term..... Examination... 52% / III.

Form Mistress... R. Groom

Next Term begins on... Jan 19<sup>th</sup> ..... and ends on April 6<sup>th</sup> .....  
A. Symes ..... Head Mistress.

S. CATHERINE'S SCHOOL,  
BRAMLEY, GUILDFORD.

**REPORT.**

Easter

Term, 1917.

Name Iris Rhodes-James.

Number of Times absent 3

Lessons Refused 0. Commended 4.

SUBJECT.	Class for Term.	Examination per centage.	REMARKS ON THE TERM'S WORK.	SIGNATURES
Old Testament ...				
New Testament ...				
Prayer Book ...			} Good	A.S.
Church History ...				
Arithmetic ...	}	64.	Good, sound work which shows promise.	M.H.
Elementary Mathematics ...				
More Advanced Mathematics ...				
History ...		65.	Good, works well.	ms
Geography ...		68.	Has worked very well.	L.M.P.
English Composition		80	} Very good.	R.G.
Literature ...		84.		
Reading ...				
Writing ...				
Dictation ...				
Latin ...		76.	Very good.	S.E.H.
French ...	}	68.	Good.	Bry 4
Oral French ...				
German ...				
Oral German ...				

SUBJECT.	Class for Term.	Examination per centage.	REMARKS ON THE TERM'S WORK.	SIGNATURES.
Botany <i>Biology</i>		53	<i>good.</i>	<i>S.W.</i>
Nature Study ...				
Physics ...				
Chemistry...				
Hygiene ...				
Drawing ...				
Painting ...				
Elocution ...			<i>Good. Must correct a tendency to drop the voice.</i>	<i>T.S.</i>
Music—Piano ...			<i>Much improved.</i>	<i>I.H.G.</i>
Violin ...				
Violoncello ...				
Organ ...				
Ear Training			<i>Very fair.</i>	<i>D.M.T.</i>
Class Singing				
Solo Singing				
Needlework ...				
Handwork ...				
Domestic Science			<i>Very good</i>	<i>all</i>
Gymnastics ...			<i>Has worked well.</i>	<i>H.J.S.</i>
Dancing ...				
Games ...			<i>Very fair.</i>	<i>N.H.B.</i>

Form *V B.* No. in Form *22* General Report *Very good work*  
Age *14 yrs. 8 mths.* Average Age *15 yrs. 2 mths.* *Her conduct has improved*  
Class { Term .....  
Examination *70% II*  
Form Mistress *H. Harrison*  
Next Term begins on *April 22<sup>nd</sup>, 23<sup>rd</sup>* and ends on *July 27<sup>th</sup>.*  
*A. Symes* Head Mistress.  
*Armatini Holiday May 11<sup>th</sup> - 18<sup>th</sup>.*

S. CATHERINE'S SCHOOL,  
BRAMLEY, GUILDFORD.

**REPORT.**

Summer

Term, 1935...

Name... *Mrs Rhodes James* .....

Number of Times absent... *3* .....

Lessons Refused... - *Commended 4*

SUBJECT.	Class for Term.	Examination per centage.	REMARKS ON THE TERM'S WORK.	SIGNATURES.
Old Testament ...				
New Testament ...				
Prayer Book ...				
Church History ...			} <i>Good</i> <i>Very fair.</i>	} <i>A.S.</i> <i>K.E.P.</i>
Arithmetic ...				
Elementary Mathematics ...				
More Advanced Mathematics ...				
History ...			<i>very good.</i>	<i>Mrs.</i>
Geography ...			<i>Good.</i>	<i>L.M.P.</i>
English Composition ...			} <i>Very good; creative work especially promising.</i>	} <i>R.G.</i>
Literature ...				
Reading ...				
Writing ...				
Dictation ...				
Latin ...			<i>Very good</i>	<i>A.S.</i>
French ...			<i>Good on the whole; could be very good.</i>	<i>Bry L.</i>
Oral French ...			<i>Bonne ille</i>	<i>J.P.</i>
German ...				
Oral German ...				

SUBJECT.	Class for Term.	Examination per centage.	REMARKS ON THE TERM'S WORK.	SIGNATURES.
Botany- <i>Biology</i>			<i>Good</i>	<i>S.W.</i>
Nature Study ...				
Physics ... ..				
Chemistry... ..				
Hygiene ... ..				
Drawing ... ..				
Painting ... ..				
Elocution ... ..			<i>Very satisfactory</i>	<i>R.S.</i>
Music—Piano ...				
Violin ... ..				
Violoncello ...				
Organ ... ..				
Ear Training			<i>Fairly good.</i>	<i>L.B.</i>
Class Singing				
Solo Singing				
Needlework ...				
Handwork ... ..				
Domestic Science				
Gymnastics ... ..			<i>Fairly good.</i>	<i>i.k.e.</i>
Dancing ... ..				
Games ... ..			<i>Tennis. Promising. His has some very good strokes.</i>	<i>i.k.e.</i>
			<i>Cricket. Fair only.</i>	<i>N.H.B.</i>

Form... *VA*..... No. in Form... *21*..... General Report... *His has a really good brain & should do well*.....

Age... *16*..... Average Age... *16:5*.....

Class { Term..... Examination.....

Form Mistress... *R. Groom*.....

Next Term begins on... *Sept: 21<sup>st</sup>*..... and ends on... *Dec: 26<sup>th</sup>*.....

..... *A. Symes*..... Head Mistress.

### **Card from Violet to Iris**

Postcard of S.S. Britannia, Anchor Line 26.3.37 - (Marseilles)

To Miss I. Rhodes James c/o Mrs Swinhoe, 21 Campden Hill Mansions, Kensington, Londre, Angleterre

*We are just sliding into Marseilles & as we have had 2 rough days I barely got through my letters and so could not write to you. I wish now I were going overland & I should be with you so much sooner, but it fits in so well with Sedbergh – Robbie is just grand & has rushed in to say there is a big boat. He was easily the best at the Fancy Dress but he took fright at the crowded room and would not go in for the judging!! Well I can hardly believe I am nearly home,  
Lots of love, Mummie*

*Thank you for your lovely long letter. I am so happy at getting it xxxx*

### **Additional information from the School Magazine**

*Magazine Jan. 1937*

Iris, in form IVAI, had won the prize for the year's work for 1936 and also prizes for English and Latin. In Dec. 1936, she had taken the Lower Grade Elocution exam and passed with Merit.

*Magazine Feb. 1938*

Iris, in form VB, won the prize for the year's work and Junior English. She passed an Elocution exam, Grade III with merit.

*Magazine Nov. 1938*

Matriculation and School Certificate London. Iris passed in English, History, Geography, Latin, French and Biology – more subjects than anyone else in her form. She left the school in form VA in July 1938.

### **Iris's writings at St Catherine's Bramley (from school magazines)**

#### **Rain** (February 1938)

Through a haze of April sunshine glistening raindrops softly pass  
Each reflecting rainbow colours from on high,  
Tremble lightly on a leaf, and the drop into the grass  
    With a sigh.

Crystals shaken from the tree-tops patter into sunlit pools,  
Forming dimples on their surface; and a shower  
Moistens soil which hardens round every tender root and cools  
    Each flower.

When the air is charged with thunder and a stifling heat lies low,  
In a breath of wind is brought the news of rain,  
Which beats down until the earth cools, and breezes start to blow  
    Again.

When the stormy burst is over, every petal, leaf and blade  
Flashes like a gem beneath the watery sun  
And the smell of moist earth rises, strong and sweet, a new decade  
Has begun.

IRIS RHODES-JAMES Va

**Hands** (November 1938)

Feet seem to be such clumsy, unattractive, boring things  
Compared with delicacies such as these.  
What use are they to anything, from cabbages to kings?  
Feet seem to be such clumsy, unattractive, boring things.  
Think of those hands of Shalimar of which the poet sings,  
And miracles like surgeon's hands to soothe and cure disease.  
Feet seem to be such clumsy, unattractive, boring things  
Compared with delicacies such as these.

IRIS RHODES-JAMES Va

**A Dormitory Feast.** (November 1938)

SINGLE ACROSTIC

Silence and darkness; not a curtain stirs.  
The creaking beds are still; a clock strikes twelve.  
Midnight! That magic hour of fancy balls,  
A time when every self-respecting ghost  
Roams; but a sudden change has taken place.  
Giggles are heard; the sound of scraping tin  
And crackling paper; curtains quickly drawn;  
Rustles and bangs; the flash of someone's torch;  
Everything strewn about and fumbled for.  
Then suddenly the light goes on. Each one  
Scrambles for bed. Alas! It is too late.

I.RHODES-JAMES, Va

**The Fête** (January 1937)

On Saturday, July 11th, a fête was held in aid of the Children's Chapel in the Guildford Cathedral. Although the uncertain weather caused some anxiety, it was a great success and enjoyed by everybody.

Form IIIA, with the assistance of Miss Garner, performed "The Masque of the Shoe," a musical play which was greatly appreciated and extremely well acted and sung, considering the ages of the performers.

Later on in the afternoon there was another entertainment in the form of a dancing display. At the beginning Miss Law explained that the dancing might be thought a little unusual, but this was because it was Modern dance, and its chief aim was to give

freedom of expression. She added that the dances had been composed by the pupils themselves and not by herself as Teacher.

There were many interesting amusements set up outside, such as the rolling horse, cokernut [sic] shies, dart throwing, and an original one for guessing advertisements. There was also a dark tent in a secluded corner where fortunes were told, and pony rides were given in the games field.

Miss Turley was in charge of the fancy-work stall, and displayed an assortment of extremely pretty articles which were in great demand. Another popular stall was Miss Mittell's, and the inviting-looking cakes and sweets soon disappeared. The fruit and flower and vegetable stall run by Miss Booth and Miss Lamb also attracted many customers.

At the end of the afternoon it was calculated that £110 had been collected, and everybody agreed that the Fête had been a great success, and were glad that the money was going to such a deserving cause.

## IRIS RHODES-JAMES, IVA

### **Storms** (November 1938)

Nature, with its mood and temperamental ways, is extraordinarily like a human being, an artist or inventor perhaps, and, like most people, especially artists, is given to fits of despair, anger or gloom. For the same hand that paints sunsets over hills or washes flower petals in dew, causes trees to groan and crash, and thunder to shake the earth. Storms seem to display the wild and angry moods of Nature, the recklessness and temperament of an artist.

Storms are by no means all alike, and it is fascinating to try to attribute to them characteristics, for it is obvious that each has a character of its own. For instance, there is the surly type, when the air is heavy with foreboding, and trees creak though no wind blows. It seems sulky and unwilling to blow over, sometimes lingering for days, and causing an atmosphere of dark oppression. Thunder rumbles and grumbles in the distance, and though the air is electric, there is no lightning except now and then a sudden fierce, spiteful jab that is gone before anyone has noticed its presence. This type of storm is by far the most unpleasant and lingers on, as if half enjoying indulging in grief, and when eventually the oppressive heat lifts and the air clears, everyone sighs with relief to be rid of the infectious atmosphere of glowering gloom.

Another type, completely different and much more enjoyable, is the light-hearted storm, when Nature seems like a child with some new toys which are completely absorbing it. The wind rises in the night and swoops away among the trees, tossing their branches in a frenzy of delight, whistling and singing as it goes. High up the thunder guffaws at antics of the lightning as it swoops to earth, and the rain patters down, chattering to itself, and leaping off swaying branches into pools with a shiver of delight, dimpling their surface as it lands. The spirit of such a day is infectious, and there is no longer a damp heat in the air which seems to suffocate and stifle the life of every living thing. On the contrary, the flowers lift up their heads gratefully to receive the rain-drops, tossing them playfully into the already glistening grass, while the trees, many of them old and weary, receive fresh heart and grow high-spirited.

There is another type of storm, unlike either of these two, which is perhaps the most awe-inspiring and beautiful of all. It is neither surly nor playful, but seems to be an expression of all the sad things in the world, for sadness is always most beautiful, and shows that Nature, who makes such things as cobwebs or young lambs, has also a

grave and lofty side to its character. It is the kind of storm one watches with wonder and a touch of fear, when the wind moans instead of singing, and the beat of the rain on roofs and tree-tops is hard and stern. Loud and strong the thunder crashes, indomitable and irresistible, as if calling to all those who are suffering or oppressed to air their grievances, for Nature is in the mood to listen.

So storms express the moods of Nature, its graveness and gaiety, and the times when it broods, jealous and glowering. For however beautiful is the freshness of a spring morning or the drowsy heat of a June afternoon, when the air is filled with the scent of new-mown grass and of heavy-headed roses, nothing can be compared with those intense and vivid moments of thunder and lightning, which comes to purge and destroy in any season. Storms reveal the forceful side of Nature, and without them we would soon tire of her gentler, lovelier side.

IRIS RHODES-JAMES, VA

## **Poems in brown notebook**

**(Headed. IRIS RHODES-JAMES. PRIVATE)**

### **Grizel**

Hers was a love surpassing all, brimful of joy & pure,  
She loved him for his faults & knew this great love could endure  
Whatever fate might send their way as long as he was true  
As long as he loved her she was content & her love grew.

At first she loved to lean on him to feel the strength of men  
It filled her soul, that lonely soul that once had feared and then  
She'd run to him and tell him of the child that she had been  
And he rejoiced she grown up so joyful & serene.

But then she longed to mother him to feel he could rely  
On her to soothe & comfort him a Grizel till you die  
That instinct will be the strongest – your delight in helpless things  
Is that why you were trying to get rid of Tommy's wings?

Her grey eyes were dry in sorrow for she scorned the string of tears.  
She was proud when young but only as a cloak to hide her fears.  
And that pride was gone for ever shown she ran back after love  
So God gave her added courage as His blessing from above....

[Written 1936. St Catherines. Aged 14]

### **Crisis**

All through the day I have laughed  
Laughed & talked & forgotten  
Out in the streets there was sunshine & winds  
And rain that the winds had begotten.  
Laugh in the sun & the rain I might.

But now it is night.

Now in the silent world  
Dark & starless & wet,  
Terror is loosened, the terror of hearts  
Which have tired so hard to forget.  
Tell me, how can I help but take fright  
Now it is night?

Down in the depths of me  
Longing the years have suppressed  
Rises & tears at my heart to demand  
What I have never possessed,  
How can there be a God of Right  
When it is Night?

Looking forwards & back,  
Seeking out of the years  
Hope for the future, my soul is weighed down  
With the burden of unshed tears.  
Gone is all happiness, all delight  
Now it is night.

Moment of hell on earth  
Moment of private pain  
Out of this white-hot dream restore  
Me to myself again

I have passed through the fierce night  
Now it is light.

[Written in bed, March 1938. Mental crisis brought on by political one.]

A desolate tree-laced blue-green afterglow

A desolate tree-laced blue-green afterglow  
A wind heavy with smoke from forest fires.  
A cough of leaves in which to sink my woe  
And conflict of desires.

A heavy sodden mist-enshrouded gloom  
A silence undisturbed by love or fear.  
A little space within the tear-stained tomb  
Of this the dying year.

[Written at Mrs McLeishes Cottage, Sunday morning, October 1938]

### **These have I loved...**

These have I loved; the scent of peat fires burning  
Under an arch of stars when nights are cold  
A slumberous flock returning to its fold  
In the dim twilight; windswept moors, the first  
Shy trembling sunset primrose bud to burst  
A biting tearing wind that cases tears  
And ??? them with its own long dwelt on fears  
Dispelled; a thick soft bed of autimnn leaves  
That crackle underfoot & golden sheaves.  
Bird lullabies at twilight, blossoms, bees  
All these have been my loves and more than these.  
The scent of moist earth after April showers  
That rises strong & sweet; & rain-washed flowers.  
The cry of gulls whose white wings seem to trace  
Strange patterns on the gall?? Of space.  
Blue eggs in shaded nests; a suynset glow  
Flushing the peaks of mountains capped with snow  
Firelight & leaping shadows pleasant dreams;  
Grey down hushed beneath the moons white beam.

### **Early Morning Tea**

To-day to most people  
To the people who eat bacon & eggs  
Whose hurrying legs  
Carry them unfeelingly upstairs  
And down again  
Whose cares  
Are heavy as dust, their pain  
As vain  
To these it is just a day.  
Each early morning tray  
Beside the head  
Of each bed  
Signifies the eternal train  
Of events. The rain  
Beating, hissing, shivering in the leaves  
Grieves  
Them only  
Because of the lonely  
Inexplicably forsaken feeling stealing  
Under this shabby tomato eiderdown  
Down & down  
Through the blankets, the sheet  
The stupid pyjamas sticky with heat,  
Through the warm sleep-soothed flesh  
Fresh

From half-fulfilled drams  
Through their flesh, untroubled yet with schemes  
Of how to fight each minute  
Fight a battle with each hour & win it.  
Through to their hearts  
The parts  
That can feel the chill the still morning air, They stir  
Shiver & yawn, until the blur  
Becomes a room and the tray  
The beginning of a day.

But to me, to me the rain  
Beats the refrain  
That is pulsing through my blood  
In a flood  
Of pure delight.  
The height  
Of bliss, the passionate thrill of living  
This is the rain stirring to Express. But you  
Do you  
Lying there in the flush  
Of sleep  
Keep  
Faith in your dreams with me.  
Do you see –  
Eyes soft-shadowed, beautiful, beautiful, we  
Two  
Me, as I am, & you  
Do you see us as one  
Alone  
In a world of dreams come true.  
We two who are two no more.  
Never more  
Shall we waken  
To a forsaken  
World. The tray  
On the bedside table is gay.  
With the promise of hours shared.  
Darling I'm scared.  
Wake up, wake  
Rub your eyes, tell me you like cake  
With nuts.  
Tell me the smuts  
From the dead fire are on my nose.  
Tell me you chose  
The wrong sort of face cream –  
Tell me the dream  
That was so funny at the time  
But I'm  
Not sure what the joke is now.

How can I make  
Sure if this joy until you wake  
Supposing I wake.

### **The grasses stirred**

The grasses stirred & the pale violets leaning  
Against the wind, fluttered & dreamed again.  
I lay on the drowsy earth & sought a meaning  
For you & me & love and so much pain.

All day long I had watched the white clouds thronging  
The harsh blue sky, bright with a hidden sun.  
All day long in a dreamy ache of longing  
I had seen them fill, change shape, pass one by one.

The grass was rough, the hard earth unresisting  
Dust & greenness & warmth became part of me.  
What did it matter, the chaos of existing  
With this hot mist wrapping around the heart of me.

Clouds & dreams & a tall slim flower sleeping  
Brushing my cheek in a dream. What need for tears  
Love is pain. But the world will go on weeping  
For loves delight through endless stormy years.

But I know better. While other hearts are breaking  
Blindly seeking a Purpose a way, a Scheme,  
I am content with the memory of a baking  
Earth, and the scent of a violets dream.

### **School Memories**

“Esprit de Corps” is something which I think I’ve never had  
And that strange thing which people call “team spirit”  
Is somehow lacking in my make-up. Though it rather sad  
I feel it necessary to admit it.  
I’d always rather be  
Alone than crowded in a herd  
These topping sporty people leave me cold.  
And so, although its childish & quite utterly absurd  
Its these memories I’ll think of when I’m old.

Hot lawns on sunny afternoons; dim passages with rows  
Of dark & somewhat morbid works of art.  
The rude remarks you make about the colour of my nose  
And Sunday lunches – pork & gooseberry tart.

The gorgeous maps that Ponto drew; the common room at night  
With corner chairs & gramophones & fug.

And sitting on the hall steps in the cold & grey half-light  
Four of us huddled underneath one rug.

The squeal of Pam's shoes, oranges. That memorable day  
When I threw a piece of dough onto the ceiling.  
Then Gastric flue with arrowroot & hours while we lay  
Discussing food to soothe that empty feeling.

The smell of cabbage cooking: Strutty's long & pointless yarns  
("Julia you have thrilled me to the Core!")  
Frosty mornings on the games-field; piles of stockings needing darns  
And people banging on the bathroom door.

The crunch of gravel as we steamed across to morning prayers.  
The tuneless thump of pianos; Mitty's eyes  
As she turned the old Alps corner; endlessly carting chairs  
Rows of new-cleaned shoes of every shape & size.

Wetty's long & shapeless cardigans & dear old Gumbos shoes  
(The rubber ones with soles 6 inches thick!)  
Miggy's "Be good sports" & "Play the game" & "pull up with your  
crews"  
And School Cert – feeling empty and so sick.

### **Down in the heart of me**

Down in the heart of me something that's part of me  
Stirs with an anguish that born of despair.  
Tears that I strove to hide, now cannot be denied  
Life holds more bitterness than I can bear

Now in the dark of night, I see no spark of light  
Hope has forsaken me, love is no more.  
Why should I bear so much? How could I care so much?  
Is there no way to that far distant shore?

Where 'neath the swinging spheres far from these stinging tears  
Soothed by the star-dust & lulled by the moon,  
I shall rest, rest under the spell of its wonder  
Sleep and forget you; but then perhaps soon  
I should awake again, feel the old ache again

[c. 1938]

# IRIS DIARIES

## January – September 1938

### 1938 January 1-19 (Holidays)

#### January 1st Saturday

Well, the first day of 1938 is at an end. At least it is evening, & I know if I don't write this now I never will, for we're going to a flick to-night. It has been an uneventful day. Mummy stayed in bed with a sore throat & I didn't get up till about 11. Had a terribly shallow bath & breakfast at 11.30! I spent the rest of the day drawing or doing the flower competition. I drew a portrait of Richard. It wasn't bad. I wish I could draw really well. Billy and Alan went beagling, but Richard stayed behind. I know they think me a wet, but I can't help it. I hope I shall outgrow my shyness. It's a funny thing, but I get on better at school than Barbara, but the reverse in the hols. If only I could get to know Desmond & Alan better I should be alright, but I've lost all the familiarity I used to have. Perhaps it'll come back, you never know. That's the reason I want to become famous, so that they'll all know there is something in me after all. But as I won't there's no point in wanting.

I must really must keep this diary up the whole year. It'll be grand fun reading in next year. And keeping it up for years to come. I must say I do like writing it. It gives me a rather grand feeling that I'm "seeking expression!" All bosh, but very satisfying.

I haven't made any New Year Resolutions, which is extraordinarily slack. As I won't keep them it's not really much use. My only resolution is to try and keep this up. Whether I keep it is doubtful.

As this day has been so uneventful this is long-winded & drawn out but I shall get used to it in time & be able to write interesting accounts. I must stop now. Hulloo! This is the next year! (Quite bold)

#### January 2<sup>nd</sup> Sunday

Another uneventful day. I got up late as usual and had a steaming bath for a change. For the rest of the day did nothing particular in fact practically the same as yesterday. Did a few more of the Flower Competitions Mummy and Granny both in bed. Did not go to church. I started a new story. It's the one about the child who was painted by the artist with whom her mother is in love. They become great and later lovers, though he is so much older. She tells him of her love, but he refused to tell her of his, so she gives in & marries another lover. However he dies and they come married. Or else the artist marries the mother and a long time later tells the daughter of his love. This is only vague outline and it may develop differently. I have had the picture of the heroine in my mind for a long time. Fair hair – grey eyes. And the hero rather John Gielgud type! I hope I finish it.

Started a song for school but did no work. It's always on my conscience but there's time yet.

### **January 3<sup>rd</sup> Monday**

Mummy got up this morning, and the boys played golf with Barbara and Desmond. I went shopping down the town. Thought of getting myself a skirt but didn't in the end. I wish I had more clothes but I suppose it doesn't really matter. They're not really important.

In the afternoon I went to see "Victoria the Great" for a second time (see Film Commentary). We went back to eat with the Turbetts. Barbara seems rather fond of Billy!

Yesterday evening after I had written my diary, we listened to Leslie Howard in "Hamlet" I thought his performance was good – but there seemed something vaguely wrong. I felt he was trying to get the effect without the background. However I am probably wrong. I always feel I could act if I had the chance. But of course, there's no chance. What a life!

### **January 4<sup>th</sup> – Tuesday**

Got up quite late and went with Mummy to see the boys off beagling. It was a horribly wet misty day. We then went on to see Mrs Smallman, who kept on saying how much I'd changed. For better or worse I wonder! The beagles went round the house and we saw them. In the afternoon read and drew. Mummy went to fetch the boys, as Uncle Lionel thought it too expensive! Dressed up. After having a bath. Mummy went down and got the Two new B's, and I think it made me look fatter but I suppose its alright. I know I didn't look very nice though they said I did. The dance itself wasn't too bad I managed to talk quite well to the people I did dance with but my toes got so jolly sore. Pat Badham was there and looked awfully pretty. Anne ?Richard was also there, and was very popular especially with Alan! In the "Evens Me" she got four people. Some people seem to have everything – brains, beauty, athletic powers and attractive brothers! The only thing about the dance was that I think I got to know Alan & Desmond better. We got back at approx. 12.30

### **January 5<sup>th</sup> Wednesday** [At top – 'Got the curse']

This was, I think, another uneventful day. I'm afraid I have been slack enough to go a few days without writing my diary for to-day is really the 8<sup>th</sup> it's a case of always forgetting, now that the first zealous thrill & enthusiasm is beginning to wear off, but luckily I have a good memory so I think I can remember everything. The boys played golf in the morning, but I did nothing particular the whole day. In the afternoon I attempted to learn my Biology but only got as far as Carbon Assimilation. I am reading "The Man of Property" at the moment, and think it wonderfully good. At first I was vaguely disappointed, but it has worked up to a thrilling climax and I am longing to know what is going to happen. It is wonderful to think I've got 5 more of his books to read. I do love them so. If only I could express myself like that. Perhaps I shall one day. The future absolutely intrigues me.

### **January 6<sup>th</sup> Thursday**

A very enjoyable day on the whole. We started up to London in the car at approx.: 10 o'clock and took a roundabout route to drop Mrs Cooksley at ?Northest. We arrived at London at approx.: 1 o'clock and went to the flat to get some things for Granny.

We then had lunch at the corner café & went to the Hippodrome. I arrived half hour early but didn't mind waiting as it was interesting to see the different types of people coming in. She arrived at 2.20 and we went in to v.good seats in stalls. She didn't seem frightfully thrilled to see me, in fact the whole time I had that vague idea. Oh! Well, probably only imagination. The play itself (Hide & Seek) was superb. Bobby Howes & Creely were wonderful, and the tunes were grand, the best being "She's my lovely" & "I'm happy when you're happy" Afterwards went to the stage door, but they never came out. We barged in but it was no use. An awful waste of time, & Mummy got a bit pippy. We then went to Lyons at M. Arch, & Betty rang up & had to go home because of her tantrum. We had good supper at Lyons then went to flat & picked up Mrs Cooksley – Arrived back at approx. 9. I was very tired.

### **January 7<sup>th</sup> Friday**

Got up late and did nothing special till lunch. Afterwards read "Man of Property" till 4.156, then changed. Turbetts arrived at 4.30 & Radfords at 4.45. We had tea almost at once, which went off quite well, thanks to the fact that there was nothing there and so we spent most of the time for seeing fussing about after things. After tea we played "Racing Demon." Desmond & B. stayed till 6.30 others till 6. We had supper at 7.45 & then boys & Mummy went off, they to dance at Cranleigh, she to bridge at Saunders. I read, & listened to good programme on wireless, & was very relieved that I was not going to dance. Went to bed at 10.30 after giving puppy brandy and milk. In the middle of the day the electric cooker gave out and we didn't have lunch till 2 o'clock and then a cold one. However a man came & saw to it, and we had the chicken at supper. Am really going to start work next Monday. Have not written any songs. What a life!

### **January 8<sup>th</sup> – Saturday**

Got up at usual time (approx. 10!) and for the morning mucked about generally. Went down to cellar and fished about in scrapboxes amongst old books. Found quite a lot of decent things I'd forgotten about, including editions of Keats & Wordsworth. Must get the Shelley to go with it. Finished reading "The Man of Property" in afterward. It ended sadly in a way. And yet I suppose the only way it could end. It gives food for thought. How in life no one person can be blamed for the tragedy of unhappy love, but only Fate and the perversity of human nature. Had a high tea and drove to Aldershot to see "The Prisoner of Zenda". A superb film described elsewhere. There was a fog going but we were on time. Saunders were late. They are rather decent people really and June isn't bad. Boys went beagling all day but I didn't, I don't think I shall.

### **January 9<sup>th</sup> Sunday**

Had breakfast in bed at approx. 11! Boys and Mummy went to church but I didn't get up till 12. We had the most awful night with /Robert. I feel like really murdering him at such times, he is such a selfish, disobedient little beast. But although I always make up my mind to protest, by the time I'm up my fury has worn off, and I never do. I attempted to make up some verses of the "Bramley British News" songs, but I don't think they're very good. I wonder if it's going to come off. I wish we were doing an ordinary long straight play in a way. We also tried to think of some games for our

party to-morrow. I hope it's a success. June is coming. Perhaps she'll change her opinion of me which I know at the moment isn't very high! Wrote to Jack. I hope she writes back. I never stop regretting I broke off with Jackie though I pretend I don't mind.

### **January 10<sup>th</sup> Monday**

In the morning got a letter from Jack saying I could go up on 13<sup>th</sup>. I shall accept as I'm going to a show, & it will be nice to see her again if she's not too shy, & I'm not too. Anyway she isn't tall which is one blessing. IN the morning went shopping – no it was the afternoon. We brought things for party such as prizes and pencils. Billy & Richard arranged the games (2 of them anyway). My signature tune was “Tea for Two”, and was very easy to guess, but it didn't really matter. They arrived at 8 o'clock. June first then others. First of all we had coffee and guessed the tunes - ?Nunce won, but didn't get a prise. Then we did History game which Barbara won. After that had easts. They didn't eat much for we had a good deal. Then we did Billy's game in which I was 2<sup>nd</sup>. I could have been first really. After this we pottered about waiting for tea then played drawing game which was good fun. I did quite well with the drawing pad. They left at approx. 12. Didn't get to know June much better. Was v. tired.

### **January 11<sup>th</sup>**

Was terribly tired so didn't go beagling, nor did Richard. Had breakfast in bed again & had a bath. Mummy & Billy both went beagling. In the morning went to the town with Mummy & Robert to get him a toy. She & B. went on, & we got ?car & some toilet paper! I met B. Jacobs & D. Cannon in toy shop. Said a few words. Saw also various other people. We took a bus back as it was raining & I couldn't be fagged to walk. Robert was very good over lunch & rest & came down and played with us after. They came in at approx.: 4.45, Mummy v. tired & wet. Didn't do anything for the rest of the day. I had been trying all day to work hard, especially at “Midsummer Nights Dream”. I do want to regain my former status in the form. Anyway I will, when the next exams come along. I think about H---y an awful lot. Wouldn't people laugh if they knew I was gone on her. This time next year shall I have forgotten her?

### **January 12<sup>th</sup> – Wednesday**

Richards's birthday. He Mummy & Granny went to early service, & I had breakfast in bed and then had to get Robert up. They started for London at approx. 10.45 (R & Mummy). Billy went golfing. I went round to Turbetts on my bike (split my skirt) to get some books. For the rest of the day I did my work, at least till supper time. I got through all the English paper except for the last bit. I hope I've done it alright I really must work frightfully hard next term. I will not be beaten by people like D. Cannon & P. Bates, when I know I could beat them. Its my Maths that puts me down so badly. Am I really brainy? I often wonder. People have told me I am so often, and yet I don't think I am. I understand things fairly easily, but that isn't brains. Well, I shall see what happens later in life. If only I could be some use in this world, I don't mind how. Even if I can't write I might do something else, that is if there isn't a world war by then. I pray not.

### **January 13<sup>th</sup> - Thursday**

Got up fairly early (9) and had breakfast. Afterwards got ready fairly soon to go, but the others weren't ready till approx.: 11. We got up to London at 12, but didn't find the place till approx. 12:30. Met Jack at bottom of stairs. She is about the same size as me, and is not fat but has rather a big bust. She is quite pretty and obviously gets on well with her mothers men friends!

There was rather an attractive oldish man to lunch, but I said very little. Afterwards we listened to wireless and talked about old times. We went in a taxi to "Cinderella" with her stop-pops ?valet, who is a decent sort of chap. The panto was rather good, though I was a bit disappointed, I think. Afterwards we got another taxi back, & had tea by ourselves. Then went upstairs and talked again. She is just the same, and quite different from her letters. Mummy came at 6.30 & we went on with Hammersleys to "Time & the Conways." We waited in the pit. It was marvellous.

### **January 14<sup>th</sup> – Friday**

Had both breakfast & lunch in bed! Robert was awful at night, so I went into boys room, and slept till late. Had breakfast then, went to sleep again till lunch time. After lunch I wrote letter etc. till tea time. Wrote to Betty, I have 3 friends, who each think they're my best friends! Jill is really dearest to me, then Jack, but I'm very fond of Betty. She's too much the ordinary school girl, and hasn't the same ideas and ideals as the others, though we're very much alike in some ways. The thing is she is much more fond of Mary than me & she's so ridiculous over that affair. Also she likes Skinny & Paula etc just as much as me. I wonder if H---y really likes me. Perhaps if Betty has that operation I shall get to know her Betty. I'd like to test her things, not in a sloppy way, but as a friend, as I think she helps people. Sometimes I think she likes me, & at other times that she doesn't. I'd love to tell her about my ambitions etc, but I don't suppose I shall. I hope I shall write to her when I've left.

### **January 15<sup>th</sup> Saturday**

Another uneventful day (there seem a lot of them really!). It was a frightfully windy day, with rain too, and none of our family went beagling. Billy stayed in bed till lunch time, but I got up for breakfast. In morning tried to compose poetry for house. In afternoon went down to cellar to try & look for Jack Buchanan record. Only found some dusty old skates and toys. Then did the same as before. After tea Billy & Mummy went to station to meet Richard, but came back at approx. 8, nothing having found him. We had supper and Mummy rang up Victoria. Nothing doing till 9.20 p.m. when he rang up to say that he was still at Victoria and had never got wire or letter. I went to bed at 10 or so, and was asleep by the time Mummy came up. Have been copying out a lot of poetry later into my brown book. Have given up my story & will write a play next time I thin, but I must think of some really good plot & characters – actions first. My day dram just now is A ---- Isn't it balmy!

### **January 16<sup>th</sup> Sunday**

Was a pouring wet day, and very windy. The boys and I had breakfast in bed. I got up soon after, and later on put on my mack and walked to Turbetts. It got me terribly wet, but I didn't think that would matter. Barbara, Desmond & A. Hilda were in and

I got 2 Biology books, and some sheets of Alan's. When I got back I tried to wave my hair but wasn't very successful this time. It was more of a fuzzy mess than anything. I tried to do some work, but didn't as I couldn't find one of the books. In the evening I read over all Jill's letters. She is a darling. I don't know what I'd do if I hadn't got her as a friend. It's funny how she's got everything – beauty, brains, artistic talent, good voice, sense of humour, nice family – everything. Well I can't really complain, and perhaps my luck will really come along some day. I can't go on being unlucky for ever. I often wonder if anybody will love me. I make friends – at least I make great friends of a few people but does that mean I will inspire love? I doubt it, though I shall love deeply myself. But how shall I know if its real? What a problem.

### **January 17<sup>th</sup>**

It was a heavenly day. I got up for breakfast and afterwards went into the nursery and did my work, after ringing up Barbara about the books. It was heavenly sunshine, and I did quite a lot. In the afternoon I went into Guildford and had my hair done, they had me as I went & did it rather well. I read about the princesses and also about why John Gielgud, Beverley Nichols etc are bachelors. I'd adore to marry John, and I'm sure I'd make him a good wife. Quite mad, but still! I came back from the town in time for tea and then we went to Godalming to see "Night Must Fall". Very good but gave me the shivers. I heard from Betty in the morning. She told me she was in love, so I'll wait for further news. I wonder if its true. I doubt it, as she's always getting these absurd infatuations. Actually I get them too, but never take them seriously, and whereas I worship from afar, she says hers is "in a way" returned! She is not having her operation & I'm glad, though I might got to know.

### **January 18<sup>th</sup> Tuesday**

Had my breakfast in bed. Richard & Mummy went off before 9 am – sorry he's gone, as he's really a dear. Billy was meant to go early to golf with Alan, but didn't go till quite late. I stayed in all day. In the morning did nothing particular – in afternoon did my work. Barbara was also going with Billy & Alan. Am I jealous? Perhaps a bit, but its only because she's seen more of them. Hang it, I used to know Alan ten times better than her. I remember the walks we went and how he gave me that information on the more salient facts of life!

This was a day I never finished writing but I know nothing particular happened during the rest of it. I wish I had somebody grown up I could really confide in. Jill is the only person I've really told a lot to, although I told Jack a lot in my youth. But I'd like somebody who had experience & could help me. I don't think I'll ever find that person though I wish it could be HER. If only I knew where to start with her. I never say anything really serious to her, except that day breakfast ages ago, but that was only a glimpse. Oh well, I'm still hoping.

### **January 19<sup>th</sup> – Wednesday**

It was a heavenly day, blue sky and sunshine, so we all went beagling. I went in blazer and gym shoes. Alan came on his bike and also Auntie Evelyn. Actually Alan came in the car with her. They stayed for quite a long time, but I'm afraid my conversation was not too brilliant! We suddenly discovered that our clocks were half an hour slow, so of course we arrived half an hour late there. They had all gone, and Billy and Alan went on ahead, but Mummy and I couldn't find the hounds for ages. I sat on a tree stump &

ate my sandwiches, then saw them. They didn't do anything for a while. Then they got a hare, and chased it round & round a field, and we saw a lot of it, but it ran off and we got lost & so went home. I was very tired, at least very stiff and achy.

Alan stayed to tea. Afterwards I did my prep, or rather holiday work, & finished it. Then after supper got my things ready for school. It is a most horrible thought.

## January 20 – April 6 1938 : Spring Term at St Catherine's

### HORRIBLE OF MOST HORRIBLE DAYS

Got up at half past seven, and it was horrible. Mummy took me in the car, and I felt rather sick and empty. When I arrived it wasn't as bad as it might have been though, although the daygirls were not a very encouraging lot. It was nice seeing everybody again, and it was especially nice seeing HER. She awaked all my old love, as she always does when I see her. But when she met me later she never even smiled. I don't think she likes me in the least little bit. Oh! Its horrible to think of it. I MUST get to know her before I leave. Its all so silly & schoolgirlish, but I can't help it, it's part of my nature.

After prayers we voted for prefects. I am absolutely sick to think it might be me, and I think I should die. Oh God, let it be somebody else. Not me, please not me. I know some people voted for me, but I pray not many.

I played a mad game of netball, in which I did nothing but giggle feebly. My side hurt like anything.

### January 21<sup>st</sup> Friday

My side hurt more than ever, and I felt rather sick, so nearly didn't go to school. But I thought it would probably wear off, so started. I think it must have been late and I missed the first one, and then I missed the connection in Guilford. Would have been hours late, but the Coggans picked me up. It was awful in prayers, when she said she was giving out Form Badges. My heart beat terribly fast & I felt quite sick, but thank goodness it was B. Jacobs & Susanna. Lessons went off very much as usual. I was 2 lbs heavier (7st: 12 lbs 12ozs) & one eighth of an inch taller (5 fit one and a half inches). I couldn't find Clarke to tell her about games. We had House Meetings, but said very little about our part of Show. Heavens knows what's going to happen, but I hope it'll be alright. As I said before I wish we were doing something definite. Had a v. boring lunch. Sat at F.3, next to June Davy & Sheila Gates at Peaseblossom's table.

After lunch did prep & did no games. Heart Betty was coming to "Faust" & she did not do games either. We sat and talked about Galsworthy, Love & Desire. She told me about French Book, "Pity for Women." Would rather like to read it.

[Pencil cross in margin against last sentence.]

### January 22<sup>nd</sup> Saturday

Got up at about 9.15, and started for Betty at 10. Had to wear my black shoes, much to my annoyance. We arrived at London at 11.15 and left Billy, while we went to Whiteley's. Picked him up at 12 & went to lunch at Lyons. We had a rather nice band. I have discovered it is rather good to be an ingénue with oldish ones. I don't know if I'm a l---- or not, I think I am, though nobody would know it. (Somebody might read this, so I daren't put the whole word!) It was a long journey to Mile End by Underground, & we were just about right time. "Faust" was wonderfully sung, & I got to like it better at the end. I think I would like Opera much better if I knew the tunes, but I liked it all the same.

Afterwards we had tea downstairs, & Joan joined us. She was very good in the ballet. Mephistopholes sat at the next table, but didn't look so nice. I was rather cross

at tea & eat nothings, as it was so Hot. It was rather a rush getting Betty back by 9, but we arrived before then. I have a marvellous new day-dream about John Gielgud. It makes me feel its almost true.

### **January 23<sup>rd</sup> Sunday**

A fine day, on which I got up quite early because I thought it was later. Which just shows. Billy played golf with Barbara in the morning, but I stayed in to do some work. I was writing an essay on Etiquette which she may consider good or she may think absolute trash. I never can tell how she's going to interpret things. I will write down, when I know, what she really did think. In the afternoon I did the same as before and eventually finished the famous essay. I wish they didn't take me such hours to write. I had been sneezing a lot all day, and did so more & more by the evening. So know I am in for a cold. It is sickening but it will get me off school which is a doubtful blessing. I went to bed at 6.30 after a hot bath, so missed seeing Mr Scott & Mrs Higgs who came to bridge. In the evening Mummy, Billy & Granny went to a sherry party opposite. Uncle Heb didn't go. He is really rather a duck – so shy & quaint.

### **January 24<sup>th</sup> Monday**

Well, as I predicted, I was in bed. I felt pretty awful, hot & stuffed up, and had a temperature of 99.6 in the morning. I like having a temperature when I really am feeling ill, as it seems a slight recompence, and I like to feel I've got something to witness the fact. It was a very boring day, although I had the wireless in th afternoon. Thank goodness Robert didn't sleep with us, although now I always find myself waking at the time he usually starts. I read all of "In Chancery". It is very lovely but I don't think I liked it as much as "Man of Property". I hate staring one of these books & finding the characters I know in the other one so much older, but I soon get into it. I think Young Jolyon is sweet. And have also got to like Irene & Jolly & Vas Darthe. It is pathetic where Jolly dies, and I feel desperately sorry for Soames. He is really not a bad old stick in a way, but difficult to be fond of. I think the Jolyon family far the nicest & Old James rather a pet. Well, I could go rambling on like this for ever.

### **January 25<sup>th</sup> – Tuesday**

Another day in bed, though I was practically alright to-day. I started off quite well, but a whole day is bound to get boring eventually. I read Shakespeare & "To Let". I think this is going to be my favourite & Jon is definitely the sweetest character I've met so far. The part called "Awakening" was one of the most perfect things I've read, & gave me a thrill when I realised how utterly true it mostly was to what I did & felt like at that age. It is going to be pathetic though, & although Hens is sweet, it is Jon whom I shall feel for most. He is so sensitive, and it'll give him so much disillusion. I wonder if anything like that will ever happen to me? I don't want it to, but I dare say a good many people have some secret bitter experience in their lives which they hide from the world. But surely I've had enough already? Oh, surely. [pencil cross against last lines.]

### **January 26<sup>th</sup> – Wednesday**

I got up and went to school. It was rather a rush, but I was there in good time to meet Auntie Hilda. I had a letter from Betty in the morning which surprised me a good deal. Oh, if only Jill would write. I long for her letter every morning. I got to school & was welcomed by B. Its nice having her, I'm very fond of her but --- well I don't know what it is, but somehow I could never tell her things. Not really. I think it's the fear that she'd laugh at me. And she hurts my feelings such a lot. I wouldn't tell her for the world, but there are tons of times at School when I feel jolly like crying. I sat at E.17. Hoped I might be near HER but no luck – she takes not the slightest notice of me, & I haven't spoken to her this term. I doubt if I ever will – informally – oh why do some people have all the luck. Fearing, of course, to other fans. I was thoroughly miserable about it to-day. Didn't go to games but copied in History Notes.

### **January 27<sup>th</sup> – Thursday**

Another fairly ordinary day at school. Mummy said I needn't do gymn, so I sat out. I learnt we were having a gymn comp: & it makes me sick with fear. I must get out of it somehow – and I think I should go to the extent of purposely spraining my wrist! But I'm just trusting to fate before I do anything desperate. At lunch I sat at G.14, opposite Pat Trav: and Daphne. We talked about John Gielgud etc, most of the time. Pomlo?? was at the end of the table, I still haven't said a word to her, and I can't think why I like her, 'cos she's not really nice, and I think she thinks she's everybody. But Love needs no reason or evidence, and mine has none. [pencil cross against this].

In the evening we discovered the Oxford Group in the bus. A Hicks? believes in it but I'm not sure.

Uncle Lawrence was at home & Billy went off to Sandhurst after tea. I did very little prep.

### **January 28<sup>th</sup> – Friday**

Had to wait a long time for Uncle Lionel & thought I had missed the car, but it was alright.

I stood at the end of the row in prayers. I can't make out whether I like this or not. I think but end is best. Although there are times when I like the end. I wish Booth was still here.

Had pretty ordinary lessons all morning, expect that Pomo?? Made me sit out in front of the class – nasty old cad. I was talking to Betty, but I didn't care really, and I had Jack's picture to comfort me. Betty showed me a lovely poem which just suits my state of love, although I took care to be appropriately half-hearted about it! I must get it to copy out some day,

Betty came home for the week end, and we read all evening. Uncle Lawrence gave me a Noel Coward Penguin Book. Must write smaller.

### **January 29<sup>th</sup> Saturday**

Got up at about 9. In the morning we thought of working but Mummy arranged to go to Berhamstead for the day instead. I was glad because of Granny James, but I might have got it over by now. It was a very windy day, & an awful squash in the car as Robert Uncle L. & Granny came. On the way there we passed Denham Studios, but

went a long way out. It was better coming back as we sang some of the time & I love driving in the dusk, its so much cosier.

We got back at about 6.30 and had supper at 10 to 7. At 7.30 Mummy took us & Mrs Cooksley to the Odeon & dropped us here. We waited in a queue for a little, & I paid for Betty. Then went in. I loved the films & coming out we saw Gumbo of all people!! I somehow got cross in the bus, & then afterwards we had a violent argument about Jessie's dancing. I was simply furious & rushed up to bed, hating her with heart & soul.

### **January 30<sup>th</sup> Sunday**

Had breakfast 9.30. Afterwards went into nursery & did prep for rest of the morning. It was awfully boring & a nuisance but we had simply piles of foul stuff to do. I didn't feel hungry for lunch, & afterwards we had to go back & do more prep. In the afternoon it was nice, as I wrote criticism & thought about a plot for a new play. I thought possibly of showing the reactions of a rich family to wealth, how it affects each one, but it means too much psychological work & character study, & I don't think I'm capable of that, as I don't know enough about people and it would only seem ridiculous. Oh, why, why can't I do it, its there but it won't come out. Will it ever? No, no, no, that's the horror – the horror of living and carrying on – all pointless – heavens! What's the use of going on like this. I feel sick of everything at the moment. Touch of genuine artistic temperament? No, rather bosh.

### **January 31<sup>st</sup> – Monday**

#### **JULIANA'S BABY BORN – GIRL**

Horrible getting up early. Mummy took us to the school. Everything went much the same as usual. We had a foul history test, which will make me to an awful flop. It lasted the whole lesson & was like an exam. We also had 4 Maths lessons – almost unbearable. I sat at lunch at A.14, next to Anne, opposite P. Walker & Jacko, & had quite an interesting time. In the evening had to go to Harry about the Maths as I couldn't do it. Oh, nobody will read this – so what does it matter, but I think she does take a little interest in me – just a little. When I get near her I feel vaguely intoxicated. She talked for a little while. Will it always go on like this? I suppose so.

Went for a walk in the afternoon & ought sweets. Confirmation? Oh I don't know its all such a muddle. Everything seems to have changed especially my ideas. I'm in a religious rage.

### **February 1<sup>st</sup> – Tuesday**

In the morning caught bus but Uncle Lionel picked me up later, so caught first bus. Hadn't got belt but found it at school. My blouse tore at the elbow. Did gymn but it wasn't too bad. Got rather cross with Betty in Biology, she does criticize so. At lunch I sat next to Nicco at A.1, but we got on quite well. I think I am getting better at the arts of conversation. B.Jacobs sat at A.17, & we talked about League of Nations Union, as we had talk by Alec Wilson at 12.30. It was very interesting. It makes me sick to think of another war, and I wish I could do anything to prevent it. Why must people be mad?

In the afternoon we walked round for a bit, then changed for elocution. It wasn't bad. We are doing "Smuggler's Song". I thought of staying for tea but didn't & I'm glad, as I saw her. She smiled at me twice to-day. Oh, how childish I am. I have another John Gielgud craze. I am reading his life in "Woman's Journal."

### **February 2<sup>nd</sup> – Wednesday**

As usual Uncle Lionel was late but didn't take bus. Had a pretty ordinary day of lessons, though boring. The Geography especially was foul, and we had neither History or English to enliven matters. At lunch I sat next to Julie, after a bit of manipulation, and had quite a decent time. As usual, we talked of John Gielgud & film stars etc. I've been thinking lately of writing to him – but what about? It must be something sensible, but I don't suppose he would take any notice. But if he did it would be too heavenly & make everybody fearfully jealous. If only I could get a very good play written, but I couldn't. Anyway, maybe some day I'll get to know him, because I might write a play then. If only I could be a 2<sup>nd</sup> "Gordon Daviot." [Gordon Daviot was the pen-name of Josephine Tey, when she wrote about a dozen plays.]

We had singing in the afternoon which was quite nice & afterwards I did prep. When I got home in the evening Mummy & Granny were out to tea with Auntie Hilda, and I had it in the kitchen. Mrs Cooksley was away, and she came back dead tired in the evening, and said she was going to leave. I feel sorry for her but think she is rather stupid & self centred. She grumbles all the time.

### **February 3<sup>rd</sup> – Thursday**

CURSE

Uncle Lionel in time for a change. When I got to school I found I had the curse, so didn't do gymn. It was rather horrible all day but there's no need to go into that. At lunch I managed to get next to Betty. I was A.7 and she A1 but a little manipulation managed it! Nicco was at the end, so we didn't manage to get much private conversation. Afterwards we did eartraining with Miss Brickman, and it was as ridiculously stupid as usual – utterly childish. In the afternoon I didn't do games but prep instead, and got quite a lot done. I came home at usual time and found Mrs? here. She is really quite nice, and amusing, not a fusty old thing as I expected. In the evening I did very little prep, and read John Gielgud instead. Oh, if only I was beautiful, I'm sure I could act, but I might be able to write. I have a lovely new day-dream about it – meeting him in Essex. At the moment I think more of him than Jack, but I haven't seen him for such ages. Of course John's of a much higher standard of acting, but Jack's a darling too.

### **February 4<sup>th</sup> – Friday**

This was a horrible day at first, and everything went wrong. I had a foul Latin lesson – and loathed Sambo. I practically cried – I don't know why. I just felt horrible and miserable and tried of her continual jawing about not working, and it made me cross for most of the day. I don't quite know what it was – one of my moods I suppose (artistic temperament as I like to think it!). I wonder if the staff really do dislike me. Some of them, loathe me I'm sure. I think they're vaguely afraid of what I shall do next.

At lunch I sat at B.14, next to Pam Bateson – very boring. In the afternoon neither Betty or I played games, but did quite a lot of work. Went home by 4.20 bus, and found a tea party in progress, but had tea after them. In evening read my “Over the River” from the library. It is sweet but not so much so as “Flowering Wilderness”. Wilfrid dies. I adore him, and would love to know someone like that. It is miserable to think of him dying out there – so lonely.

### **February 5<sup>th</sup> – Saturday**

Didn't have breakfast till 10.30. Afterwards went into Guildford with Betty. We thought of walking in as it was a heavenly day, but look a bus as my shoes hurt me. Took a look round second-hand book-shop. Afterwards I exchanged my book token for a 8/6 “Play Parade” by Noel Coward. It is a heavenly book, and my day-dream will probably be him now. Anyway he's inspired me to write a play – a modern one, with quick dialogue. I think it will have to be about the financial crisis, anyway I can try.

In the afternoon we went to see “A Star is Born” very good but sad. I stayed in Guildford, for lunch with Granny James. It wasn't as bad as I expected. I found Auntie Evelyn, and felt rather self-conscious. Conversation wasn't too bad, and I got away at 2 for cinema. She didn't exactly get to “know” me though I didn't do any prep to-day.

### **February 6<sup>th</sup> – Sunday**

Had breakfast at about 9. Afterwards went for a walk on the downs. It was lovely at first and afterwards wasn't too fine. We didn't go very far, and spent quite a long time on the swings. These made me feel rather sick for a long time afterwards. On the way back we sat on them & talked about love – our usual conversation. I am an awfully good bluffer. As I know I shall fall desperately in love the first minute I get a chance. I have so many pashes on both men and women. The only thing is to decide not to see or write for a long time to decide me.

In the afternoon worked and read “Play Parade”. Later on I started a play on the same lines Noel Coward. About a family. Wouldn't it be heavenly if I got something really good & had it produced. Why shouldn't I? Anyway I shall have a damn good try – to write something good I mean. How they'd be taken aback at school, and even at home! And I might get to know Noel & John. Oh Joy! Oh well I'm counting my chickens before they're hatched. I shall write the whole thing & then go over it & I'm home.

### **February 7<sup>th</sup> - Monday**

Couldn't find my skirt to go to school, so left it. Had quite decent lessons, although we had a test in History. I hope I did it alright. At lunch I sat at C6, next to Barbara, but it was pretty boring all the same. I don't know if she dislikes me, but I have a feeling she does somehow. She is not so much in her element at school, and she resents it. Oh well. I'm not so keen on her friendship. She's rather weak & decidedly catty. She'll never get anywhere. I did not do games, but didn't do prep either. I went home by the 10 to 4 bus, but didn't start prep till 6. There was tons of Geography to do, and I didn't do it all, unfortunately. Heaven help me if its Geography to-morrow! I didn't stay to tea as I had no skirt, so didn't have Maths coaching. I love it, but it might be

too suspicious if I went every time. I haven't spoken to her since last week. I can't think what to do about it, as this is a hopeless state of affairs. HOW I'll laugh reading this next year!

### **February 8<sup>th</sup> – Tuesday**

Did not meet U. Lionel and caught bus. Did not reach school till nine. Morning's lessons more or less o.k. Did not do gymn. Had the most boring lunch & was furious with myself. I got C.2, and thought it was Gumbo, so put it back, then found it was Harry & Juliet was at C.1. I cursed myself blue in the face. I sat at B.12, next to E. Boyer & J. Tong – most boring. I spoke not a word. After lunch we had a rehearsal and didn't get very far. I do hope it comes off, and I manage to do all right. I really don't know how to express myself (or rather express it.) In the afternoon had elocution, which was quite decent. We're going to do "To be or not to be", which will be heavenly. I really must let myself go and do my very utmost to make it good, even at the expense of them laughing at me. In the evening at 6.40 I listened to John Gielgud on wireless, talking about "three sisters" and Checkov. Val Gielgud & Saint Denis also spoke. Jolly interesting.

In evening tried to decide about holidays. I couldn't bear Isle of Wight, ?tennis or anything like that. I'd adore Wales.

### **February 9<sup>th</sup> – Wednesday**

Caught the bus again. In Maths & French frantically tried to learn my Geography as we were having a test. Test was last lesson, & was pretty awful, so I doubt if I shall get a commended. My map was quite good though – so I might with luck. At lunch I had rather a nice place, next to Daphne & in talking distance of Betty. I was at A-14 with Steve at end of table. Afterwards we had singing which was quite nice. I giggled a good deal of the time with Olivia & Anne. I like Anne awfully, and wish I was a great friend of hers. I don't quite know how I'd stand though – she's so devoted to Olivia. A funny couple really. At 3.30 we had a rehearsal. It was pretty futile, and I didn't do too well. I know I shall let the whole thing down or something ghastly. It will be too awful if nobody laughs, & all my family, as Steve says she is relying on me to make it funny. I pray God I may succeed.

### **February 10<sup>th</sup> – Thursday**

Had letter from correspondent (in Germany)

Returned to religion with relief last night. I think it was due to praying about our play. Mummy took me in the car to-day and I picked up Anne, June & Olivia. I like Anne awfully (I seem to have said that before!). I had a lot of prep that I had not done, & did not do it. In fact I have not given in my Maths yet, but I will get round Peaseblossom. I seem to have got all behind with my prep. I did gymn & it was foul. I was wearing the wrong Bz [bra?]. [Pencil cross in margin]. At lunch I sat at B.12 next to Anne & opposite Haslow, and had quite a nice lunch. I do hope I get at G sometime. I don't suppose I will though. After lunch had the most hysterical eartrailing. We lay on the desks and heaved – the tears pouring down our cheeks. We all asked the most futile questions Eg: "I always muddle crotchets & minims". All utterly feeble but enjoyable. In the afternoon it was heavenly but had been raining so

we went for a walk. I was going with Pula, but in the end went with Betty. Mummy & Granny in London. Started my English essay.

### **February 11<sup>th</sup>** – Friday.

After a frantic chase down the High Street I caught the first bus. It was worth it as I finished my geography. I got a Commended for the Geography test – I hoped I would. Had quite decent lessons in morning except Gumbo was a bit squashing. Said “ You don't know as much about the play as you think”. Rather hard as I don't think I know much. I sat at E9 next to N. Vallin (?) and opposite D. Everett. Not bad and we managed to keep up a fairly good conversation. It is funny to think that N. Vallin is 18! She might easily be 12! In the afternoon I had a rehearsal by myself with Steve. She was jolly nice but made it pretty obvious that I wasn't doing too well. I think if I get a megaphone I might be better. In the afternoon I stayed in from games with no excuse and so did Betty, but we didn't get caught. I had a letter ready in case Sambo came in. We went home in evening and did a bit of prep. I really must do my prep on Friday evenings in future, instead of hanging it over till Sunday.

### **February 12<sup>th</sup>** – Saturday.

Had breakfast at about 10. I am still having John Gielgud and orchard(?) daydream. Had a long talk with Betty about men. The amount I bluff her is really extraordinary! If she only knew! We walked into the town in the morning with my bike and took it to Halfords for a carrier. We came back by car. After lunch we went back to Guildford and saw “Wee Willie Winkie”. Shirley is sweet but she does not fascinate me the way she did. There was no news so I couldn't note the expression. I wish I wasn't doing it, it is foul. We had tea by ourselves as the others were out at Mrs Mcleishes. Afterwards I attempted to do prep but didn't do much so I have still got it to look forward to tomorrow. I read a bit of “ The Vortex” and it inspired me but I haven't time to write mine. I have so much to do and no time to do it in. Richard and Betty are coming next weekend. Betty will overshadow me but I don't see why Barbara should. I consider I'm better than her. Burnt S.T.!!

### **February 13<sup>th</sup>** – Sunday.

Had breakfast at usual time (about 10). For the rest of the morning did nothing except prep. After lunch returned to prep and finished History essay. Hope I get a Commended but I doubt it. Also finished English essay and French composition.. Then set to work on my play. I am getting on rather well. I shall write the whole thing and see how it works out, then go over it all again and alter it, putting the significance on things that will point to the end. It might be good. Gosh, if it was! I haven't practised the BBC thing at all. I'm sick with fright at the thought. My last hope is a megaphone. I wrote 2 letters – one to Billy and one to Jack. I have a feeling she doesn't care the way she did, having met me. Oh well (---?) is all the world to me. But even she hasn't written for years. I wrote quite a confidential letter to Billy. I feel I could get to know him quite well. It's funny how little we know of each other.

### **February 14<sup>th</sup>** – Monday

Waited quite a long time in the freezing snow for a bus. When we got to Quarry Street gave us Anne and June a lift in his rattly old car. It was quite amusing but a bit unsafe! We had quite a nice morning. Before prayers I asked Harry (?) for a R.M. Book. She asked me about “The Three Sisters”. I feel all sick when I go near her, and my heart beats like fury. I've never known anything like it. I think it's more like real love than anything I've felt before. If everybody only knew! Gosh they'd laugh. At lunch I sat next to Betty at G3 and she was at the end. I wished in a way that Betty hadn't been there as I wanted to look at her all the time. I love her much more desperately than B.Jacobs. In the afternoon we went for a walk and bought sweets. I came back and changed before the others were back. At tea I sat at F15 next to futile people. At about 5.15 I went to Harry. She didn't talk about anything but Maths but I felt was taking more attention of me than of Betty. Today I seem to talk of nothing but her but I've seen her more than on any other day.

### **February 15<sup>th</sup>** – Tuesday

Walked in right to Quarry Street! Just caught the first bus, with Barbara. Read paper at school. Austria has lost its independence to Germany. I hope this isn't the beginning of fresh complications. We had quite a pleasant double Latin. It was a bitter day as it has been for days. At lunch I sat at B16 next to Morag. It wasn't too bad but was a bit boring, I pray to get at G. this week. After lunch we had a rehearsal in the hall. It wasn't bad and she said I did better, but I don't know it's all horribly uncertain. After that I went and did some prep and got my French done. Talked to Isobel and B.Jacobs for a time. Got the 4.20 bus. The awful fat girl who stars was in the bus. Also a devastating young man with long gold hair and a camel coat! When I got home I did my Latin (very badly) and then no more prep. I wrote a rather sniffy note to Jill about her not writing. I hope she doesn't go up in flames. Also wrote a most heavenly imaginary letter to John. Of all the sentimental fools I am the biggest. Granny got me “Greek Poems” which I shall love very much.

### **February 16<sup>th</sup>** – Wednesday.

Walked in again and caught the first bus. We had pretty foul lessons. A horrible day Wednesday I always think. After lunch we had a rehearsal which was quite good actually. It lasted from 2.15 – 3, and she said I was better. I mustn't let the house down whatever happens. I shall feel awful if nobody laughs. After the rehearsal I went and did some French prep which I finished. I think I did it quite well, but then so did everybody. Gumbo told me in the morning that I had done a very good essay, the best I'd ever done. I'm fearfully glad, and Mrs Chambers will have to see it (I'm not so glad about that!)

In the evening I wrote some more of my play although I should have been doing prep. This is definitely my line of writing I think, as my conversation is the best part of my writing. If I could get a really good plot and characters worked out I should do better. If I don't become famous I shall be jolly disappointed. In fact I'm counting my chickens before they are hatched and the eggs are probably addled!

### **February 17th - Thursday**

I walked all the way again. Hope it'll be the last day. Gumbo gave out the composition books. Betty got a Commended but mine had gone to Sambo. I don't enjoy chapel in the slightest as I can't see HER. It's funny, she's so small and plain really and not terribly nice but she means everything in everything to me. More than the others because I should hate anybody to know about HER, whereas in most other cases I rather liked it. At lunch I sat at A16 next to Molly Wilson, and opposite P. Weir Rhodes! I talked to the latter a fair amount, but it was pretty boring. After lunch we had the usual hysterical ear-training(?). I emerge weak and aching - a shattered wreck. I didn't do vaulting in the afternoon, but sat in the form-room instead. Sambo never seems to come and(?) so I shall continue to do this until she does. Then there'll be a rare bust-up and I shan't be able to do it again. My religious renewal has gone I'm afraid. Prayer doesn't mean anything so why do it?

### **February 18th - Friday**

Once more I walked to Quarry Street. I shall not do it any more. When I got to school I valiantly tried to learn my French vocabulary, but we didn't get a test on it. At lunch I sat next to HER!!! I got G17 and nobody was 18 so I moved up. Oh I thank God for that lunch. It was simply heavenly. But I was shivering all over most of the time and feeling horribly sick. We talked first of all about our play. She laughed a bit at what I said, but I don't know if she really thought me funny. After that we talked about Noel Coward. She said "If he had experienced some really great emotion he would have written better." I nearly said "He probably has", but didn't after all. I wish I'd followed up the subject. I love talking about that kind of thing with her. I think she does like me fairly much. Oh I must really talk to her some time. I can't bear this state of affairs much longer. I didn't do games or Betty. I did very little prep either and caught the 4.20 bus. At 1.30 Mummy went with Mrs Chambers and arrived with boys at 8.15.

### **February 19th. Saturday.**

Yesterday evening we stayed up late talking about the song for our show. Wrote a bit of "Top Hat" and talked the rest of the time. Murray is quite nice and amusing at times but certainly not handsome! In the morning there was a terrific fuss about what to wear etc. and in the end I wore school clothes. I was glad as several other people did. The rehearsal went off quite well, but I must speak louder. Afterwards Taddler(?) and I walked down the road a bit and Mummy picked us up in the car. She told me how her car had been stolen and smashed up. In the afternoon I did Latin (with Murray's help) and then we had tea and went to fetch Barbara from school. We went on to see "The edge of the World" in Godalming. It was grand. When we came back we had supper. Afterwards we tried a séance, but it didn't really work, but I'm sure I felt the thing work. Then we tried lifting hands which did work. At about 11.15 I went to bed and wasn't asleep until about 12.

### **February 20th. Sunday.**

Got up fairly early. In the morning we stayed in the drawing room, and I did my prep. Betty and I went for a stroll just before lunch and the boys went for a short

walk. We stayed in all afternoon. I did my history essay. Barbara came to tea and afterwards we various games such as Snap. I had to leave off in the middle to do my history. Barbara stayed to supper and afterwards the boys got their things ready and went + Barbara. I wrote a quite good love poem after the Rupert Brooke style. "Sick with my love for you" - it was really my feelings for HER only put terribly badly. I showed it to Betty when I went to bed and she said she thought it very good. I don't know really. I think it's probably better than most of the stuff I've written. I should vaguely like to show it to HER. At least I should hate her to realise - and yet - oh I don't know what I want.

### **February 21st. Monday.**

Didn't catch the first bus but Pa Selby took us in his car. There was terrific excitement over Anthony Eden's resignation. I think now has come the crisis. If only we can get over this we might pull through. I really uphold Chamberlain because I believe in peace at all costs though my sympathy is all with Eden. We had a History Test and I got 27 out of 30. Not bad since I hadn't learnt the blinking thing. At lunch I sat at D12 but moved over to the other side next to K(?) and opposite Taddler(?). Quite a decent lunch. Played netball in afternoon and had a decent time. I was playing against P. Walker(?). She said I would get money through myself. My dream might come true! I stayed to tea and soon afterwards went to Harry. I stayed with her till 6.20 trying to work out a problem. It was heavenly just being near. Mr. Turing and Mr. Hare came for supper. Like Mr. Turing very much and also Hare.

### **February 22nd. Tuesday.**

I biked down after some fuss about straps(?) and left my bike at Maud's. I found Betty had shown my poem to quite a lot of people. Was furiously glad. I got A for my Latin but not a Commended I don't think. At lunch I was B9 next to M. Campbell, opposite Joy and near Mona and Betty. Had quite an amusing lunch but I don't think Mary is too fond of me. They were foul to me about poem (teasing me). Afterwards attempted some Geography prep but didn't do much as we talked most of the time. At 3.30 went and changed. I hoped to meet HER but just missed her. Had quite a nice elocution. Recited "To be or not to be" but not so well as before. Did not see HER afterwards either as was too late. Biked back rather a fag but worth it in the mornings. Had a lot of Geography to do and did some of it in bed. I am dreading doing the whole play tomorrow. It is sure to be a complete bosh(?)

### **February 23rd - Wednesday**

Biked in and arrived still earlier. Had a foul Geography test for which I will not get a Commended. At lunch I sat at E11 and Betty was at E14 so we managed to get together! Joy was quite near. I was in a complete dither and feeling awfully sick. Afterwards we went straight over to the hall and started. I was feeling positively awful. I wish this wasn't at the end as it makes it much worse. The first thing was awfully sweet and quite amusing. The second (Hamyls)(?) was marvellous and screamingly funny. Pat Coggan was by far the best and really a wonderful actress. Then came ours. It was perfectly frightful - nothing but hitches and everything went wrong. I had to do everything and hadn't got my megaphone so it was all rather a

hash. However, afterwards they said it was good except it needed to be faster. If it only goes off on the day! I think it may be bosh, won't I be glad when it's over.

### **February 24th - Thursday.**

Arrived earlier still on my bike. I got A for my History essay, much to my surprise that was better than Betty who got D. I must beat her in the exam. We had a collection in Chapel, and a test on Biology. The questions weren't too bad as we'd had them all in Exams and I had plenty of time in which to do them, At lunch I sat at G5 but moved to one next to Pat Trav. We discussed our careers. She said she thought I would be famous. Gosh, I hope so. We arranged it all - about a theatre we would get up when we grew up. I'm just longing to grow up. I can hardly wait, it's so thrilling and mysterious. I didn't do gym or games because of my chilblains, but did some prep instead. I started my History essay but otherwise didn't get very far. After lunch we had a vague discussion in the Common Room about the play. It lasted till 2.10 and so Barbara didn't go to ear-training. This is rather a disjointed day as I am doing it from memory.

### **February 25th - Friday**

Caught the early bus as per usual. Last night I had an awful trouble making a megaphone. At first I gave it up as a bad job, but then Granny helped me, and we managed to concoct something which helped a bit. I took it to school with me in a paper bag. We had quite an ordinary morning's work. I got A for my Geography but not a Commended. I must try and get one next week. In House Order time we made the final arrangements about the Dress Rehearsal. In the afternoon neither Betty nor I did games. At tea I went to Pat Trav's table (at lunch I was at B3 opposite Daphne) and we had a lovely cake. I went out in the middle of tea and felt horribly sick again. We sat just behind Harry during the first thing and I had a cold. I think she thought I was crying but she turned round and smiled sweetly. Our thing didn't go off quite so badly but they kept on turning the light out and there were lots of hitches. We have got a rehearsal of it on Sunday.

### **February 26th - Saturday.**

Got up at 9.30. In morning did prep, finished History essay and most of my English. I hope I get a good mark for that History. After lunch we collected mugs(?), hot water bottles etc. and started off for Guildford Camberley. It was a freezing day and my shoes hurt but I enjoyed the match. Billy played quite well and scored a try. Afterwards we went up to the tearoom and had tea - toast and eclairs. Tony arrived late and we turned on the wireless to Harry Roy. Then Billy turned up and after having his tea we set off for London. On the way up to London we had terrific arguments on religion, etc. Billy seems to have become much more serious-minded lately and I like him better than I did before. If only he wasn't so funny in society. We arrived at the theatre in plenty of time and found it raining but survived [? unreadable word]. Bluebell had got gallery and not pit which was rather annoying. The play we saw was absolutely super and wonderfully acted. John was lovely. I'm sure he's in love with Peggy Ashcroft. I shall be furious if he marries. Why are some people so lucky? Had supper on embankment and arrived home at 2.30.

### **February 27th - Sunday**

Didn't get up till 10 or so. Had violent religious argument in bed. I had my injection in the morning. Dr. wasn't at all bad really. he is rather sweet. In the afternoon went to a rehearsal. it went off quite well, and got some better ideas about the cars. Steve is sweet. I hope she likes me. She smells so nice. She knows Toddler. Is quite gone on her and jolly well plays up to it too. I can't help it. My feelings and emotions are beyond my control. After tea I wrote a letter to Jilly all about my religious difficulties. Thank Heavens I've got her to talk to. It really is marvellous having somebody to tell everything to. as Betty isn't any good on really confiding in. She's too sceptical and thinks herself so old and wise. I did a bit more of my play in the evening. It might turn out quite well. I shall struggle on anyway and then go over it again.

### **February 28th - Monday.**

Caught the bus and vicar(?) took us in. Betty had letter from her mother which obviously said something nasty about us. I think her mother and I hope she isn't a day-girl with us. We had a test in History in which I hope I did well. At lunch I sat at D9 next to N. Vallin. Betty boring but I managed to keep up a vague conversation. B. Tong was opposite. Afterwards went to French conversation which was quite hysterical, I didn't do the Geometry test. I played netball. It was a lovely day and an energetic game but I didn't enjoy it much. I played against Betty at the end and we had a quarrel about the letter. I do think her mother's the limit and glad she's not mine. I changed for tea and soon after went to Harry with Tap(?) and Daphne. She was quite nice to me and I felt she was taking more notice of me than the others. but it was probably all imagination.

### **March 1st. Tuesday.** The great and awful day!

Woke up very early and felt horribly sick for about 2 hrs. in bed. Biked down and caught the bus. Had 4 lessons in morning, then break, then Pa Elly's(?) funeral. It was really jolly decent. I sat next to Betty but couldn't see HER very much. At lunch I sat at C13, but changed to 11, opposite Harlow & Betty. Had a giggly lunch and Maggie was at the end of the table. After lunch watched Net ball match and then rested in dormitory. Then Tap(?) and I went down to change. Was feeling awfully sick and horrible. We had tea at quarter to 4. I sat nearly opposite Her, and Tap opposite. She left quite soon. After tea we mucked about for some time and I felt worse and worse. Tap and I spent most of the day together. I shall tell her when I leave about my little secret! At about quarter to 5 visitors arrived, but Mummy didn't come in till late. I was giving out programmes. After 1st play waited(?) in aschomte(?) shivering. Our thing went off quite well really. Steve was an angel to my people afterwards. Told me they liked it. Thank goodness it's over.

### **March 2nd. Wednesday.**

Biked down. Lots of people said they couldn't hear me. I hope Steve wasn't too disappointed. I dreamt about her last night and felt almost gone on her this morning! Dreams always affect me that way. We had a foul Latin lesson getting better towards the end. I asked her for my composition book. At lunch I sat at F4. I would have been two away from HER. Actually I moved up to 1 opposite Mona. We had a jolly

interesting lunch and I like her most awfully. We talked about slipping back in time, cancer, ghosts, etc.! I like really interesting discussions on definite things instead of footling trivial stuff. I hope I shall write to Mona when I leave. She may be fickle but she's nice all the same.

After lunch we had quite a decent Singing. We started "Music when soft voices die". Patsy(?) seems to be taking a great interest in us nowadays. I used to think her rather snobbish. Nearly told Tup(?) I had a secret but then didn't. Caught 5 past 4 bus home. Did very little prep in evening and went to bed quite early.

### **March 3rd. Thursday.**

In the morning everything was most unsatisfactory. For the English I got C+ and for the History Essay 4½ out of 15. Steve was a bit pippy but at least she takes an interest in me. I'd like to get to know her as I think she's a dear. At lunch I sat at G13 next to Rosemary Jewell. We swapped places and were told to report but I shan't. It wasn't such a bad lunch although not terribly nice either. I always feel vaguely embarrassed [sic] with Rosemary as we've got nothing in common. I shouldn't like her as a friend I must say. After lunch I renewed my library book and then had ear-training. We giggled as per usual and I was sent to the back. Then Pat Walker was sent to the back too. I have really quite a lot of friends, or rather acquaintances, at school. In the afternoon played in a nice game of netball. It was very hot and I shot quite well. Near the end some of us were sent away so Tup and I went in. In the evening I did Biology and started my English essay.

### **March 4th Friday.**

In the morning biked. It was rather a rush but I managed alright. In House Meetings Miggy read out Miss Ireland's criticism of the plays. She didn't say anything very nice about ours, and nothing (thank goodness!) about me. We had Silas Marner in English and I knew it quite well. We had a pretty foul Latin lesson as per usual. I must do well in exams and show her. I discovered I had the curse so didn't do games. Tried to get on with my English essay instead. I hope I do another good one. I haven't had a Commended for two weeks now. I wonder what I shall get for that History. It'd be nice to get more than one Commended in a week. At lunch sat next to R. Jewell and Billy at B8. Had quite an amusing lunch on the whole but not the type I really like. All fooling and no serious talk. In the afternoon Betty and I caught the usual bus. When we got home I didn't do any prep but read "To Let". I love it and especially Jon. It's very pathetic and horrible.

### **March 5th. Saturday.**

Got up at 9.30 and was meant to be at Dr. Bell's at 9.45. Got there late but even then had to wait a bit. Read magazines in garden. It didn't hurt. Afterwards we went into Guildford. Hope nobody saw me. When we got home Betty and I went for a walk. She has discovered my secret but I think I have succeeded in bluffing her. Whatever I do I mustn't make any sign that I'm gone on HER, because she'll be all on the lookout. I wonder how she found out! She says she saw a look in my eyes. Talk about Love's richest(?) stories in Love's richest book!" Anyway will keep it from her. Why should I let her know? I shall lie all day and not think it a sin, because it's too

sacred a thing for her to know, and I can't trust her to keep it to herself. If I could it would be a different matter. In the afternoon we went to see "Dr. Syn" which I enjoyed very much. In the bus on the way back we were caught over the penny fare business! I felt an awful fool. I wrote my play in the evening and went to bed quite early.

### **March 6th. Sunday.**

Got up at 9.15. After breakfast took the dog for a walk on the downs. It was heavenly weather and Snuff was quite good. When we got back I wrote some more story (or rather play). I am getting on quite well. Playwriting is definitely my line. After lunch I did a little prep and finished my English essay. I don't know if she will think it good or not.

I never finished this but if I remember rightly nothing else happened. On Sundays it's always the same programme, and in the afternoon I just read or write. I love those times when I can just think or read or do what I like.

### **March 7th. Monday.**

Caught the bus and caught the early bus in Guildford. Gumbo seemed in quite a good pip. Hope I did a good composition. Had a vile History test in morning and felt like crying. I do like Steve though. Hope it won't develop into anything worse! At lunch I sat next to her at E1. Thought it would be Harry but was glad it wasn't in a way. I enjoyed our conversation though I expect she was bored stiff! We talked about Noel Coward, John Gielgud, etc. We always seem to talk about that together.

Anyway we kept up the conversation which was something! Got a letter from Daddy - a rather pathetic one - and a charm affair from Jill. I hope it works I must say. I can but wait and see. In the afternoon Daphne and I sat in the sun and tried to do some Maths. Actually we talked most of the time - I was feeling in an expansive kind of mood. I did not stay for Maths Coaching so as to put Betty off the scent. I behaved rather cunningly today. In the evening had very little prep. Mummy had bridge party.

### **March 8th - Tuesday.**

Biked down. We had Biology in the form room and I came top in the first Biology test. I got 76! I was very surprised as I thought I had done the first one very badly. Afterwards Wetty(?) told me I had done the second one well too. I hope I get a Commended. I could get several. Sambo called me to her study about changing places, but wasn't pippy. I have to go in last to meals. I don't know where, the chance is more or less. I sat at F5 but as there was no chair went opposite next to Morag. We had quite a decent conversation as usual about Jack, but also about Miss Booth. I like Steve just as much as her now but not as much as I used to like her. After lunch I tried to do some prep but copied in some lovely Swinburne I discovered. Afterwards Betty and I went into the garden and SHE was sitting there. I wish I had been there alone but she never came near us. We had quite a decent Elocution and I think I said "solid flesh" quite well. I ate too much at supper and felt sick.

### **March 9th - Wednesday.**

Was a bit later than usual being down but caught the bus. Had the usual foul lessons. I hate Wednesdays - neither History nor English. Gumbo asked me to do an illustration for the magazine! I think I will get Betty to help me in the holidays - if she can wait till then. At lunchtime I sat at C17. Peaseblossom was at the end. I discussed with Cynthia and Pat Benning about Evolution, and had quite a decent lunch. Asked Peaseblossom about the soul, but she was rather taken aback! After lunch did not go out but went up to form-room. In afternoon went to library about Silas Marner and caught the ten to 4 bus home. I did my Silas Marner till supper time and hope I get a Commended for it. I might - but on the other hand - - ! I was very tired in evening and tried to learn my Biology after supper. Then I had a bath and learnt it when I was in bed. I don't know it and I mustn't let myself down, because I have done very well so far.

### **March 10th. - Thursday.**

Was rather late again. Tried to frantically learn my Biology in the bus, and also my French Vocabulary. We got our essays back. She was rather rude about mine but I got B+ all the same. Luckily we didn't have a vocabulary test in French. At lunch I sat at G5, and nearly opposite Mona and Betty. We had quite an interesting conversation. Mona told me about a horrible disease in which your nose goes black. I'm glad I haven't seen anybody like that. Algy was at the end of the table. After lunch got our places for gym and comp.(?) I am not looking forward to it, I must say. I may get out of it yet. Had quite a serious ca--aming(?) but she was furious at the end. In the afternoon did prep and after tea had a lantern lecture on the origin of man. It was jolly interesting and proves the theory of Evolution. In the bus Anne, Barbara and I had long discussions and afterwards Mr. Lynn on the pavement. I like Anne awfully.

### **March 11th. Friday.**

Got 2 Commended lessons - English and Biology. I hope the English was the essay as I might get another for the Literature. She wasn't at all complimentary about the English at the time. In break we had a Gym Comp practise which wasn't too bad. At lunch I sat at C1 next to Peaseblossom. I talked jolly well to her and Anne was at C2. We kept up a conversation all lunch time which was quite good considering she said practically nothing! At 2.30 Betty and I went to History coaching with Steve. It was quite nice. I think she quite likes me and I like her awfully, but I am **not** gone on her. I think Betty is. Afterwards I went out and played House Games. I'd like to be in the team, but won't be as Billy will be. Then we had the Gym Comp practise. It was a dull day but boiling hot, and I didn't enjoy it much. I must get out of it on the day. Betty and I just caught the bus and bought pea-nuts. Did a bit of Algebra and discussed a play we might produce. Wrote to John Gielgud - I hope he answers.

### **March 12th - Saturday.**

Had an awful job over Robert's medicine. He screamed and became quite hysterical. Then I walked to Betty's house and had my injection. I thought I had lost the piece of paper but found it in the end. When I came back did a little prep before lunch. After

lunch we started for Camberley. Then we watched the match in which he played quite well, and Sandhurst won. Then we had tea (which we got free) and Billy joined us. We looked up cinemas and went to "Broadway Melody" at Aldershot. I liked it awfully. Robert Taylor was a bit better than usual. Afterwards we had supper at a café. There was a gramophone going in which we put pennys(*sic*), and quite a lot of Sandhurst boys. Mummy said the charm had brought her bad luck, so I hope it doesn't to the boys. Then we drove back to Camberley having lost the way. I was very tired. I had nice dreams that night about John Gielgud and Steve and everybody mixed up

### **March 13th - Sunday.**

No entry

### **March 14th - Monday.**

We missed the 1st bus and Pa Selby didn't arrive until too late. I got the Literature back and got A so it must have been my Commended. we had quite a nice History lesson but nothing out of the ordinary. At lunch I sat at G13 next to M. Mountford, and had a fairly decent time. Anyway we kept up a conversation! After lunch we had the usual batty French conversation and then had Geometry. After that I played games. It was a lovely day and played quite a nice game of netball. It was meant to be a house game but pretty rotten and very mixed. Afterwards changed and at tea sat at D15, near to Toddler. After tea went to Harry about stocks(?). Stayed with her till quarter to 7.

### **March 15th - Tuesday.**

Biked down. Had gym in the morning which wasn't bad. Heard we might be having Exams next week. Awful thought! I don't know a single thing. History is going to be by far the worst. I like Steve most awfully. I think perhaps soon I might like her better than anyone. It's funny how I change and switch over my ideas all the time. I'm sure I shall never marry happily. At lunch I sat at G7. Pat Trav(?) was opposite but she moved over to my side of the table, and we had quite a nice lunch. I like sitting next to her as we talk about sensible things. After lunch had a gym practice. Jane Dawes(?) was away so I was nearer the front. I hope it won't be like that on the day. Afterwards did my Latin prep and some Maths in the afternoon. Did not change for Elocution and did not recite. Afterwards hoped to see Her but didn't. I am definitely ----ing(?) away from her. I caught the 4.30 bus and biked up. it is a frightful sweat, but can't be helped I suppose.

### **March 16th - Wednesday.**

Were definitely told we were having Exams. I hope I will come out well as it will show what will happen in School Cert. If only I could do Maths. Had the usual foul morning but Latin was slightly better than usual. At lunch I sat at E18. Gumbo came first, but went away and Nicco(?) came. I was glad in a way as I feel vaguely self-conscious with her. We managed to keep up a vaguely (repetition!) consecutive conversation about fossils. After lunch we had singing. I talked to Anne about Turbetts and Oxford Group, I hope they are not drifting apart.

### **March 17th - Wednesday.**

Got our English books back. She read mine out in class but I don't think she realised it was an acrostic! I also got my History essay back and haven't broken my record as I got A. We had quite a nice History lesson. I like Steve just as much as Harry now, and think about her much more. Betty plugged me about it, and I told her I was gone on somebody, but won't tell her who. It is in the balance between Steve and Harry and I think Steve is winning! At lunch sat at D6 opposite Hilda and Jacko, and had a quite amusing time. After lunch went to ear-training and it was very boring. Was in a pip with Betty. Afterwards went out to play games and watched a Juniors match till half-time. She came out and sat quite near me and I was glad.

### **March 18th - Friday.**

I have not written this diary for days owing to my work for Exams so I can't really remember what has happened. I have been revising frantically most of the time. I biked down (as per usual). In the morning we had fairly ordinary lessons, only Latin was rather annoying. I get more furious with her than anybody. In Church history she talked about people with critical attitudes. Cat! (?). At lunch I sat at F10 next to Nancy Vallin and opposite Anne and Pat Trav. We had a very funny lunch and talked all the time about Molly Lynn. I have really come to the conclusion that childs (*sic*) half-baked. In the afternoon I didn't do games but talked to Betty most of the time. We caught the normal bus home. In the evening we sat in the nursery and revised all my(?) Palgrave. I think I really know that. I must do well in Exams this term.

### **March 19th - Saturday.**

Got up in plenty of time and went to Dr. Bell. Had to wait about an hour but read some quite nice stories. Afterwards I went into Guildford and had my hair cut and washed and set. I didn't tip her as I ought to have done! Afterwards Betty and I walked to the bus. In afternoon revised and listened to the Rugger International (Mummy had gone up to see it). Then after tea we went into Guildford for Granny and she gave me 2/6. We spent some of it on Woolworth sweets and some on flowers for her. We took the bus back. Mummy, Billy and Barbara were just arriving. After supper we went off to see "Big City". Had to wait in cue (*sic*) but got in at last. It was a damn good film, and also the one with it. Very tired when I got back and went straight to bed. Slept badly as I had my hair in a night-cap.

### **March 20th- Sunday.**

No entry.

### **March 21st. - Monday.**

We caught the first bus and I was surprisingly calm considering Exams. The Composition paper wasn't very nice and I didn't write a very good composition. I hope nobody beats me. I should hate that. When the paper was over we went into Common Room and listened to Noel Coward on the gramophone. Then went and did some English revision. At lunch I sat at F16 opposite Billy. Harry was at the end

of the table, but I didn't say anything to her. After lunch we had a gym practice which wasn't bad. Then I did some more revision and didn't do games so did revision then. I went home, by the usual bus as there was no Maths coaching. When I got home I found Mummy had gone up to Sedburgh to Richards ten mile. I do hope he wins. After tea I tried to revise really hard but found I couldn't concentrate at all. I hope we get a really decent paper as I mustn't let down my reputation. Algy was most complimentary but was only sponging-up

### **March 22nd - Tuesday.**

Biked down with flat tyres. The Exam paper was quite nice but terribly long and I didn't nearly finish it. I like it at first but afterwards found I had made lots of howlers in the questions. Anne and I walked round revising History before lunch or rather just talking. I was in a furious pip just before lunch over the (?)exam. I sat at F13 next to Pat Trav and Rosemary. We had quite an amusing lunch becoming hysterical towards the end. Algy was at the end of the table. After lunch I took my history to revise but didn't do it. Betty was in bed the whole day. I hope she wasn't revising that's all! I got 68 in Composition and tied top with Anne. Not very good but still. I didn't stay to Maths coaching as I hadn't got my skirt. When I got home I finished my letter to Annemarie. Did no Algebra revision.

### **March 23rd. - Wednesday.**

Just caught the bus. Had the most foul Algebra paper. I just couldn't do a thing and sat for hours at the end doing nothing. I feel like crying. It will bring my average down so. Afterwards I found I had done several right so I may get a weak Pass. We walked round afterwards but I did no revision. In the afternoon had singing which was fairly decent. Then afterwards I discovered I had to play in a House match! At lunch I sat at E15 next to Joan Ellis(?)! It wasn't a particularly interesting lunch but might have been worse. The House match was too awful. I couldn't shoot or get the ball and thoroughly disgraced myself I feel. My one chance to show them and I couldn't! Steve and Harry were both watching. Oh if only I had excelled myself. Afterwards I was practically bursting but survived and biked home. Did a little History revision. I must do well.

### **March 24th. - Thursday.**

Had really a rather decent History paper. I pray I've done well, I shall die if I haven't. I feel I could do it but I felt last time just the same, and then I came an awful cropper, so I shall probably do the same again. After the Exam Barbara and I walked round but did not revise. I shouted at Betty's window but only Milly(?) came and was slightly pippy (at Barbara!). At lunch I sat at G5 next to Juliet and opposite Pat Walker. We talked, as per usual about John Gielgud. After lunch we had a gym practice on the hard court. I didn't go to ear-training nor did I revise. In afternoon I played in a feeble game of netball, and my feet hurt. I have got another John Gielgud craze I suppose the result of his letter I have got back to the farm. bother(?) imagination! Worked very late.

### **March 25th - Friday.**

It was raining but I biked down all the same. We had a foul Biology Exam. I couldn't do a thing - didn't nearly finish the thing. Heaven knows what I shall get. I hope it isn't too bad. if only I could get good marks for History to pull up my average. After the exam we did no revision. At lunch I sat at B4 next to Juliet and opposite Pussy(?) and had quite a decent lunch. Afterwards Betty Harlowe(?) and I went round looking for Steve for History coaching but couldn't get any, so we wandered round vaguely for some time and then went back to form room. In afternoon Daphne, Toddler and I talked all the time and didn't do any revision. I caught the normal bus and biked home meeting Robert and Nanny on the way. In the evening went to the Odeon with Daphne to see "100 men and a Girl". Had an awful time over shoes as mummy has taken brown ones. Wore her blue ones. The film was super. She looked jolly pretty and her father(?) is very nice.

### **March 26th - Saturday.**

No entry.

### **March 27th - Sunday.**

Got up quite early for today. In the morning we went to Mothering Sunday Service. it was not a success.

### **March 28th - Monday.**

When I got to school I found Betty was back. She certainly had a bit of a cold but I mustn't tell her so. The French paper wasn't bad really. The translation was quite easy and I only hope I did well. Afterwards we ate Gumbo's biscuits and talked. At lunch I sat at E11. I hoped it would be Steve but no such luck. It was Nicco(?) and I was next to Pat Coggan. We talked about the political situation. After lunch I revised and talked to Betty (the latter more than the former!) Then we watched the Merriman(?) House match. I didn't play but Toddler did. Steve watched part of the time. They beat us by 96. Afterwards I went home. I am in a queer state. I don't think I'm exactly gone on Steve but I like her so much that it comes to the same thing. Miss Fevez(?) came to supper(?) but did not stay long. I did a little Geography and Arithmetic revision. I am dead tired nowadays, stayed to tea and sat at Jacko's table. It wasn't a very nice cake. After tea Betty and I did some revision in Domestic Science Room.

### **March 29th - Tuesday.**

The Arithmetic paper was much better than I thought it would be and I got quite a lot of answers the same as other people. I think Betty did well. I hope not better than me. We had History results. I was top with 61! I thank God only I wish it had been higher still. At lunch I sat at E4, next to B. Jacobs. Wetty was at end of table. She told me I had got 9 out of 20 for my last Biology question. Not too bright! I hope I don't do too badly. The lunch was not really a success. After lunch we watched the match - lacrosse - Oxford v. Cambridge. we had to go in half-time but Cambridge won I think. We had elocution. We read instead of recited, and it was really quite

nice. I did not stay to tea and I revised Geography very late. I feel completely done at the end of a day, and just lie in bed and howl sometimes. I am sure it is a strain on my nerves. I feel sometimes that my brain will burst. I wonder if Daphne is cleverer than me.

### **March 30th - Wednesday**

Had the Geog paper in morning. It was pretty foul but I don't think I did too badly. The Ordnance Survey map I couldn't do at all. I think it was mean giving us all different maps. I came 2nd in French with 63 and 3rd in Biology with 63 which isn't bad really. The Biology anyway was a surprise. At lunch I sat at D12 next to Cynthia Washington(?) and Peggy Davis. The lunch was pretty boring but I managed to keep up a fairly consecutive conversation. It was mostly about film stars as it usually is. After lunch we had a gym practice. it didn't last long. When it was over I went out into the garden and talked to Mona. I like her inspite of a certain queerness in her. Afterwards Betty joined us and we talked for some time.. I caught an early bus home. Revised Geometry and Snuff(?) had a kind of fit.

### **March 31st - Thursday**

Biked down but was just in time. Geometry was not too good but I think I did better than some people.. I worked out quite a lot but they were probably all wrong. I got 53 for Arithmetic and Betty 51 so I just beat her I'm glad to say. At lunch I sat at C17 next to P. Davis. Again Nicco was at end of table. . I didn't say a word to her. Afterwards we had a gym practice and then the Gym Competition. It was foul and we came bottom. I went all wrong in one exercise and so did Daphne. The only nice was that I sat at Steve's feet most of the time. And Betty thought the thrill came from Harry's(?)!! Like an idiot I left my skirt at school and went home in only my knickers! So I couldn't bike home. I did quite a lot of Latin revision as I do want to do well. If only I could get into a second class I wouldn't mind.. But I shall be beaten by Daphne again, I know. Oh hang!

### **April 1st - Friday**

In the morning had a Latin exam. I did not think it bad but could not do the "Oratio Oblique" part. Rosemary liked it awfully so she will probably beat me. I only hope she doesn't. Anyway she said last time and nothing much happened, so I hope the same thing happens again. It was a terrific relief to feel that exams were over. I only got 63 for Geography. Rather disappointed but it was that beastly Ordnance Map that did it. Haven't the foggiest where I sat at lunch as this is being written several days later. Anyway in the afternoon I know we did nothing in particular and did not play games. We caught the usual bus home and found that Nanny(?) had taken my bike so I could bus. In the evening we went to see "Dinner at the Ritz" in school clothes. It was super and David Niven absolutely ravishing. I dreamt about him - that smile!

### **April 2nd - Saturday**

In the morning I got up quite early and went to see Dr. Bell. It was an awful strain biking there owing to my idiotic skirt, but I managed somehow. He is rather sweet, and I read a fairly decent story. I came back, read and wrote my play for quite a while, then took ----(?) for a short walk. Billy and Mummy arrived in time for lunch. In the middle of lunch we had the boat-race. It was very thrilling and I am glad Oxford won. In the afternoon we didn't do anything special. It is such a pleasant

change to have nothing to do and I revelled in the sensation. In the evening we went to see "Dinner at the Ritz" again. We walked both ways. I loved the film even though it was the second time I'd seen it. Mr. Hare etc. came to Bridge. He is very nice to me. Anyway, Mrs Chambers says he thinks I'm intelligent which is something. I wish he was more like the Leslie Howard brother!

### **April 3rd. - Sunday**

In the morning we did not go to church but went for a long walk on the downs. Billy and Mummy and it was nice except that I had the curse and felt a bit weary. In the afternoon we all sprawled about in chairs and read. I read Noel Coward and went into the usual ecstasies. Oh to have talent like that! After tea we had an argument about going for a walk. I didn't want to go owing to the curse but I didn't want Betty and Billy to go. However as Betty was so anxious to go on to the downs I left in a huff (?). I'm sure that was her idea all along. I was thoroughly miserable and cried but felt better after expressing myself in poetry. It wasn't a good poem but said what I felt and the rhyme(?) was nice. In the evening I did my character sketch of Theseus and it was quite good I think though I didn't take very long over it. Mrs Chambers to supper.

### **April 4th - Monday**

Caught the bus and the late bus at Guildford therefore rather a scramble at the other end. I was rather pleased to get 79 for Latin but Geometry was not read out. Rather disappointed. Had most boring lessons in morning except for History. She said I ought to get Distinction. I must do so and please her. At lunch I sat at G15 next to Mary Brooke. Gumbo was at end of table. She yelled down to ask me if I was going to the Missionary lecture. I can't imagine why! After lunch I took back my library book and went up to sign School Cert form. Then we had the usual boring Maths in which I copied out poetry. I did not do Games. First I went and read in Common Room. Then went to Library and looked at Magazines. Caught the usual bus home. Barbara and I did not sit near each other in the bus but were quite amiable afterwards. I dislike her intensely most of the time Billy was at home. I did my Latin and then scribbled the rest of the time. I wish I was taking Drawing in School Cert.

### **April 5th - Tuesday**

Biked down and was in good time. In morning we went over our papers. V. boring. P.Jeffcock nearly fainted in Biology. At lunch I sat at C14 next to Pam Bates and opposite Betty. Harry was at end and I was not at all thrilled. I expect Betty was thinking I was all the time! In the morning Steve stopped me on the stairs and asked me about library books. What an ass I am! I do wish the House Play is (?) would come all over again. I didn't appreciate her when I had her. In the afternoon it was freezing. Betty packed but I went to watch a Staff v. Sixth form match. It was jolly boring as I wasn't interested in anyone playing so I escaped at half-time. In the afternoon we had cleared our desks and I had filled my suitcase but I didn't take it home as it was so heavy. Barbara and I caught the ten to 4 bus. Billy was at home. In the evening we listened to a marvellous comic opera called "Cousin from Nowhere".

### **April 6th - Wednesday**

Walked to Quarry Street and caught the 2nd bus. Sat next to Barbara, so evidently all is well! When we got there we got our reports. Mine is not too good. My exam results were very disappointing to them, poor dears! Anyway there was nothing written about my conduct. We dashed round until 9.30, then had long Parliament. I

was 2nd, only one mark behind Daphne who was top. Sambo, as usual, touched on the critical attitude stunt. She is a cat. Afterwards had house meeting. Oh Steve! Then dawdled about doing nothing, saying goodbye to various people. Said goodbye to Steve. She smiled awfully sweetly and looked as if she wanted to say something but actually didn't. Saw her several times later and she smiled once. Had coffee with Mrs Chambers in Guildford which was nice. Talked about Physics. Richard was at home. In afternoon we went for a walk over the downs, which was nice. In evening listened to super play - "We are not alone" with Emlyn Williams.

## 7 April – 5 May 1938 (Spring Holidays)

### **April 7th - Thursday**

A lovely feeling not having to get up early in the morning. In the morning I spent all my time writing up this diary in the nursery. I got into my green dress before lunch. Lunch was at 12.30. I had to wear my black shoes, worst luck. We got up at 2.30 and went 1st to the oculist. We had to wait quite a long time. Afterwards had to wait again at dentist. He said I was to have a plate. It really is horribly unfair all that I have to bear. Then we went to Whiteleys and had large high tea. Then we went to take Granny to Waterloo. Afterwards we parked the car near the theatre and wandered up and down the streets. There were some jolly nice-looking boys or rather young men just behind. There was a nice man and woman who talked to me. I sat near to him in the theatre and he pointed out Count Grandi and Edna Best. The play itself was super. Raymond Massey was a darling and the whole thing amusing, pathetic and arresting.

### **April 8th - Friday**

Got up rather late in the morning, did a little work (History) and then went into Guildford with Mummy. Met Mrs Chambers and Auntie Hilda and we had coffee at the Indoor café. I was very cross at lunch because boys were playing tennis with Turbetts. Got over it and in afternoon went to lovely woods for primrosing. I tied a handkerchief round my head and didn't look too bad. The woods were too gorgeous. I took my Rupert Brooke but didn't read it. When we came back the Turbetts had gone. In the evening Mrs Chambers came for supper. I think she was rather attracted by Richard, she was looking at him an awful lot! In the evening Mrs Chambers treated us to "100 Men and a Girl" at Godalming. It was simply lovely and I liked it even better than the first time I saw it. Deanna Durbin is a fascinating little creature. Why do some people have all the luck. I'd do anything to be her, but best of all I'd like to be Peggy Ashcroft. Perhaps she doesn't realise her luck!

### **April 9th - Saturday**

In the morning I did a little History prep. I am not getting on at all with my work. I really must make some systematic plan for doing it as it is hopeless as it is. At about half past eleven we went off to a point-to-point. It was a bitter day and we went in the Van Lessen's car. I don't like Mrs. V.L. much. She's so obviously squashing towards me. When we got there we had a picnic lunch. I saw Monica Mountford and Elizabeth Cockell. Afterwards we went and backed. Billy and I were together then

me and Mummy. Mummy won £1 on first horse but we didn't win again, and in the end we were down. We had tea there and went to dinner with Van Lessens afterwards. There was quite a nice boy called Peter there. Pam looked ravishing. Was rather cross in the evening. Made up when I went to bed and looked rather nice.

### **April 10th - Sunday**

Was Robert's birthday. He was very thrilled with his presents. Richard stayed in bed. In the morning I stayed in for a bit, then went outside and drew. I copied things quite well. I was very silent at lunch and rather cross. Afterwards I painted the things I had drawn, but they were definitely not successful. I nearly scribbled one of them out but didn't. Billy played tennis with a girl who knows Jackie. Wish that I hadn't broken with her, ass that I was. She's just the kind of person I want to know. Lucky little devil, she's evidently good-looking and has pots of money. Robert had tea-party which I went to. Granny James came to tea but I don't think she enjoyed herself much. Olive came to play tennis. I did a little work after tea and bathed Robert. In the evening I listened to John Gielgud appealing. He spoke adorably and all about a friend. Oh! to be that friend.

### **April 11th - Monday**

This was an uneventful day. I learnt some history and in the afternoon I enjoyed myself writing out poetry. I wrote a short essay on Spring which was quite good and which I shall put into poetry if I have time. I never have any time to do anything nowadays. After School Cert I shall just revel in books and poetry and everything else. Theo Price and Barbara came to tea after playing tennis. I am sure that when made up I shall be more attractive than Barbara. I am absolutely relying on make-up to save me! I am sure Barbara likes Billy and I have a horrible suspicion that he likes her too. I wonder if he will ever marry. I suppose so. In the evening there was a nice programme on the wireless.

### **April 12th - Tuesday**

We went up to London. The car took ages to start and we nearly didn't go at all. In the morning we went to the dentist and the oculist. After lunch went to Evans to get me a new costume. It was horrible because we tried on frock after frock and none of them fitted and I looked ghastly. I do hope I get slimmer or I shall have to take up dieting. Anyway I shall wait till I'm sixteen or so. Eventually we got an awfully nice camel-hair  $\frac{3}{4}$  length coat and green dress, also ---(?). They will be super for the summer. I hope Betty likes them tomorrow. We drove home to have a very late tea. Nothing else particular happened today. This diary isn't particularly interesting but maybe I could get a kick out of it a few years from hence, or when I'm famous! When, oh WHEN!

### **April 13th - Wednesday**

In the morning dressed in my new outfit and looked quite nice. Caught a Green Line bus at 10.30 to London. Felt quite scared that nobody else was wearing a summer outfit. The bus arrived 10 minutes late and Betty met me, looking very grown-up as

usual. We went to the flat and Betty Scriven was there. We had a nice lunch in which I talked quite well but B.S. didn't open her mouth. Afterwards we went to see a flick - "Stand-in" and "Smash and Grab". They were both lovely and Jack was sweet, though I don't think he thinks me quite the way he did. There was a stage show as well. Leslie Howard was sweet. I'd do anything to be his daughter. When we got back we didn't have tea and afterwards went to Boots bookshop. When we came back Betty Scriven had been and gone. Mrs.W. was very rude about her. I hope she doesn't say things like that about me behind my back. In bed I read "These Foolish Things". A queer book but I liked it. I wonder is it's true(?). Betty and I hardly talked at all.

#### **April 14th - Thursday**

Got up rather early and had breakfast in pyjamas. Had 2 pieces of toast. Afterwards dressed. We went into drawing-room and read. I read daily Mirror. Betty and Mrs went at about quarter to 11. Ic(?) played to me on the piano and gramophone. She is really rather good at the piano. I read "These Foolish Things" but could not finish it. We started too late and arrived at 12.5 instead of 12! Betty and Mrs were a bit pippy. Had a vey light lunch at Selfridges and then went on to see "A Yankee at Oxford". We came in in the middle and so I saw part of it through again. It was a super film. I wish I had kept up my film critisizms (sic). I might try to make some of them up later. When we came out I had an ice at Lyons and Betty went as far as Marble Arch. I had to wait about 20 mins. for a bus but had bought a paper. Nobody nice in this. A very precocious child. When we got home had hasty supper and went to "The Raj"(?). I loved it. Got to know June much better.

#### **April 15th - Friday**

Had a very bad night. What with nightmares, an uncomfortable bed and a streaming cold! Didn't get up till about 10. The others went to church but I didn't owing to my cold. I listened to a very nice service on the wireless and the man spoke awfully well. In afternoon I attempted Biology. The questions seemed very easy. If only I could get over 60 for everything! I ought to get a Credit in English, History, French, Latin and Biology. I could get one in Geography. It's the Maths. Oh I must do well in them after Colonel Curtis and Uncle Ernest. After tea I did a lot of tidying up and read through Jill's letters. She is a darling. I'm sure she'll be famous one day. Oh, I hope I am too. I am planning a new story. My play is still going on, slow but sure. We listened to the Archbishop speaking in the evening. If only I could get out of the mess I'm in. But there's no one to help me. If I wasn't so shy I'd go to Uncle Ernest.

#### April 16th - Saturday

Still had a foul cold but got up all the same. Did nothing particular in consequence. In the morning I got 2 letters and a parcel. The letters were from Annemarie, Aunty Twinkie and a box of chocolates from Mrs Lindop. I wrote back to Annemarie and Aunty Twinkie in the morning. My letter to Annemarie was definitely hot(?) Explaining the English view very tactfully. In the afternoon i did nothing very much - just revised and mucked about generally. There isn't really much to say nowadays as I never do anything particularly. The boys usually play tennis or golf with the Turbetts.

Anyway I'd much rather be like I am than good at games like Barbara and so completely insipid. I don't think I could survive without my writing and daydreams. Perhaps I am an extraordinary character! What an intriguing thought! I must put all my energy into writing something really good. I am having the most heavenly daydream now about writing a good play. Oh! John!

### **April 17th - Sunday**

Got up and went to 7 O'clock service. It was quite nice but I don't feel in the slightest bit inspired or helped. It's awful but it doesn't make any difference. I wonder why I can't get back to that queer mystical state I used to live in. "Heaven lies about us in our infancy". How true those words are. The atmosphere of those Furze Down days is really queer. We had Easter eggs. In the morning I read and in the afternoon I rested and learnt quite a lot of History. Barbara came to tea after plying singles with Billy. They both seem definitely fond of each other. In the evening I thought out the plot of a new play. The girl with literary ambitions meets the older man - thinks his sympathy love, etc. Words of poem "For love of love or from hearts loneliness. It would make a better story but I prefer writing plays. I must work up minor characters.

### **April 18th - Monday**

Had breakfast at approx. 10.

### **April 19th - Tuesday**

Nanny was away and I was sleeping with Mummy again. I got up about 9. After breakfast I did some Maths but couldn't do much. I went to Colonel Curtis. While having my coaching I heard Muriel Game(?) chaffing with all the boy friends! I like the old chap but not in a way - he stares rather. Mummy picked me up on the way back in the afternoon. I did some more Maths. Bluebell and Mr and Mrs Grahame came to tea and tennis. Bluebell is not in the slightest bit attractive now, thin weedy and dowdy. She might have been sweet looking. I wonder, if I make up I shall be fairly attractive. I hope so at any rate. From now on I am going to do my best to be alluring and see if I can attract anybody. I shall start with David Hadrill. I did more Maths afterwards and hardly got any of them out. I must just go on struggling until I can. Mummy went out to bridge with Mrs Chambers in evening.

### **April 20th - Wednesday**

As usual this was another singularly uneventful day. I am not doing anything this hols it strikes me (I must get that History from Barbara).

[The following italicized sentences have been lightly crossed out] In the morning we went over with Mrs Chambers to Wonersh House. It is quite nice though not nearly as nice as this. I suddenly felt suddenly quite crazy about Mrs C. It's queer but I had a sudden infatuation. I think it's the way she told a story yesterday.

All this happened on Monday!

Today in the morning I went down the town - walked down with Mummy. Went to Boots and got out (or rather failed to get out) one of the books Mrs Chambers put on my list. Then had coffee with her and went back with her in her taxi. My infatuation

has quite worn off. Oh God, I'm in love with love. It's mad - I'm mad, everybody's mad dramatic fool that I am.

### **April 21st – Thursday N.B. Heidi**

The day was uneventful. In the morning I did the usual work and reading. I don't seem to be getting on very well with my revision on the whole. I did some Maths and I am definitely doing better in that. I can do at least some of the problems which is certainly better than before. I went at 12 to have my coaching and he said that I wasn't stupid at Maths and I ought to pass. It isn't a case of "ought" - I must. In the afternoon the boys played tennis with the Turbetts, and they all came back to tea. I talked quite well. Barbara does think she's the cats whiskers - poor mistaken child. I wonder if Billy likes her. I sometimes have my suspicions in favour of it. In the evening we went to see "Heidi". It was really a jolly good film. Barbara carefully sat next to Billy I noticed. All very touching I must say. We biked back.

### **April 22nd – Friday\_ N.B. Tennis**

It was not a particularly nice day but in the morning Richard and I played tennis. I played quite well and I think with practice I might be quite good. If I had done all the practice the others had done I should be just as good if not better. By the end I was quite hot. In the afternoon it was raining a bit but we went to Grays's tho' I wasn't very keen to go. I wore blazer, red jumper and white shorts. In the end we didn't play but had tea and then went to "Prisoner of Zenda" at Godalming. There was a nice, oldish (about 40) Miss Hutchison there. She must have been very pretty. I wonder why she never married. Also two rather nice girls from Weston Hall(?) (had been there). One of them was talkative, the other shy but they were obviously great friends. The film was simply grand and I liked it almost better than the first time I saw it. Billy went to Kingston with Jean ? from opposite. In the evening I did more work. But I never do concentrated work.

### **April 23rd - Saturday**

It was a pretty miserable day and so I didn't go to the point-to-point. Nor did Billy. Richard and Mummy set off at about 12 after confusion with Mrs Badham arriving early and Leigh also coming. In the morning I set to work on some Latin. I wish I had started it earlier. It is just about killing me. After lunch did the same and at 5.30 Billy and I went down to Guildford on our bikes and on to Saunders for Sherry party. It was awful and I felt a perfect fool. June was surrounded by boy and girl friends and Billy and I sat in a corner and said nothing the whole evening. There were hundreds of people and I was bored stiff. It lightened up a bit in the end but I was jolly pleased to go. In the evening Billy and I biked down to see "Paradise for Two". It was grand.

### **April 24th - Sunday**

In the morning I set to work on some more Latin and finished the chapter. We listened to Radio Luxembourg and I read a very good criticism(sic) of the Merchant of Venice. I am cutting out all Gielgud criticisms to keep and pore over when I'm

famous (I don't think). After lunch Billy went off to play tennis and Richard and I stayed in. I did some more Latin, mucked about, etc. In the evening at about 6.30 Billy went off to Sandhurst. Richard went with him in the car but I put Robert to bed. After supper I did a little more prep.

### **April 25th - Monday**

In the morning I got a letter from Jill, which was awfully sweet. It was quite long. Oh, I don't know what I'd do without her. I don't care about Jack, if she doesn't want to be friends she needn't. She doesn't mean half as much to me as Jill. She evidently had a young actor to stay. Lucky little blighter. She seems to have everything in life. I started a letter back to her. In the morning Leigh arrived and he and Mummy etc. drove to Sandhurst. I had my hair done and had rather a nice girl to do it. I tipped her too! They picked me up on the way back. In the afternoon I did Latin and at 5.0 went to Colonel Curtis. He asked me why I was limping so he must have forgotten. I suppose I'm really very noticeably lame. He came round afterwards with the solution to the sum. I tried to do some more Latin in the evening.

### **April 26th - Tuesday**

In the morning I tried to do some more Latin but was interrupted most of the time by Leigh gassing. Mr Smallman came round but didn't stay long. Mummy, Leigh and I went to Guildford in the car. Thought of getting rouge but didn't in the end because of(?) Mummy. Might get some at Bromsgrove. After lunch I went to Dr. Bell's as I'd forgotten to go on Saturday. I biked there and back. When I got back I felt a terrific throbbing in my head and ears. Got steadily worse so I went to lie down. Then felt simply ghastly. Stifflingly hot, sick, had foul pain and ghastly throbbing headache, itched all over and my eyes burned and watered so much I couldn't open them. Lay writhing and gasping till Dr. Bell came round with an injection which relieved me almost at once. My face was swollen and I was covered with rash from head to foot, so must have looked pretty! Stayed in bed rest of day and read. Listened to good programme but wireless gave out. Leigh came up and gassed in evening.

### **April 27th - Wednesday**

Wore my russet(?) silk frock and blue cardigan after having breakfast in bed. Pottered about in the morning till they came - packing and whatnot. When they came I felt a bit embarrassed as I had to meet them alone. Mr Cory was there but I was not a bit thrilled. We had lunch and talked for a bit afterwards and then set off in the car. I sat in the back with A.Twinkie (?). We had a nice drive to Oxford arriving about 4. We dropped Mr.C. and went off to have tea with Michael Hadrill. In spite of all my resolutions I was as shy and tongue-tied as ever, but he is awfully nice. My tongue loosened a bit afterwards and he really is a dear. We picked up Mr. C. afterwards and went on to Stratford arriving about 7 and had supper. Walked about and then went in. It is a nice theatre and I sat between Uncle E. and A.T. The play itself was grand and very amusing. Tons better than before and made me like it. We came out about and arrived back about 11.30. I was v. tired.

### **April 28th - Thursday**

Had breakfast about 8.30! Afterwards did some Latin while A.Twinkie went out. Played with Pat for a bit. She is really a sweet kid although perhaps has not so much character as Robert. All the same I prefer her type. At lunch said practically nothing. Afterwards I went back into the drawing room for a bit to do more work. In the afternoon Pat, A.Twinkie and I went for a stroll in the school grounds which was quite so-so. We had tea. Mr. Cory and Mr. Keble(?) came. All really boring and rather embarrassing. Afterwards did some Maths with Uncle E. He is a great help. I think I might be able to pass in Maths if I don't get het up and flustered. Did a jigzaw with Pat, then went and changed, had supper and drove to Stratford to see "Macbeth". It was super and Phyllis Neilson-Terry was too lovely as Lady Macbeth. On the way back Mr. Cory made me furious. I hate him, he's so patronizing and thinks he's the cats whiskers and just despises me. Well he can for all I care, the conceited, self-centred vain creature. Ugh! He makes me sick!

### **April 29th - Friday**

Got up at the usual unearthly hour. It is awful after home but will prepare me for school at any rate. In the morning I worked all the time at my Latin. I am getting on slowly but surely. Mr. Cory made me still more furious. Ooh how that man despises me. It oozes from him. It's queer, that whenever I get near him I'm completely tongue-tied and say and do idiotic things. He's always had that effect on me. Tomorrow I will not be tongue-tied. Why should a mere nothing like him have that effect on me? Mrs Keble came to lunch and I said nothing. Afterwards felt miserably and horribly in the way. I must be famous and just show all these contemptible [sic] people what I really can do. In the afternoon went for long walk with Uncle B and dropped in on Hadrills. Rather embarrassing really. No good about David. After tea Auntie T. and I went to "100 Men and a Girl" for 3rd time. Oh, to be like Deanna. Lucky little creature.

### **April 30th - Saturday**

In the morning got a letter from Jack. It was funny as I had dreamt about her last night. It was a very conciliatory one so I'm glad I didn't write in a snotty way. It's funny how much more domineering she is in actual life than in her letters. In the morning I worked as usual. Uncle Ernest and Mr Cory went to London and were away for lunch. I was just as silent as ever. Oh well I don't care. Let him think what he likes. He'll be proud to have known me one day. We heard yesterday Michael H. had got the Lothian History Essay Prize - pretty bright! The 1st time an undergrad. has got it too. After lunch Auntie T. and I went for a short walk. It was rather pleasant. When we came in we had tea. Afterwards had on gramophone records and played with Pat. I wonder if I really can draw - they seem to think so but, well, I don't know. After supper we listened to "In Town Tonight" and Music Hall. I have done no work today. It is just about getting on my nerves. I must pass.

### **May 1st - Sunday**

Woke up at usual early time but didn't get till 20 - 9. After breakfast spent quite a long time upstairs then went down to drawing-room. A bit embarrassing as I'm sure they were in the middle of a conversation and had to stop when I got in. I always feel that. It's horrid. Then we went to church and I sat between Mr Cory and Uncle Ernest. They both bellowed so I don't suppose they heard me chirping but they didn't miss much! At lunch I said nothing. Afterwards Pat, Auntie Twinkie, Gordon and I went for a walk. I wasn't tired until a little way off home when my shoes rubbed my toe like fury. When I got home my stocking and toe were covered with blood and very sore. We had tea in the nursery and afterwards I did a jigsaw puzzle and bathed Pat. She is a sweet little creature and gosh is she an attractive little thing - those eyes! After supper we (Uncle E. and I) did Geometry and he cleared up Ratio for me. If only I had another term I'd be sure of passing.

### **May 2nd - Monday**

Did nothing particular as far as I remember. In the morning I studied as usual. I got a note from Betty in which she was obviously afraid that she had hurt my feelings and was very submissive! I wrote back to her at once. Did not get my History. I'll never be able to finish it. Anyway I don't care. In the afternoon we went into Birmingham and dropped Auntie T. at the hospital. Then Uncle Ernest and I walked about 1/2 a mile to an art gallery. It was quite interesting walking around but we had to do it at speed and then go quite a long way back to have tea. There we met Mr Cory and someone called Rhoda (I think her name was Mitchell). Mr Cory is obviously fond of her (she is quite old) and she is not portentously amusing or anything. Afterwards we drove back. In the evening Auntie T's brother Eric. He is quite a nice specimen but not very like her. We did crosswords in the evening and later Uncle E. helped me with Maths.. There are lots of things I don't know. I must work like fury.

### **May 3rd - Tuesday**

This I think was a day very like the other days. I did the usual work in the morning, and thank goodness Mummy sent my History. In the morning I did an essay. It wouldn't have taken me nearly as long only I mucked about in between. I was reading some of Shelley's poems. They really are lovely, even the long ones - "Adonais" and "Prometheus Unbound". just one long flow of loveliness. Almost too much beauty - it makes ones head reel and wish for a bitter taste now and then (mixed metaphor, what!). I don't care for Keats so much though "Nightingale", "Autumn", etc. are very lovely. After lunch Uncle E., Auntie T. and I went for a walk. In the middle it blew and rained so we went into the Patriken(?). Afterwards I put on Uncle E.'s cap as I didn't want to lose all my wave. As a matter of fact I was glad it did rain as we went straight home. I sat in front of the fire and worked. Mr. Cory was in to tea but not to supper. I felt a bit sad at going.

### **May 4th - Wednesday**

In the morning put on my brown dress. Got a letter from Betty saying she was coming to "M. of Venice". I packed in the morning and we had lunch at 12. Set off at about quarter to one. Said goodbye to Pat, Mr.Cory, etc. It was lovely driving

down - a super day and simply super country too. But I tried to do some Latin and simply couldn't. "This England - - - ", it makes one feel quite sentimental going through such lovely, quiet, sweeping hills. We met Mummy and Richard at the Martyrs' Memorial after going over Keble and a few other colleges. They were all charming. We saw "Light of World" original. Michael Hadrill came to tea. He and Mummy got on very well together. I wonder if he likes me. I like him awfully. He's so completely un-snobbish. I hope I go to Bromsgrove when he's there sometime. Went to see Harveys after. They are fairly nice. Drove home and lost the way. Rather a nice house.

### **May 5th - Thursday**

In the morning got up in my brown dress and did some Latin. Had lunch at 12 and started at about quarter to 1. There was a bit of a muddle and we rang up Betty to tell her to go to theatre earlier. We arrived at the theatre at 2.30 so were late for the dentist. I was done first and it was horrid. Mummy went afterwards and Granny came in to say Richard and Betty had to wait to 4.30. We went to theatre afterwards after being held up, and then on to Adams for supper. They are very nice and Betty fell completely in love with Douglas. She stuck to him in the queue and in the theatre and we sat between him. He is really rather sweet. Betty is an awful flirt and I left her to it. The play was good, John Gielgud was good and Peggy Ashcroft sweet. After we went to Adams while Mummy took Richard to station. I was very tired. Douglas showed us card tricks.

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### **May 6th - Friday**

Got up early and it was horrid. We went down in the car and went up to form-room. It was quite fun seeing everyone again. Gumbo was away and so Peaseblossom officiated! Sambo was foul to us all day. She is a spiteful old thing and quite goes against her own Christian principles. She is always preaching about being critical and she herself does nothing but criticize. The lessons in the morning were pretty feeble. Betty and I went home for lunch and walked home with my bike afterwards. I am in "B" singing which I think is absolutely foul of Maggy(?) as I've got just as good a voice as most of "A". Anne Hicks(?) is in "A" if you please. We are doing "HMS Pinafore" too, and it could be lovely. Betty and I went to the shop for her bike and then biked home. In the evening I read Noel Coward's autobiography. I should love to know him. Oh to have that wit! I wish he was younger.

### **May 7th - Saturday**

Didn't get up till 9.30 and had breakfast at 10. In the morning we did nothing in particular but talked to Billy. He is always much more friendly when Betty is here. He is much improved and much older and more sensible and thoughtful than he used to be. After lunch we went for a walk but Billy went to play tennis in Guildford. Our walk wasn't very long, just over the hill. We came back in time for tea. After tea we went in to Dr. Bell's. He was looking rather sweet in a blue sweater and did both Betty and I (me for the last time). Afterwards I felt a little funny and throbby so he took us into Guildford in his car, which was rather sweet! The queue for "Madame

Walewska" was long and we waited for hours before getting seats then had to wait for them so felt a little peevisish. The film was wonderful - Greta beautiful and Charles Boyer just as good. He had just the right attractiveness and nastiness.

### **May 8th - Sunday**

Had a long laze in bed as usual. In the morning there was rather a muddle. I didn't want to play tennis at 1st but afterwards decided to and so was peevisish when I was told I had to take Robert. However we didn't have to and so took Snuff for a walk instead. It is absolutely ridiculous how I get hurt and cross over the slightest things. I'm the most sensitive person I know (rather good that!). If the person I marry is mean or hurts my feelings I shall die. It was a lovely walk, and then we went for a short bike ride. Afterwards I did my Latin. I have nearly finished "Vergil" and I think I know it. After lunch I sat and did some more work then wrote to Jill. It is super writing to her but I'm sure my letters aren't nearly as amusing as they used to be. I often wonder if I have a sense of humour. It doesn't display itself in public much. I told her about my religious problems. In the evening Betty, Billy and I went for a walk. It was a "beauteous evening, calm and free". Went to Sandhurst and got back at 11.30.

### **May 9th - Monday**

It was simply horrid getting up early. We biked down to school but no-one saw me. I don't think Gumbo was back. I don't think she believed my story about the English but still! In the morning the lessons were pretty boring, but I got a bit better in Maths. I also managed fairly well in English. I don't think Gumbo had a B2 (a bra' ?) on! We biked up for lunch and I was reading "Nothing is Safe". In the afternoon we had History and did the Indian Mutiny. I finished my Vergil, thank the Lord! After tea I had to put Robert to bed, had great difficulty over some Maths which we could not do at all! I hope my Maths coaching wasn't wasted. Betty and I talked about love etc.! I don't think I'm lying when I say I don't feel thrilled because I don't. I didn't feel the slightest thrilled with Douglas.

### **May 10th - Tuesday**

The usual horror of getting up. I lie in bed and wait for Mummy to come in and am always half asleep. In the morning we had a boring double Biology and afterwards Sambo was furious with Betty for talking. That woman is spiteful to the extreme. We were fuming about it all through break. Afterwards we had English during which I did rather well considering I had no book, and then Latin in which I maintained (?) a cold and what was meant to be dignified silence. I doubt if it had any effect but it was meant to typify my utter scorn of her and her petty, un-Christianlike attitude. We biked home for lunch. It is always rather a sweat up that beastly hill. In the afternoon we had ear-training with Mrs Brickman. It was quite hilarious as usual and the tears streamed down my cheeks. Afterwards Sambo wanted me and I was in fear and trembling but it was only about lunch. We had Elocution and are doing quite a decent modern poem. S---tty(?) was full of her usual racy anecdotes! In the evening I didn't do much work but talked and heard Cochrane on the wireless. I prayed in the evening and resolved not to criticize Sambo any more. I hope I'm not praying because

of School Cert. I suppose it's ghastly(?) that but He understands.

### **May 11th - Wednesday**

Had horrible lessons in the morning but it was a lovely day. Sambo was pretty foul in Latin but not so bad as she might have been. I think it is more Betty she is being spiteful against. Anyway i didn't say anything against her. In the afternoon we biked up in great haste and gobbled our lunch, but when coming out of the gate I crashed and made a hole in my stocking. I went on, pouring blood and got a handkerchief and stocking at school. We had a school photo which was pretty feeble. In the afternoon I had Maths coaching. I must pass in Maths.

### **May 12th - Thursday**

In the morning we got our chapel places. I am sitting in exactly the same place as before, and Steve is sitting opposite so I'm glad. I don't know that I'm exactly "gone" on her. I don't think so. I have been trying lately to analyse my feelings about people and being "gone" on them, and also about love. I know men attract me up to a certain extent but I never set out to try and attract them, and I don't feel at all the way Betty does about them. I am convinced that when I grow up I shall have a "grande passion" which will turn out to be a failure(?). I shall love someone who won't love me back. I shouldn't think anyone will ever love me. I wonder! I am occupying myself a lot with the thought of the future nowadays. Will there be a war which will be the end of civilization? No, there mustn't be. God wouldn't allow it. Will I become famous? No, it's only a typical example of youth's dreaming. I shall be bitterly disillusioned. After all, is being famous everything in life? Isn't it better to live one's life quietly to the best of one's ability? Fame has its penalties. What a lot of rot I do talk!

### **May 13th - Friday.**

This was a very ordinary day in which we worked and talked and quarrelled and criticized in the same old way. How futile it all is. I sometimes manage to get out of myself, to look at myself as if I were another person and then I see how petty are all the little grievances I worry about. For instance, this question of being in "B" singing. What does it matter if they think I've got a rotten voice? It won't hurt them and it doesn't really hurt me. The real only reason I want to be famous is to snub all the people who despise me - the staff at school - some of my relations and acquaintances. Maybe that'll be a compensation to me for my leg. In the afternoon Betty and Harlow(?) were sent out of singing. We went home quite early and after supper went to see "Emile Zola". It was super and Paul Muni was magnificent. He is about the finest screen actor.

### **May 14th - Saturday**

Got up fairly late and wore my green check cotton dress which is rather nice. Betty went in to Dr. Bell but I made beds and got on with my prep. Dr. B. wants me to have another injection. I thought I'd finished with that. In the afternoon we did nothing in particular but at 3.15 went to the tennis club to fetch Billy. It had been raining on and off and it soon started to pour, so we took him off. We got to London at about

quarter to 6 and found a queue, and were told we had to pay 2/- to stand all the way through. Betty hurt her ankle and so didn't want to but I persisted and the time passed quite quickly as there were two interesting girls behind. At least one was interesting and talked all the time while the other said nothing. In the end we sat on some stairs so were quite very well off. Paul Robeson was lovely. He sang a lot of the songs I love - "Water Boy", "Ol' Man River", Canoe Song" and a lot more. We waited for him afterwards but there were lots of people. I was standing just near his ---(?) but when he came out the crowd pushed me back so much that I got fright and escaped. However I saw him as he towered above everyone. Rather disgusting a lot of white women shrieking around a black man!

### **May 15th - Sunday.**

Rose about 9.30. In the morning I finished my essay and my other prep. I don't know if Gumbo will like that essay or not - she might but I doubt it. It is rather too slushy - cheap sentiment etc. I wrote a letter to Jack and I am fond of her but nothing compared to Jill. I must ask one of them down to stay at Cornwall. But I'd better not ask both. Jill isn't furious(?) about Betty. I tried to put it tactfully. In the afternoon we went for a scrambly sort of walk and then came back for tea. Afterwards tried to learn some History but gave it up as a bad job and went to sleep instead. Thank Heavens I've got this up to date.

### **May 16th - Monday.**

Felt that usual "Monday morning feeling". However, dragged myself and went off. We had Maths in the morning which i managed only fairly well. Sambo was horrible to Betty and Harlow for being sent out of Singing. Miggy probably exaggerated(sic) everything terribly. I didn't like the English lesson as I didn't know anything. Gumbo said squashingly " You know Iris, intelligence isn't going to get you through - you must have knowledge", etc. I know they don't think I work but they'd be surprised. At lunch time Mummy bandaged my leg as it looked yellow but the bandage came off. I had Maths coaching with Henry. She said we didn't have to do all the Maths paper and put a lot of new hope into me. Perhaps I shall pass after all. I like her awfully but am not gone on her. I had a reaction after my last craze of dislike but I've got over that now.

May 17th - Tuesday

In the morning I got a letter from Jean Williams! I'm glad she wrote as I had been wanting to write to her. That means I have four friends to write to! If only I had a boy to balance it. They have quite different sort of ideas. Heavens knows what happened for the rest of the day as I never finished this. I always get to bed too late and am too tired to write. I know this is utterly weak and feeble but I really can't help it. I feel I have managed qujite well so far. I wonder if I'll ever show this to anyone. It is is so juvenile and typically schoolgirlish. I wonder if I am "typical". I like to think I'm a bit different but I don't suppose I am really. I'm just a very ordinary schoolgirl with ordinary ambitions and ordinary crazes. Oh well I shall see whether I am. I am having rather a Noel Coward craze at the moment because of his autobiography etc.

**May 18th - Wednesday.** N.B. talk at night.

Eliza's verse;

Hitler is skittish  
And Musso's a flirt  
And Stalin's a gay dog too  
But the sun is on high  
And God's in the sky  
So, I don't mind? Do you?  
My hair will always look a sight  
Unless you're there, hemaphrodite  
Oh marry me and mend my socks  
My little squashed up chocolate box  
Please don a veil and orange blossom  
My fluffy half and half opossum  
And teach me not to suck my thumb  
My heart's delight, my sugar plum  
My whole career will be a flop  
Without you near me, lollipop  
So dearest darling cherri-bee  
Do come and cut my nails for me.

**May 19th - Thursday**

This was a thoroughly unpleasant day on the whole. Everything went wrong from beginning to end. We had to get up early because of French Converse. We got there on time - didn't know the bell had gone and then found it had. So, we had no time practically and Mdlle [sic] bleated to Gumbo. Result a hell of a row in which Betty was blamed and I was rude to Gumbo and she told me I was not my brother's keeper, and I said I didn't care. I thought it was unfair, and eventually we were let off with merely an apology. Sambo was foul, Gumbo was mean about my essay and Hardycanute gave us lines. I was utterly miserable, until fortunately I saw the funny side of it all. Thank God I've got a sense of humour. It makes me see how petty and futile are all the little things that seem so vastly important. I shall look and I shall smile pityingly. The one bright spark of the day was an A for History. I did not stay to Games.

**May 20th - Friday.**

Was an ordinary, very ordinary day. How meagre and uneventful is this drab day-to-day existence. No point, no hope, no thrills!

~~You know I'm always~~

And who could cook my tea and lunch

As well as you, my honey bunch  
Or for that matter, tie my tie  
Or warm my slippers, sweetie pie.

### **May 21st - Saturday**

Had to get up fairly early because of Dr. Bell. He was rather sweet and didn't hurt much. Thank Heavens it's the last. Afterwards Billy, Betty and I went round Guildford choosing Mummy a bag for her birthday. We found rather a nice little blue one. It was a simply heavenly day. After lunch I spent my time working and Betty didn't do anything. She is lazy. Betty, of course, sat next to Douglasy and then she has the face to say I am! After tea we went for a run on our bikes. It was simply glorious and we lay for quite a while watching a cricket match on Shalford Green. Perfect contentment if there ever was any. She was feeling sick because of Douglas. I was feeling quite alright. They arrived late but we gobbled supper and saw "It's Love I'm After". It was super. Betty, of course, sat next to Douglas!

### **May 22nd - Sunday**

Got up at 9.30 after a rather unpleasant night. I had horrible nightmares. Betty came down to breakfast first and afterwards we listened to Normandy and I did my Biology. It was a simply glorious day and we went for a walk. I wonder if Billy is the person Betty means. I'm keeping a close lookout and I think it's a bit suspicious. They tried to go out for a walk without me so I felt thoroughly hurt and miserable and put on the air of an injured martyr but it wore off in the spring sunshine. We walked to Blackheath and lay in the shade talking of many things - Life, etc. We think we know such a lot. There is tension on Czech frontier - oh God - there mustn't be war. In the afternoon went to sleep and read "To Let". In evening I made up poetry and tried to write words after Noel Coward standard. It looks so easy.

My heart's delight, my sugar plum  
My whole career will be a flop  
Without you near me, lollipop  
So dearest darling cherri-bee

### **May 23rd - Monday**

First the usual aversion to getting up early and going to school. Betty was full of her love affair (a dark and secret one which has been going for a year!) and she wouldn't tell me who it was. I began to suspect Billy as I'd read something in her rough notebook. Also I knew she'd tell me about anyone else. In the evening I got it out of her that she'd been passionately in love with him for a year! It made me feel quite extraordinary - absolutely different because I never imagined him in that sort of situation. She said he held her hand in the car. I wonder if he loves her. I think he likes her but I'm pretty sure it isn't love. Oh well, it's a funny situation. I couldn't get it out of my mind. It makes me see him in quite a different light. He isn't nearly as nice as she thinks. In the afternoon I went to Harry for Maths coaching. My infatuation for Steve has gone off I think, but I still like her awfully. I'm terribly fickle.

Thank goodness I haven't been in love. I think the nearest I've got is Michael H.

### **May 24th - Tuesday**

Had a horrible night when I was boiling hot and couldn't sleep at all. Gumbo was horrible about my précis and said it was very bad and I wouldn't get a Pass (not in front of the class though) and made me feel thoroughly miserable. We finished the Biology tests in the lesson. I doubt I will do well though. I hope I do well for my Disraeli essay. I think she'll say it's all "hot air". Sambo is getting quite amiable. I think it's mainly Betty she dislikes. In the afternoon we had the usual batty ear-training and rather a nice elocution in which we all argued madly about madness etc. and didn't get very far. This pen is much better since Billy altered it back. I hope examiners can read my writing. It's coming horribly near. In the evening Mummy had a bridge party when Mr. Turing(?) came. He is a dear old thing and I think he likes me. Anyway Mr. Hare does I'm sure. Nanny felt sick and was so I started bathing R. but luckily she got better. I came to bed early (and am in it now) and am just going to start some History.

### **May 25th - Wednesday**

This was an uneventful day. Gumbo was rather decent. She wanted me to give hints about "Midsummer Night's Dream" as I'd been to Stratford. I can't see myself offering any suggestion that would be accepted. In the afternoon I did quite a lot of work - learnt about Ireland - in the Domestic Science Room. It was pouring all day and foul biking to school. There was a simply super musical comedy in the evening with gorgeous songs: "I'm in Love with Nobody but You", "I'm a little bit fonder of you", "Tie a string around your finger dear". It was just the kind of thing I like best. Oh if only I could write songs too. I sometimes think I can but then I don't. I tried to write a song after Noel Coward. It wasn't bad but not good either. Shall I ever get to know Noel Coward or anyone? I very much doubt it but I might. Oh gosh if only I could. Perhaps I will. I shall be furious if Betty soars up and I remain unknown.

### **May 26th - Thursday**

It was a cold nasty day and freezing biking to school. We didn't have any Chapel. Betty, Harriet(?) and I were sent out of English for humming! Gumbo cleared up after. I was disappointed for only getting B+ for my Essay on Disraeli. But still, it was rather hot-airish. And I got a Commended for Biology. The rest of the morning was uninteresting. But at 12.30 we got away thank goodness (being Ascension Day). It was a foul day and so we couldn't go for a picnic. Instead we went to "Ebb Tide" (so did the rest of the school!). It was in technicolour and wonderful I thought. It was adapted from Stevenson's "Beachcombers". Oscar Homolka was the star and absolutely adorable. he had shaggy eyebrows and blue eyes and a sweet smile. The girl (Francis Farmer) was delightful, quite unsophisticated. Afterwards had tea at Tudor Café. Heard "Mercenary Mary" and got tunes.

### **May 27th - Friday**

The morning was uneventful. We had a Spelling Bee in the morning and I came out unscathed. Miggy made up with Betty, and so she and Harlow came to Singing. I get simply furious when nobody sings as they are such lovely songs and it could be so grand singing them together. Afterwards I went to the Library and wallowed in Alfred Noyes preparing myself for an Essay on my favourite living poet. He is utterly wonderful, although I expect it is only my girlish delight in his rich style. I don't think my essay was very good but I hope so as she was horrible about the last one I did. In the evening we went to see "Murder on the 2nd Floor" at Sandhurst. Betty and I had a furious quarrel before going but it cleared up after a bit and we both made up, so I looked quite nice. The play itself was very intriguing and the acting of a high standard. The hero was adorable and very like Michael Hadrill. Betty and I went to bed in high dudgeon with each other.

### **May 28th - Saturday**

It was a pouring wet day which is really quite satisfactory for the ruined farmers if it isn't too late. In the morning Betty went into Guildford for an injection and to have her hair done. She wanted me to go too but I didn't like the thought of dripping up and down the High Street. Also I wanted to finish my essay. I took the whole morning over it, and personally I think it rather good, though I know Gumbo's opinion will be different. She will make scathing comments about my lush journalese style, etc. Well, let her! I enjoy writing that sort of thing and I'm damned if I'm going to change my style to suit her! In the afternoon it was still pouring and in spite of it Bill and Mummy went to play tennis with the Van Lessens. Betty was furious as she wanted to go to the flicks with Billy. It really is extraordinary she should be so in love with him. I'm pretty sure he's not with her, though you never know what deep dark passion he is concealing in his heart. My writing gets worse and worse. I wonder if I'll ever show this to anyone.

### **May 29th - Sunday**

This started by being quite a promising day. Mummy suggested us taking Snuff on the Merrow Downs and then going for the 11 service. I was slightly peeved but ungraciously complied. It was stifling(?) on the walk and fine but later clouded over and prepared for a downpour. The service was rather nice. I like church. I like the "dim religious light" and the singing and the drone of the clergyman's voice and the hushed, soothing atmosphere, but it passes gently over me like a wave while my own thoughts go buzzing on inside me. I try sometimes to pray intensely but it fails. The sermon was moving for its personal appeal. The text was "I will come to you" and I felt somehow comforted. All this struggling after something, this spiritual unrest and unhappiness will get me nowhere. I must stay still and let Him find me and then I shall be content. I'm sure He has come but He seems to go away again and leave me lonely and miserable. In the evening I read plays. First "After All" by Van Druten which was very sweet and inspired me to write a sketch of my own. Mine was quite good in parts and I shall keep it because it has in it the germs of something better. Then I read the most divine play by A.A.Milne, called "Success". It was utterly marvellous and gave me a horrible lump in my throat. It showed a man who had

been hemmed in by success and then in a dream went back to the days of his youth when love was strong in him. He meets Sally, his lover and finds her still ready(?) and decides to run away. But Success in the form of C. of Exchequer wins and he gives her up.

### **May 30th - Monday**

I had a horrible pain all day and also violent diarrhea all day. I can't think why although it's time I got the curse later, but that doesn't make it follow. In the morning we sang a descant to the hymn, it went a bit weak in the middle! It was a horrible day with a gale blowing and great gusts of rain. In the afternoon we had quite a nice History and afterwards Betty and I went to Maths coaching. Spent quite a long time there but it didn't do much good. At teatime we stayed up in the Form-room and Hardy Canute came pottering in and told us we ought to go in to tea. We said we didn't want any, I said I'd had a pain all day (which was true!). Betty said she'd felt sick (which was not true). Result - H. Canute sent us home! I can't think what'll happen tomorrow. I somehow don't think Clark will take the story at its face value. However, that's as it may be. I've got no day-dream now.

[at end of book] Monday (smudge)

Foul pain all day. Got B+ for Literature. Gale blowing and raining. Had quite nice History. In afternoon went to Maths Coaching Hardy Canute and sending us home. curse.

### **May 31st - Tuesday**

I think I've got the date (Oh no I haven't I'm writing the wrong day!) Well this was a rather unpleasant day as we were both in bed all day. Betty was sick in the morning (or so she said!) and I still had a foul pain so we both stayed in bed. In the morning I read "A Source of Civilization". It is a wonderfully interesting book. Its main point is that specialization always leads to extinction and that awareness, sensitiveness, curiosity and receptivity are the only way to continue progress. He points out that all through the stages of fish to man, it is the animal which has kept aware, which has chosen unrest, dissatisfaction, discontent and refused to become specialised, that has carried on the species, while the other animals who have chosen safety, contentment and seeming fulfillment(sic) of their destiny that have faded out. He also thinks that evolution is due to a fundamental change in the cell, not in the conditions. Did nearly all my Caesar and some English. Had good wireless programme. Thought of M.M.H.!!!

When I see the golden sunshine gild the rose I am thinking of you

When I see the water lilies in repose I am thinking of you

When I see the lazy daisy bend their heads I am lonesome and blue.

### **Monday (smudge)**

Foul pain all day. Got B+ for Literature. Gale blowing and raining. Had quite nice History. In afternoon went to Maths Coaching Hardy Canute and sending us home. curse.

## June 1st - Wednesday

It is nice starting a new book, a clean "starting afresh" feeling. Well today was uneventful as we stayed in bed again. I don't think either of us need have done, because I at least was better, but I still had a pain, and besides Wednesday is a horrid day. I did some Latin and finished Caesar but found I didn't know it very well all the same. Otherwise I didn't do prep but read "R.I.P." rather a good detective story. But it made it rather pointless as Betty told me it, or who the murderer was before I started. In the afternoon I attempted to do some Geography but failed. Anyway it doesn't really matter if I don't pass. We listened to the Derby and a French horse, Beaucelle(?)\*

won after being right at the back. It was very thrilling but I wish Patsch(?) had won. We also heard Carol Gibbons and a few other good programmes, including "Milestones in Melody", showing all Cole Porter's work. I went on with Noel Coward's Autobiography. Gosh, that man is attractive and it's wonderful to think that he had to struggle up from being no-one, and to think that he knew what it is to be star-struck and want desperately to be famous. He must have an alluring personality as he made 100's of friends. I thought of writing to him, a really witty letter, 'cos he might answer. He sounds really modest and un-snobbish and charming. I'd love to marry him except he'd be far too old, witty and temperamental.

\*The horse was called "Bois Roussel".

Betty had diorea(sic) in the night and kept me awake. There was a terrific gale raging.

## June 2nd - Thursday

We got up at last and trotted back to school. It was a stormy day with a hell of a wind, and we had to fight our way down the hill. We had French conversation and went through Aural for School Cert. Afterwards we went back to the formroom and were greeted by the appropriate "Oh you're back"s and suspicious aversions. I got B+ for my Essay which was quite good. I wish I'd been there when she gave them back. In gymn-time Sambo gave me a little Latin coaching on scansion in her study. She was rather decent to me and I don't think she dislikes me as much as I thought she did. She said "Which is your worst subject" and I replied, with the suitable wan smile, that I "simply couldn't do Maths" at which she said "Is it problems you can't do" and when I said Yes it was Problems she said "I quite sympathise as I could never do the beastly things myself", and we both laughed, me a trifle nervously and edging for the door before she turned the conversation to Deeper Subjects. After a few more allusions to my carelessness at Maths etc. and similar carelessness at Latin she let me go. She's not a bad old stick really. We came home after lunch and stayed here. In the afternoon lay in bed and learnt History. Mrs Smallman came to tea and Granny changed her opinion about her commonness. We heard extracts from "People of our Class" which sounds rather good. I am developing a very self-conscious certainty that I am going to get somewhere someday.

## June 3rd - Friday

The morning was uneventful. I found Anne had got a Commended English. She always seems to do better than me nowadays, I wonder if she's cleverer. I don't think so. Anyway, I must do better than her in School.Cert. This pen always gets frightfully full when it hasn't been used for a bit - most annoying and an awful waste of ink. The

morning was uneventful except that I didn't get on very well at Latin Scansion. I must be terribly careful in the exam. Oh God, when it's all over! What perfect bliss. Betty went off after lunch but I stayed at home. I did a little revision but spent most of the afternoon and evening at my Scrap Books, cutting out, tidying round and sticking in. Mine is much tidier and cleaner than Betty's and I prefer it though it hasn't got all that about the Princesses. I sorted and read through John Gielgud. Oh, he is an angel! It seems unfair that anyone should have such a happy and successful life! He obviously isn't spoiled by it and I like him for his modesty, almost shyness. Mummy is writing a book! It does seem funny. She must be quite young and frivolous under it all. I wonder if I shall get to know my children better than I know my parents. It is a strange thing but I'm not particularly attached to Daddy. In fact sometimes I almost dislike him. I suppose it's that letter. It still gives me a horrible ache in my throat when I think of it. I suppose nobody in this world really cares for me. I'm completely unwanted.

### **June 4th - Saturday**

Lovely lying in bed for hours in the morning. In this(?) morning I played tennis with Mummy. It was hot and windy and I didn't play very well. I'm sure I could be good, and would be much better than Barbara is after all her practice. In the afternoon I did nothing particular but learnt a fair amount of History. It really rather overwhelms me, the amount I've got to do. And yet at other times I feel surprisingly light-hearted and I think frivolously that there is practically nothing to do. I think I shall get a Credit in everything, but what about Maths? In the evening I composed a letter to Noel Coward. It is quite good but I very much doubt if he will answer apart from the usual "Yours sincerely". However I shall persevere in my little autograph business. One of these days I might get a really good reply. I really am a sentimental schoolgirl of the lowest type, though I look on the others with a patronizing contempt (a phrase of my letter). I read a lot more of "Present Indicative" and so was in a delirious mood of wild adoration. Gosh, Gladys, -osh(?) and Jack are lucky. What inspires me most in the book is his complete sense of proportion, and modesty and obvious good sense that enables him to survey his work with detachment. I don't know what he's really like but he certainly gives the impression of being utterly adorable.

### **June 5th - Sunday**

This was an uneventful day. I got up at 7.30 and went to church early. It was horrible. In the beginning I arrived latish and had to march up the aisle. Then going up to Communion I got on the wrong side or something and waited all by myself on the side with the whole of the rest of the church on the other. I felt awful and the actual taking of the Communion didn't help. I don't know why but Communion never seems to help at all. I hate the wine and choke over it and I'm sure I get no spiritual blessing. If only I could regain my wonderful religious assurance. I mustn't lose faith utterly. It only needs some little thing to stir me up to fresh religious ardour. A sermon or a book would do it in an instant. I suppose I'm "indisputably a victim of my teens". Adolescence brings with it such pangs, so much that's got to be fathomed and experienced and understood that we are bound to be in a ghastly muddle. I suppose it's growing pains. Our self-confidence coupled with an almost pathetic faith in what life will bring to us is bound to lead to disillusion. Youth has always dreamt and hoped, but I long for the time when it's all over and when experience has taught

me not to care so much.

### **June 6th – Monday - nothing**

### **June 7th - Tuesday**

Got up fairly early and got into my green dress, which I don't like after all. It's baggy and makes me look extremely fat. However, I had to wear something. Afterwards I helped to get the things on the car and we started off at 11. We got up not long after 12 and then we put the seats down. Then we rushed off to Notting Hill, had lunch and I was shoved hastily in the tube. I had to change and was confronted with endless passages and without the vaguest idea which I wanted. However I got there at last and just in time. We had very good seats and the play itself, "French without Tears", was super. Rex Harrison was utterly adorable - just the type I'd like to marry. Amusing and fairly oozing charm. There were some other extremely attractive men and a sweet girl, Jacqueline. The whole thing was gay and irresponsible and full of humour and light-hearted charm. Afterwards we had tea at Criterion and went on to B's flat where we picked up her things and I played her "Noel Coward"s. When we got home we played them again. His rendering of "The Stately Homes" was grand and I could listen to him for ever. When I get my own gramophone I shall get him, Jack, Maurice Chevalier and Paul Robeson.

### **June 8th - Wednesday.**

Was as awful as usual getting up early. Betty's tyre valve burst and she crashed and rattled down. Latin was horrible - I couldn't remember anything she told me and she fumed and raged. I was cold and completely ignored her - afterwards she said some of us had been rather grumpy - referring obviously to me. After lunch we had Scripture in which we discussed violently and incoherently Christian Science, the future life, morals, etc. As a matter of fact I maintained an aloof and what was meant to be impressive silence. It just isn't worth while, as she never takes any notice and though I sometimes thirst(?) to contradict her when she makes her smug, dogmatic assertions. In the afternoon Betty and I sat in the Domestic Science room and discussed ourselves, other people and adolescence in general. We are both most terribly self-consciously critical. Yet this critical faculty in us makes us restless and uncertain, shows that we are at least intelligent and don't just accept things as they come. I wish in a way I was a typical little schoolgirl who could enjoy all the little jokes and jolly little pranks without seeing in a detached way how foolish it is. Whatever I do or say, I think I am always consciously analysing it. I can't realise how much of me is genuine and how much is my theatrical self-glorification. Even as I write I am aiming at effect.

### **June 9th - Thursday.**

Got up early and hooshed(?) off to school for French Conversation. It was quite pleasant. I like her really only she was so catty about that time when we were late. The Gym was so-so and afterwards we had Double Biology during which we talked and went through questions etc. It was better than usual. I think that Biology is my one sure subject, tho' I ought to get a Distinction in English. If I don't Gumbo would be horribly disappointed. I wonder if Anne is cleverer than me. I don't think she is.

Anyway this exam will prove it. I've come to the conclusion there isn't so terribly much to learn. If I keep my head and read the questions properly I should be alright. We came home for lunch and afterwards I had to go back for a Spelling B practice. I think I'm pretty sure tho' we're all quite and absolutely hopeless. Betty and I spent the afternoon in the Domestic Science room, but did a little work for a change - Midsummer Night's Dream. It seems ages back to those times when prep was just prep and my mind was blissfully free of all particular necessity to work. I wonder whether I shall like this place in London. If I don't I shall ask to be taken away and go to a smaller place, or abroad. They may be awful made-up snobs.

### **June 10th - Friday**

I heard in the morning that Miss Booth is engaged. I suppose that'll mean she won't teach any more. I think he's in India so I might meet her. She is the most divinely attractive person I have ever met. If she'd only stayed on I'd have remained faithful to her for ever. We had the Spelling Bee and it was quite fun. I came out quite unscathed and so felt very pleased with myself, considering practically nobody else did. Our house won in the end by one mark. Singing in the afternoon was utterly foul. Miggy(?) started off by saying how bored I looked so, considering I was the only person singing, I stopped and refused to do any more for the whole lesson. I don't mind being scolded for something I've done but the unfairness at school just gets me down. Then Miggy will go and tell Sambo, and so on, so that we'll never hear the last of it. Oh, wait till I'm rich, wait wait wait you horrible old narrow-minded bundles of prejudice. I shall write the most scathing things about school and them and the system in general. I wish I could say some of the things I've wanted to say for years. In the evening Betty and I wrote some of the most sappy letters imaginable to Eileen Ascroft about meals. We might however get a prize, tho' it made me feel sick to write such rubbish.

### **June 11th - Saturday**

We forgot about Betty's appointment and had a great rush to get her in. I went in to have my hair washed and she met me there. Afterwards we went into Woolworths and then home. In the afternoon we did a little History, and then, after an early tea, went to the flicks. We saw Errol Flynn in "The Perfect Specimen" and Hughie Greene in "Melody and Romance". I enjoyed them both very much. Errol Flynn has a sweet smile and Hughie Greene was adorable. There was also the most charming girl with him - Jane Carr(?) rather like Ruth Chatterton. Also Margaret Lockwood who is always sweet. Granny paid for us and I think she quite enjoyed it. Gosh Hughie G. is a clever young thing, he can impersonate, sing, act, play the piano and conduct with the most devastating charm and almost frightening maturity. I wish I could on to his Gang but of course I couldn't and anyway all the rest of them are horrors. Ghastly squawking and made-up girls who think they can sing and made me feel an intense desire to retire and be sick. There were some wonderfully vivid Crystal Palace Fire Scenes. Mummy was home when we got back.

### **June 12th - Sunday**

Had lovely dreams about Hughie Greene so woke up very attached to him. However the infatuation wore off during the day. In the morning I merely sat and tried to

work. It was very cold and I sat and got more and more frozen. In the afternoon we went to bed with bottles and I did some more History. I think I know from 1789 onwards with the exception of a few things. Gosh to think it's in 3 days and yet I'm most fearfully calm about it. Oh of course I'll pass. If Beatie Osborne can well I'm damned if I can't. After tea we went for a very brief bike ride up to Blackheath (or rather on the way there). When we came back I tried to learn some more but didn't succeed very well. I'm longing to hear the result of our drivelish letters to Eileen Ascroft. I shall be furious if Betty has hers published and I don't. If I get this published I shall undoubtedly write more things - articles etc. Gosh if I could get somewhere while I was just a kid that would be something to boast of. I don't want Betty to become famous and me to be left nowhere. Or Jill for that matter. I think Richard and I might write something together. Herbert and Eleanor Farjeon or the Sitwells or something. Lovely idea!

### **June 13th - Monday**

This started one of the strangest, most horrible, exciting weeks I have ever known. I haven't written my diary for years and so I can look back on it with a dispassionate gaze. It all seems unreal - another part of me and my life. The first few days before the actual Exams started were tinged with same(?) unreality. I could not realise that it was there - that it was so significant and vital. I was terribly, ominously calm today. The whole atmosphere at school is somehow different - expectant and queer. The rest of the school have sunk into the background, and there is only one object and purpose in life. School Cert. is just like a dark shadow stretching across these still sunny days. It is hot and bright and lessons seem all meaningless, as unreal as the rest of the whole existence. When thinking of it I shall always remember the crunch of gravel under the feet and the long hours of revision. When we get home in the evening, lying on my tummy in the grass with my legs in the sun and my eyes itching.

### **June 14th - Tuesday**

Another day just like yesterday with lessons dragging by and still the ominous calm. Not even the thought of the horrors of it could wake an inward palpitation or make my heart miss a beat. The only time I can revise is at home in bed and then my eyes are dropping out with sleep. None of us ever revise in lesson time. We just talk and lament our fate. It is very stupid of us as our fate wouldn't be nearly as bad if we worked a bit more. Oh gosh, suppose I fail! Suppose they can't read my writing or I do the wrong question. Oh God, help me not to do anything like that. I am clever (or supposed to be) so I ought to manage. I don't think its worth going on with this. I did History and English revision.

### **June 15th - Wednesday** Talk with Anne. Late revision.

I was still feeling quite calm in spite of School Cert being so horribly near. I think my feelings are submerged and ready to burst. There was a terribly tense atmosphere in the air and it was extraordinary to think that everyone else was going on in the same old round. I was feeling elated and yet vaguely unhappy. In the afternoon I went to the Library to do some work but didn't do any which was very silly. Instead I talked to Anne. She is a nice kid and the more I talk to her the more I like her. Her parents must be very poor and yet I envy her like Hell. She's got everything that makes life

worth living. Brains, attraction and an ideal home life. She and her mother talk over sex together, she and her father are great pals, and she and Peter are obviously on much more familiar terms than I am with Billy. I suppose it can't be helped. I stayed up till after 10.30 working and it was horrible. I tried to learn up all of M.Ni.D.(?) and succeeded fairly well. I felt horrible and fagged out and utterly sick at the thought of day after day of failure.

**June 16th – Thursday** HORRIBLE OF MOST HORRIBLE DAYS. ENGLISH

This day will always remain as one of terrific emotional excitement - a mixture of utter nausea and a queer elated jumbly feeling. I woke up early and started revising. It's so difficult to know how much you really remember. When I got to school I was in complete panic and every nerve in my body was on edge. I felt frighteningly sick and had frequent attacks of diorea (sic). We all sat in the sun around Gumbo and she gave us a few last minute words of advice. I've never felt so utterly, self-consciously, miserable in whole life. I felt llike bursting into tears or screaming or something. All my suppressed uneasiness came to the top with a rush. Everyone else was pale and chattering too. Once I got into the hall I felt much steadier. The atmosphere was quiet and dim and somehow soothing. Then when the Essays were given out I felt something of my old panic returning as I couldn't think which essay to do. Once I had chosen it and started it I could remember nothing more. It was like a dream. The feeling on coming out is extraordinary. Dazed and strung up and yet dead tired. The Literature paper was much nicer

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**June 17th – Friday** ALGEBRA AND HISTORY

In spite of the fact that the first plunge was made I still felt funny. Algebra is so important. However, the Algebra paper was much better than I expected, and I think I might get 50 for it. Oh I hope so. The History was glorious and I think I did it well. I wrote reams and tried to keep strictly to facts; oh dear Steve, I don't want to disappoint you. And I do want to do better than Anne and Betty. I think I shall. This School Cert. is just about getting me down. I shall be a complete shadow when it's over. I work and worry and work again and I don't feel hungry or anything. I do 6 hours work a day plus about 5 hours solid revision. Just slog, slog, slog. My mind is in such a daze I can hardly write. The hot lawns and the last frantic revision, the crunch of gravel and the groups of agitated people. Running to the Alps(?) and the cool dimness of the hall. The feel of the books under my pen and Sambo ambling slowly down the room. The first sickening glance and then the 3 hours when I become a machine conscious only of an aching head and a racing brain.

**June 18th - Saturday**

Betty had to get up early and go to Dr. Bell's, but I didn't get up till later. I read Lytton Strachey's "Victoria". It is a simply grand book. Oh! I wish I'd been born a queen or something. It would have been marvellous to have worked and spoken to people like Melbourne. And this diary would have been printed as an example of the growing tendrils of my mind or something! I'm sure I would have been just as clever a sovereign as Victoria! Billy arrived in the morning and also Mummy, back from

London. She had been to "Bluebeard's Eighth Wife" and had to go out in the middle, it was so boring. In the afternoon they went to play tennis at the Club, but Betty and I stayed in. We thought of going to the pool, but didn't in the end as the weather wasn't good. I didn't do any work and didn't go out at all. I shan't know a word of Geometry, or Geography. The latter doesn't matter so much, but the other! Oh I pray I've got a credit in Algebra. Please God, let me get Matric. I think Anne did better in the Algebra than I did: oh I hope she doesn't get Matric, and I fail. I might get it. My History and English were good.

### **June 19th - Sunday**

In the morning I did a fairly steady session of Geography. I don't feel I shall ever know it. Thank goodness it isn't compulsory. In the afternoon I did Geometry and we went to the pool. We met Mam'selle but no one else. It was rather nice I do hate bathing in front of 100s of people.

### **June 20th - Monday**

We started off with the French. The dictée was rather a beast but the rest of the paper was quite nice. I brought in simply 100s of idioms which I hope they appreciate. I went in to Geometry feeling quite hopeful. After all I had done better than in Algebra before. However my hopes were completely dashed. It was a simply foul paper and moreover I could do practically none of it. The riders were completely insoluble, and the only 4 theorems were perfect beasts. I think examiners who set such papers ought to be hung, drawn and quartered. I came out feeling thoroughly depressed. It seems so unfair that the whole exam should depend on that one failure. People like Pam Bates will get Matric. while I fail. Even Anne is sure to pass. Oh its mean mean MEAN. The whole system is wrong and cruel and its a disgrace that it should be carried on. I had to revise very late at night for the Geography and felt thoroughly done up and miserable.

### **June 21st - Tuesday**

Woke up early but was so tired I fell asleep again. However, I managed to get in a little Geography. I got a letter from Uncle Ernest and 5/- (?). He is sweet. He's asked me down to Trevone. I'm so glad. I hope Mr. Cory isn't there. I wish Michael would come! The Arithmetic paper was rather nice except I did several stupid things, However, I got the method right and I think will get a Credit. The Geography was foul. I might get a Credit but I doubt it. Thank Heavens it doesn't matter. It was a lovely feeling not having work to do. After tea I cut out and stuck in pictures. There were a lot of the princesses. Then I sat down and wrote to Uncle E. sending him my papers. I hope he writes back encouragingly. I wish Jill would write. I do think she might. There was a nice thing on in the evening but the batteries were all gone. Mummy went to Wimbledon - lucky thing.

### **June 22nd - Wednesday**

It was gorgeous sleeping on late. We had breakfast at about 9.30 and spent the morning in revision. I did practically a whole book in the morning and only finished it in the afternoon. Otherwise I read through my Princess book, and mucked about

generally. It is a funny thing, but I can't work unless I have to. I can waste a whole day doing practically nothing, then learn it all up that night. Its very stupid of me as if I did it in the day I shouldn't have to stay up late. This was a completely uneventful day. I do hope Gumbo asks me to write as I do like her awfully. I wish Steve would but she obviously won't.

### **June 23rd - Thursday. RED HOUSE**

6th Form Margaret Kennedy - Maggie  
 Joan Higham - Pussy  
 Beatrice Osborne - Beaty  
 Pat Coggan , Molly Lynn

Va Pat Walker, Joy Bairnsfather  
 Sheena Macdonald, Barbara Turbett, Myself  
 Barbara Jacobs (Toddler), Daphne Cannon

#### The Rest

Juliet Fox-Andrews, Sally Norton(?), Joan Ellis,  
 Connie Nash, Cynthia Washington (Snippet),  
 Margaret Chalklen(?), Phyllis Champion, Anne Parry,  
 Bunty Mitchell, June Davey, Anne Cameron,  
 Olivia Newell, Pat Benning, Peggy Davis.

### **June 24th - Friday**

I am writing down the names of the form in case I forget them.

#### FRONT

Christine Wetenhall	Muriel Gane	Sheena Macdonald	B.Turbett	Empty
Betty Wight	Myself	Betty Harlow	J.Hoare	Joan Hunt
Barbara Jacobs	Daphne Cannon	Joan Baconsfather (?)	Rosemary Jewell	S.Caster
Isobel Paterson	Morag Scott	Elizabeth Stevens	Anne Everitt	Empty
Empty	Anne Hicks	Pat Walker	Pam Bates	Empty

#### STAFF

6th Form - Sambo - Miss Symes  
 V a - Gumbo - Miss Groom(?)  
 V b - Hardycanute - Miss Hardy  
 V b ii Steve - Miss Stevenson  
 IV a - Harry - Miss Harrison  
 IV b - Ponto - Miss Clark Plint(?)  
 IIIrd, IInd and Ist Misses Gumbley and Haurp (??)  
 Games Miss Clark and Miss Bilney  
 Music Miss Turley (Turkey). Miss Garner (M----?)  
 Miss Tutin (Tutes) Miss Seer (?)

## **June 25th - Saturday**

### **Books read while writing this diary**

R.I.P. - Philip Macdonald  
\*Present Indicative - N. Coward  
Queen Victoria - Lytton Strachey  
Reason and Emotion - Macmanay(?)  
Outline(?) for B's and G's and Parents  
\*Freedom in the modern World. Mac:ll,  
Dangerous Corner - Priestley  
\*All Quiet on the Western Front  
As Michael Dare (??) - F.C. Mackenzie  
\*The Summing Up - Maugham  
The South Wind of Love - Mackenzie  
\*Shadows Around the Lake  
Theatre - Somerset Maugham  
\*Busman's Honeymoon - Sayers  
Self - Beverley Nicholls  
\*Nya - Stephen Haggard  
The Young Desire It - S. Mackenzie  
The Way to the Present - Van Druten  
\*Gone with the Wind - M.Mitchell  
Heaven and Earth - Middleton Murray(?)  
Experiment in Time - J.W.Dunne  
Juan in America - Linklater  
South Riding - W.Holtby  
The Nutmeg Tree - Margery Sharp.

## **June 26th - Sunday**

Got up fairly early and did some Latin Grammar. Then at 11 I went and got ready for the picnics. I started at about 11.15, but when I got there everything was quiet and nobody was about. I saw Connie Nash and she said they had gone. I got a terrific shock and didn't know what to do. I waited for the bus for an hour, but I was quite cheerful as I somehow felt I would catch them up. Then I got on my bike and rode home. Mummy didn't arrive until 1.15 and then she took me in the car to Winterfold but we couldn't see them so had to come back. I felt thoroughly miserable as I'd been looking forward to it but I soon cheered up. I lay all afternoon on the lawn snoozing and doing Latin in a vague sort of way and was very interested to watch the ants in the grass. It is fascinating to think that they have a little world of their own. I remember when I could almost shrink to that little world and the grass would appear as trees and woods. I wish I could get back to that queer half-unreal atmosphere of my youth. I suppose I never will. "That age is best which is the first".

## **June 27th - Monday**

Woke up early and learnt. The Latin in the morning was quite nice, especially the translation and I ought to have done well. In the afternoon it was also good, but rather long. Anyway I knew all the Caesar and Virgil and contexts. It was a great relief to find it over but I felt somewhat cross due to overwork I suppose. I went home at four and wrote a [piece of blank verse which I hope Gumbo likes. Then I read "All Quiet on the Western Front". It is a wonderful book, gripping on account of its baldness - pure unexaggerated(sic), unemotionalised fact. It is terribly lurid, almost to the point of being disgusting, but it serves to show the utter beastliness of war. It had an extraordinary effect on me as all war books do. And to think we are preparing for another war. Oh men are mad.

## **June 28th - Tuesday**

Lovely feeling not having to work. (I'm writing with Betty's, or rather my old, pen - horrible nib!) I slept peacefully on. We got polite replies from Eileen A. saying she was sorry she could not print our letters. She wrote to me as "Mr"!! I don't know what she thought we were doing in the same house. I don't think she could have read my letter as the whole point of it was lost if I became a male. In the morning we had jolly interesting lessons, In Biology we are doing Evolution and are starting with how cells work and how characteristics are passed on. It is not a question of luck what characteristics you get, as it works by proportion. I wish I could get hold of more knowledge on the subject. I've never been told anything really, and I ought to know. Afterwards I went to the Library and looked it up in a book. In English we are doing "Caesar and Cleopatra" by Shaw. It is awfully nice, and I read quite a lot and quite well. For Latin we are doing "Ovid" which isn't particularly inspiring. However, it is quite easy. Damn this pen!

## **June 29th - Wednesday**

We started off with Double Latin, and, I hope, increased our good reputation. Sambo's hair was falling which caused us many suppressed giggles. Definitely schoolgirlish but anything to relieve the utter boredom. Ovid is quite cosy. Then we did Trigonometry with Pease. and I thought it exceedingly dull. Betty went afterwards and asked to give up Maths so I asked Mummy to write a note, which she did, and when in the Library Sambo called me ferociously outside and said fiercely "Have I given you permission to miss Maths" I jumped 5ft high, but then realised we didn't have it. After that she was quite charming but didn't(?) do more than agree to ask Peaseblossom. I hope she agrees and paints lurid pictures of my feeble mentality. Then I shall do Hygeine(?). Ponto gave us a rather boring lesson on maps which no one listened to and at the end she was rather pathetic and said she hoped we'd enjoy it etc: I felt an utter beast but I don't quite know what I did except draw. Next time I shall be specially nice as she must have felt hurt read "Reason and Emotion" a simply grand book - but I wish I could keep it. It says' as soon as we realise we might be wrong in religion then we will be in sight of true religion and not until.

## **June 30th - Thursday**

Had French conversation with M'd'lle and she said I read very well. She said Nicco didn't approve of me learning and reading the same thing but I can't change now, nor do I intend to. Gumbo was rather a skunk and said I was ill-treating her books etc. but she cheered up in the end. That's the best part about Gumbo. She may be perfectly horrible one moment but she will always make up by being particularly nice afterwards. She is a very moody person due, I suppose to her being so clever. I wonder she doesn't get higher as she is fairly bursting with brains and teaches well. But still I'm glad she hasn't left in my time, as I'm very fond of the old stick. I'd like to write to her when I leave but I shouldn't have the face to unless she asks me to. History was lovely without any notes - suffragettes etc: Biology was rather fun but Betty was bored so I worked with Rosemary. She got crosser and crosser but after a bust up at lunch the air cleared. Steve gave us a lovely prep on Suffragettes. I hope I

did it well. Mummy got "Outline(?) for Boys and Girls". It is lovely and when I have enough money I shall buy it. I have a great thirsting after knowledge.

### **July 1st - Friday**

It is a lovely feeling going back to school nowadays. The lessons just flow by in a pleasant and aimless circle. Nothing to worry about or think about particularly. The preps too are nice. I got B+ for that Blank Verse which was quite good - I hope Anne hasn't done a marvellous one. I bet she has. My poetry for Gumbo never seems very good. I wonder if I can write poetry. I don't think I really can, and yet when I was small I know I was exceedingly good at it. I wish I had kept it up. Ponto read to us in Geography from "Perfumes from Provence". It is rather a fascinating book and has the definite flavour of perfumes. It is soothing and sweet and very restful. We read "Caesar and Cleopatra" but I didn't take a very important part. I love reading Caesar. Bernard Shaw has a certain note of tenderness in his work in spite of what some critics say. There is warmth of feeling and a quaint sympathetic understanding of weaker minds. In the afternoon we had singing in which Juliet was sent out and Miggy gave us a long lecture - obviously pointed at me. Whenever I look at her I think of her passionate love affair. No wonder she has become bitter and unjust.

### **July 2nd - Saturday**

Woke up fairly early and learnt a French Vocabulary or two. I was feeling very calm all the time which was lucky. Betty and I went in second which was a fluke as we ought to have gone in about last. She was a dear old thing with a red face and false teeth which kept on nearly slipping out. She asked me a few questions to which I feebly replied "Oui" and got into a hopeless muddle over Robert's age. However she got going (in English!) about French books and was quite a dear. She also knew one of the Sedburgh masters and Miss Spalding. She said Princess Elizabeth was going there at one time. I wish she would again. I should love it. I made rather a hash of it as a whole but she said something about "reussit" (?) so I hope she meant I'd past(sic)! I don't suppose so! In the morning I looked over my speech and finished it. I do hope it's thought good. I find the whole thing ("History of Ideas") very interesting and I hope they do too. I feel I can talk. In the afternoon we went to see "Damsel in Distress". Fred Astaire was adorable as usual, tho' the film not up to his usual standard. He did a super drum dance.

### **July 3rd - Sunday**

A hectic day with hundreds of people dashing round the place. It started by being pretty dismal (the weather I mean). We tidied up generally and Betty went off for Kay(?). Then we just messed around until they arrived. Douglas put everything out by missing the train, but after a general scrimmage at 1st it all went smoothly. The Youngs arrived after lunch. She is quite nice and he's alright, but they were neither of them very interesting or inspiring. Mrs Wight(?) looked very nice but her figure in shorts is not too good. She has the most lovely light blue eyes. In the afternoon we just sat and watched and it kept fine most of the time. Tea was very good tho' rather confused. Afterwards I went up to June's room and played all her records. She is a lucky little devil. She has a wireless and 2 gramophones in her room. I played lots of Maurice Chevalier records a few of Noel Coward and Paul Robeson. I must go over

again and play the rest. I wonder what it would be like to be June. The apple of your parents eye, lots of clothes and friends and parties and everything you wanted. She is very grown up and yet her writing and, I should imagine, general outlook is decidedly juvenile.

### **July 4th - Monday**

This is undoubtedly the nicest day of the week now that Maths has gone. Just History, English and Hygeine. We finished "Caesar and Cleopatra": I am sorry as I had got very devoted to Caesar. I think he is simply adorable and very human. Cleopatra was rather a little horror but Caesar was too sweet with her. Gentle and kind and very understanding. I wish I'd read it before as it would add a thrill to my "Caesar". I went and looked up G.B.S. and then we had Hygeine. It was awfully nice and I poured out a few of my grievances about youth being repressed etc: She was awfully sweet. I hope she tells Sambo about it. I think she's one of the few staff who really takes any interest in us personally. Gumbo doesn't I don't think.\* She thinks of us except as machines meant for working. I'm terrifically muddled about everything - my own feelings in particular. I don't know how much I feel or how much is put on to deceive even myself. I wonder if, stripped of my self-glorification I should have anything left. I seem to be just a mass of moods and even as I write I am doing it for the sake of effect. But I think my new desire for knowledge is really sincere. It is insistent and the more I learn the more I want to.

### **July 5th - Tuesday**

A somewhat strenuous day on the whole. We decided not to tell Sambo or ask her permission. I only hope nothing comes of it. In the morning we had both English and Biology speeches. I didn't have to make my Biology speech, but most people just read them from pieces of paper. Betty made quite a good one on the whole. Gumbo was very sarcastic about our coyness and said we were silly little schoolgirls etc. I made rather a hash of the bit I had to do, but she said in rather an ominous voice "If you have to speak in the Oratory Cup". Oh, it's a horrible thought, and yet I think it's quite likely. I must do well if I do, because I know perfectly well I can if I want to. The speech I wrote for Booth on Charles 1st was quite good. After lunch I wrote a poem and then got ready. After having poshed ourselves up we sallied forth and who should we meet but Wethy. I bet she tells Sambo. The bus journey up was pretty boring, but we arrived quite early and met uncle E. Mummy didn't arrive till later and I had to talk to him all through dinner. However I got on quite well. In the theatre I sat next Alan and neither of us said much. "Operette" was lovely. "Lord Elderly was divine and the "Stately Homes of England" simply grand. It was beautifully produced and v. pathetic.

### **July 6th - Wednesday**

I had the most extraordinarily vivid dream last night that I was deeply, wildly, in love. I don't know who with or why, but the sensation was simply extraordinary - perfectly lovely and yet somehow painful. I suppose it was because of the love scenes in "Operette". I think I really know the feeling of passion now - just the feeling, nothing else. I couldn't explain it, but it was very wonderful. It was a terrific effort getting up this morning. Sambo beamed away and didn't make any reference to our absence so

by some miracle Wethy must have forgotten. In the throes of love I suppose! The morning was thoroughly boring as it always is. In the afternoon I went to the library and read poetry. Some of it was lovely and inspired me to try my hand at some. It was pretty rubbishy stuff - meant to be modern and very passionate. I don't think that modern stuff is really my style. I finished her poem for Gumbo. I wonder what Steve thought of my History. I wish I could get a Commended. It was quite well written but somewhat off the point and certainly not humourous. However it had some pretty purple passages she might enjoy.

### **July 7th - Thursday**

Didn't go to French Conversation and so were told by Gumbo to make our peace which we did. In Biology I made my speech, It was quite fluent and I hope they appreciated it. I think they did. I didn't feel very nervous. I was very pleased to get a "Commended" for History and she wrote "excellent" beside it so it must be pretty good. I'm glad she liked all the wild heroic stuff. It shows her I can write it anyway. She gave us for prep a diagram of the causes of the Great War. In the evening I drew mine. At the top was the fire of the War with the Kaiser silhouetted against it, on the bridge of hatred and suspicion joining the two flags. The rest was a railway with the various landmarks and chief events etc! I think it was quite good. I do hope so anyway because I'd like her to think I was good at drawing. That poem I wrote was obviously not appreciated by Gumbo, but Anne got a Commended. She seems to get more than I do and yet I don't think she's really better. I was rather cross before lunch but it cleared up afterwards. Betty stayed at home but I went back and did my Geography.

### **July 8th - Friday**

Was agreeably surprised to find that my Biology speech had been Commended - Betty's, Anne's, Harlowe's etc. had been too. We had our English books given back and Gumbo was very nice about mine really, in spite of all the remarks she made about it. Then we had the debate which was, on the whole, rather feeble. I was furious because when I said something she said it was off the point. However she obviously repented afterwards because she put it among the few points she mentioned. She is a queer fish Gumbo - she always does that. I think she says things without meaning them, and then feels sorry afterwards. It was a horrible day and so Betty did not come back after lunch. However I did. I wanted to finish my History. I outlined it in black ink, put some dates etc. in red ink and it looked quite nice. I hope she likes it. I might by some vague fluke get a Commended but I very much doubt it. In the evening I stayed up late finishing "Reason and Emotion". I could not understand much of it but what I did grasp profoundly impressed me. It is a book I would like to keep and pore over.

### **July 9th - Saturday**

Another unpleasant day as per usual. This weather is too depressing - cold and wet and windy. As a result we sat huddled up over the fire all day. Unhealthy but definitely preferable to doing anything else. It was a restless sort of day for me as I didn't feel able to settle down to anything. I read about Science from my book. I'm going to buy that book because I can't possibly take all that in at one go. The more I

read the less I seem to know which is an unsatisfactory sort of feeling. I want to know about everything and not be just one-sided and classical. Science is really frightfully interesting and exciting and I'm sure I could grasp it if I tried hard. It seems to me that one cannot live one's life to the full if one doesn't try to see it from every point of view. I want to be able to appreciate and understand everything, Science in all its forms and Art and all its forms. I want to have a solid background of facts to work on and, if possible add to, and I want to have the sensitiveness to be able to appreciate true Art when I see it and if possible to Create for myself. In the evening we rang up Daddy. It was terribly queer hearing his voice again. I'm going to try to be especially nice, in spite of everything, and make up for my former treatment.

### **July 10th - Sunday**

In the morning we went for a fairly long walk over Blackheath. It was driselling(sic) but pleasant. In the afternoon I read "Freedom in the Modern World" by Macmurray. I ought really to have read it first as it is much simpler than "Reason and Emotion", and really very charming. The first part is called "The Modern Dilemma" and is suitable to our present day state of affairs, tho' it was written some years ago. It points out the reason for the Dilemma is the fact that we have lost our faith, thereby then(?) losing our capacity for choice and our whole grip on life. Our faith is really our principle of valuation - our ability to discover what we really want, and without this we are tossed on a tide without knowing why. He says that though we think we want various things our heart is not in them. We do not want them urgently - we would not fight for them and sacrifice for them. We do not want war or peace, freedom or liberty. We are paralysed. I think that is what is at the root of everything. We have nothing to pin our faith to and religion as we know it has failed and Science seems the only alternative. But life cannot be all scientific for Science itself is based on Emotion. I want to do something about it.

### **July 11th - Monday**

I read "Dangerous Corner" until late last night. It is a most fascinating book and completely gripped me. The personality of Martin seemed to pervade everything. At first I was rather in love with him and fell under the spell of his fatal fascination. But at the end I was rather frightened of him. I wonder if there are such people in real life. If so I would like to meet one of them. It was queer altogether and must have been marvellous as a play. To-day(?) is always nice. Our form report was positively stunning - everybody seemed to think we are angels, tho' personally I am not working in the slightest hard. Gumbo gave me a Commended and I think Ponto might have done, and might get one for the history tho' its unlikely. We are reading "Aeschylus". It is fascinating and the language exquisite(?). But it is awfully difficult to read as I don't understand much. We had to play games which was foul. We found a hedgehog to divert us but otherwise it was all unpleasant.

### **July 12th - Tuesday.**

I had an awful war dream. The terror of it stayed on for a long time. The thought of bombs flying in real life is too terrible. If it does happen that I'm mixed up in anything like that, I think I will rise to the occasion. I think I must even if its only conscious glorification that does it. Oh but I pray it won't. I don't think God would

plunge us into another war. And human nature isn't so dense and unreasonable. Gumbo told me she wanted both my poems for the magazine which is quite satisfying, though personally I think they are all rotten. I wrote them in two minutes. We read "Aeschylus" again. It is gorgeously tragic. I just love the flow of the words. They cast a kind of spell over me. Gilbert Murray is a marvel. In the afternoon I finished my English. "Shakespeare at St. Catherines". I think it is good but she may think it rather long and tedious. Anyway it took me more time and trouble than the other things she Commends. Wethy gave us a foul Biology all about plants. Why can't she go on with heredity. Its so much more use. She's a perverse old cow.

### **July 13th - Wednesday**

An uneventful day - surprisingly fine. I only hope this weather lasts. It was the usual obnoxious, sort of day Wednesday always is. Betty didn't come back in the afternoon but I did as I wanted to do my Latin. However the school was quite deserted and I wished I hadn't. In the evening I had no work to do so I read and mucked about generally. In the late evening I read some of "Play Parade" again. I think "Private Lives" really is my very favourite. It is utterly adorable and the love scenes set my blood racing like anything. If only somebody would make love to me like that. But they won't. I don't suppose anybody will ever make love to me. Oh to be beautiful, or rather attractive and have everybody falling for you. And yet - well is beauty everything? Not really. Perhaps in some way it will be made up to me for everything I've had to suffer. Perhaps I won't be so plain and I have a certain attraction. I'm having marvellous day-dreams about Noel Coward now.

### **July 14th - Thursday**

I had a violent pain before chapel so I decided not to go. As I was languishing in the cloakroom Killick arrived and asked me suspiciously what I was doing. She didn't seem favourably impressed with the answer. I didn't get anything very good said about my History, but then neither did anyone. However I was a bit disapointed (sic). Biology was ghastly. Wethy came bouncing in and informed us we were going to the(?) the life history of a Fern! We all collapsed into feeble protest but she persisted. After dragging wearily through the 1st ½ hour she asked us in a whining voice if we were bored. This was all a bit awkward, but Betty, Anne and I volunteered that we were. With which she gave us a terrific question and sent us packing. Of all the slimy, odious pieces of wet seaweed she is the foulest. She just sets out to find something revolting to do. Ferns my foot! How she has the face to walk in and talk about Ferns! She makes me sick. In the afternoon I stayed at home and read "Post Mortem". It is lovely and shows a more serious side to his nature. It inspired me to write a play of my own.

### **July 15th - Friday**

We approached school in fear and trembling thinking Clarke would be on the warpath but when the time came she was exceedingly pleasant and didn't press the point at all! The first bit of the morning we spent playing rounders which was rather fun and then the rest of them went off for a lesson with Peaseblossom. But Betty and I sat in the Common Room and the result was Pease complained to Gumbo who said we were to apologise. Lot of old hags, that's what they are. I got back my English. She didn't say

much about it, in fact what she did say was rather cutting, but I got B+. And to think of all the trouble I took over it! We did not come back after lunch but, after tea at 4, Nanny and I set off. It was pouring with rain and beastly but I eventually got safely into the crowded train. We were met in London by Mummy and Daddy. He didn't look as old as I expected and I was quite favourably impressed. But I can't forget, ever - - - . We had jolly good seats for "Happy Returns" and it was super. The music and dancing were just too lovely and some of it was extremely funny.

### **July 16th - Saturday**

We got up late and after breakfast went to see "Snow White". It was perfectly charming and the colouring was exquisite. The scenes when she is in the wood with all the animals are better than anything Disney has ever done I consider. Altogether a delightful film. I was terribly stiff and it was agony to move a limb. After lunch we started to pack but we didn't get it finished till after 3. It was all hectic and we were rushing to be in time as usual. However as we didn't arrive until after 4.30 we decided not to go. I was rather relieved but I'm sure Sambo will be furious. I am dreading going to Miss Spaldings. They'll all be beautifully dressed and snobbish and horrible. But there is one girl who has just done School Cert. like me, so we may get on. Anyway if I don't like it I shan't stick it. My one compensation is that I shall have first class teaching. In the evening I read a bit of Noel Coward and consequently fell happily asleep thinking of him. I must write to Richard Ainley next term. We might start a good old correspondence and he could tell me about John!

### **July 17th - Sunday**

Had breakfast at about 10 and from then onwards I did nothing particular except read. I read chiefly "Design for Living". It is a strange but fascinating play. I fear Noel Coward has rather a one track mind. He always paints lurid pictures of neurotic, highly strung and extremely witty people in an atmosphere of cocktails and copulation. I don't know if such people exist, I doubt it. The only play which gets away from that really is "Post Mortem" though "Cavalcade" and "Bitter Sweet" are pretty clear(?). "Post Mortem" though odd and in some parts over-sentimentalized is I consider, a very important play of his as it shows a different side to him altogether. I wonder what sort of emotional flare-up was going on when he wrote it. A love affair probably. In the evening we went to the Turbetts. It was a family reunion and very boring altogether. I wish all the cousins weren't so sporty. And yet I myself am good at games really. Odd! Robert made rather a scene, but I put him to bed and he was alright.

### **July 18th - Monday**

Arrived at school to find we were going to be doing Biology all morning. Had a mild heart attack but got over it. Miggy told me I was going to be tried for Oratory. I was glad in a way and yet petrified. We made slides all morning and then after break I went to the Common Room and tried to think of something to make a speech on. I eventually decided on A.R.P. and got together a few wild sort of notes. At dinner I got into a panic and it got worse and worse, and it was not very relieving to find I had been chosen to read as well! It was simply ghastly waiting outside the door and the 2 minutes (it seemed like 2 hours to me) were some of the most painful I've ever spent..

At the end I just stopped dead and looked pitifully round, but luckily they said I could go. Later in the evening Miggy told me she wanted 6 of us again. I don't know whether I want to be chosen or not. I want to be in a way but the thought of it sends me dizzy. We played games and went to "Barretts of Wimpole Street" which was lovely.

### **July 19th - Tuesday**

Refused to go to the Arithmetic class so went to the Library instead. I tried to work out a speech about who I'd like to meet best Shakespeare or Cromwell. It was futile and I didn't really form any consecutive idea. The second ½ of the morning we did Latin which was quite pleasant and frivolous. I also read to Sambo in the morning, gabbling it off at great speed without any expression. I'm perfectly sure not to be chosen. After lunch we had the ordeal all over again - almost worse because it was in the hall. I tried my best to be funny but they only gave one half-hearted titter. However after an agony of suspense they came out to say Pussy, P. Walker and I had been chosen. I was glad and yet absolutely sick with fright. Steve was quite nice and encouraging - she told me my voice was very superior and I waggled my head, but she bucked me up too. In the evening I started my English - it was lurid(?) but might be quite effective.

### **July 20th - Wednesday**

We both stayed away from school the whole day. I spent the day making up a speech and painting that thing for Gumbo and got thoroughly sick of both. The painting was quite effective and she might like it. My speech is simple and my point is trying to engross them by being personal. Human nature is so egoistical that it cannot be interested unless it is drawn in itself, so I have worked up to that as much as possible. Oh I hope I can say it alright. I would like to make a good impression, but I'm sure to be most frightfully nervous. The thought of it sends me giddy and sick so what will the actual moment produce! Billy took Betty home and didn't return for an hour, and when he did he looked hot and bothered and said they'd been for a walk (it was 10.30) I was simply furious and went to bed planning all the beastly things I'd say to her "you can keep your cheap little ways to yourself, etc.!!!"

### **July 21st - Thursday**

Now that its my last, or one of my last days, I'm going to try and sum up some of my impressions. When I first arrived the coldness of it and the strangeness and the sick feeling when I left Aunt Margery's in the morning, and waiting for the bus at the corner. Then there was the agony of waiting for break - that agonising break when I was carted round by Olive and Joie(?) or Zella Fortune. And trying to get off games and gymn, and the horrid feeling of waking up to another day of mental torture. Then my first term as a boarder - God that was awful. Sleeping next to Pam Jeffcock and dreading the evening when I sat by myself crying - Betty asking me to join them - and after that comparative happiness. My friendship with Pam, the cold musty little shed where we ate sardines by candlelight, my adoration for Panther(?), then Booth, then Harry, then Steve. Waiting in that long dim passage to take a ticket, Mitty(?) rounding the corner of the old alps in a fay(?), lying with Betty on hot lawns or sitting on radiators. Armchairs in the Common room - oranges -

## **Friday - July 22nd**

My 16th birthday. Hammer Well, well, well! I wonder what this year will bring. A boy friend perhaps. Some new friends at another school. Maybe even the beginning of my literary career. And lots of unpleasant things as well. But I'm going to try and get the best out of it. I'm going to fight self-consciousness and awkwardness and try to make friends. I'm going to write articles for magazines if I can and not be disappointed if they come back. And I'm going to try and get a boy friend, not to be sentimental with but because I want someone with a different outlook on life. I want to plan my life and work it after that plan, without killing spontaneity. I want to learn about things and read about things and experience things. I want to live to the fullest capacity, live deeply so that everything, suffering as well as joy, is much more real. I got a gramophone and some records, a cardigan and some money. In the afternoon the fateful moment arrived. I went on second after P.Walker, and was in a fearful state of agitation, but I managed to control myself and acquitted myself quite well. We won and several people told me I had won it, which was gratifying if untrue.

## **Saturday - July 23rd**

I hadn't room to say it, but last night we had a moonlight picnic with the Grays. A Miss Hutchinson and her neice(sic) and Stephen ? were also there. We went to Frensham Ponds at 8.30 and came back at 2.30! Some of them bathed but we didn't. We lit a fire and cooked sausages round it. While doing this we saw 2 bathers and invited them to come. They turned out to be 2 adorable young men who knew an endless amount of songs, duets etc. and were wonderful mimics. Our family joined in lustily with the songs but the Grays faded into oblivion. Altogether grand fun. One of them turned out to be Mrs Saunder's god son! This morning I slept on till nearly lunchtime and afterwards Betty and I went to the pool. It was very hot and there were crowds of people and it was a long time before we decided to go in. I hate bathing in front of crowds of people, and I don't enjoy it much anyhow after surf-bathing. Thank God we're going to Cornwall. I couldn't have stood Charmouth.

## **July 24th - Sunday**

A hot but grey day. In the morning I mucked about generally, reading and playing records, and in the afternoon went to the pool. It was quite enjoyable really. There isn't anything more to say about today, so I'll leave this space, for a time when I feel an urgent desire to write down my thoughts.

### My impressions (cont:)

The desperate feeling of sitting next a staff - our form party (making jellies), escaping from the new Alps - rows with Sambo - crunching across the gravel to prayers - giggling our way through Geography and ear-training - Betty's adoration for Mary and my furious misery - the bell waking me on cold mornings - gastric flu with diorea and empty stomachs and tarts(?) and boiled potatoes brought up - the frosty sunshine going to the games field in the morning - sitting in the Common room on Sunday waiting and praying nobody would come in - evening chapel when I longed for my "pash" of the moment to come, and so on - almost ad infinitum.

## **Monday - July 25th**

An agonizing day. In the morning we had fairly ordinary sort of lessons, but we were all on edge as to when the results were coming. For the last 2 periods we went and watched the swimming competition and when we got back they still hadn't come. After lunch we sat on the lawn and kept our spirits up by singing. Just as we were going to singing practice we were called and told. We sat on the lawn and Sambo came across from the study looking like death. She said "This is a very bad list" and read them out v. quickly. I was horribly disappointed and furious at being beaten by Daphne, but it was much worse for Betty who failed. We spent the rest of the day, or rather afternoon, in Singing. Pat Walker etc. were howling and we were all comforting each other and moaning. In the evening we told the family who were disappointed. Daddy is as consistently nasty as he can be. It's horrible. We went to see "Rebecca" and Shirley(?) was sweet.

## **Tuesday - July 26th**

Was relieved to find I had a good list of Credits. They were: English - V.G. History - G. Latin G. French Oral V.G. French, Geography, Biology, Credit and Arithmetic Pass while Maths was a Weak Pass. It is a shame that I should have failed just because of that weak pass. But still I was glad that my list was good and worthy of me. In the morning was the Music Comp. and I sat next to Steve! It was heavenly and I think I acquitted myself fairly well. At any rate I said a few quite sensible things. I wonder if she likes me at all. I do hope so. She probably likes me because I'm good at History, but otherwise thinks I'm feeble and stuck up. We won the Music Cup on account of the Orchestra, not on account of us. We forgot a lot of the words. In the afternoon we did a sort of literacy crossword with Gumbo, and then talked to her for a bit. After that we wandered round the school in an aimless sort of way looking for library books. I felt quite sentimental about leaving the old place. After all, I've had some good times there.

## **Wednesday - 27th**

My last day at St.Catherines. The morning was just the same as usual except that we had chairs to sit on in Long Parliament. I was simply astounded to hear that I had won the Rawnsley Reading Medal. It was the last thing I expected. I wasn't particularly moved to think it was the last time I would hear Gumbo on the platform. She said some pointed things such as "There are some people who have done nothing for the school" etc. etc. However I don't care. Afterwards we had House Meetings and Miggy was foul about Billy, Juliet and J. Ellis, and said how glad she'd be to get rid of them. I nearly got up and walked out. Afterwards we went round saying goodbye to everyone. Harry pressed my hand very hard. I wish I could write to her. Steve also, who said she'd like to see us again. I promised to write to Toddler, Hamlet, Juliet and possibly Harlow and Pat Walker. It was nasty, in a way, leaving. I've had some good times there and the girls are jolly nice once you get to know them. Anyway, I shall keep in touch with the old place by writing to some of them.

## July 28 – 21 September Summer Holidays 1938

### **Thursday July 28th**

Rather a nice feeling getting up late, but I felt vaguely miserable at not going back. It's silly really as I should be overjoyed. But I'm always like that. I hate leaving anywhere even if I haven't been particularly happy there. A new place or atmosphere makes me feel miserable straight away, and goodness knows I ought to have got used to it by now. I wonder how I'm going to like Miss Spaldings. I'm looking forward to it, because of living in London and I want to meet new people and make friends. And my search for celebrities will be satisfied, as I'm sure there'll be several there. Oh I'm really going to start writing next year. Gumbo obviously has faith in me and she's critical enough God knows. She asked me not to give up writing but to send some articles to magazines. I felt very touched. Perhaps I could make friends with somebody who'd give me a push on in life. I feel so sure that I am going to get somewhere that I shall die of disappointment if I can't. I know that if I do meet all these people I shall be disillusioned, so what does it matter?

### **July 29th - Friday**

A thoroughly miserable day - one of those days when I'm feeling as if the whole world were against me. It started and reached its height at lunch time, I don't quite know how. They kept on going on about how I never did anything and were all thoroughly unpleasant and I felt simply beastly. I know I'm not sporty like them and I can't join in, but I'm perfectly happy in messing about by myself so why must they all interfere? I hate the way Billy and Daddy especially nag, nag, nag. At lunch I literally hated them all. I jolly nearly burst into tears and my eyes absolutely filled, tho' I don't think anybody noticed. I'd rather die than cry in front of them or show that I cared. I felt almost sick with misery all afternoon - absolutely unwanted and self-consciously lonely. That's the worst of me, I can't even be unhappy without being theatrical. I cheered myself up by writing a sketch. It was quite good. At least it wasn't so good on reading it through, but it had something in it I'm sure. I have a definite flair for dialogue.

### **July 30th - Saturday**

Had to get up comparatively early and take Richard into Guildford for the doctor. I started to read Faith Compton Mackenzie's "As Much as I Dare" and was interested so decided to keep it out. It is fascinating to think that she is a relation of us. Our family is so boring really and theirs is so exciting. Oh to be Faith. I spent the rest of the afternoon reading her. Compton Mackenzie sounds simply adorable. I do hope I marry somebody like that. Oh I want to, God, desperately. I do deserve something surely. I want somebody to love me. I've never had anybody to really care about me (that's not being self-pitying, it's true). I may not be really different from others tho' I think I am, but I am more sensitive. The only person I could really talk to this about is Harry. I do want to write to her - not because I like her feverishly (I don't, not nearly as much as Steve) but I feel that she takes an interest in us all personally. I played tennis in the morning - pretty badly. Afterwards we went to the Club and had drinks etc.

### **July 31st - Sunday**

I seemed to be called early but it wasn't really. After breakfast we (Mummy, Daddy, Richard and I) went for a walk. We took Robert and Nanny to the pool and then went on to Hascombe. It was simply glorious up there but stiflingly hot. I think there must be going to a storm (sic), as it is not sunny but most fearfully oppressive. A most sticky and unpleasant sort of heat. The walk had some glorious views and was altogether very enjoyable. In the afternoon I finished "As Much as I Dare". It is a fascinating book although somewhat disjointed, and I like to think they are relations of ours though it is obviously very distant. All these autobiographies are inspiring me to write my own. But I've reached the present day already! My childhood is singularly uninspiring compared with everyone else's, but it would be a test if I could make it interesting. I'm going to fill it with my ideas rather than actual happenings.

### **August 1st - Monday**

I got a letter from Betty in the morning which came as quite a pleasant surprise. I do wish Jill would write and Jack. I keep meeting people who know Jackie and say how clever and attractive and musical she is. Some people have everything. Oh if only I'd kept up my friendship with her I might be going abroad with her now. Oh she is lucky, lucky, lucky. She has everything and is frightfully attractive with adorably witty parents and pots of money. In the morning I took Jeremy for a walk across Blackheath, lost my way and had a row with a farmer, and arrived home completely dead, covered with blisters. So I had to spend the afternoon recovering which I did sprawled on the sofa, writing letters to Jill and Betty. I wonder if I shall make any new friends. I think I have the capacity for friendship. Macmurray says that in friendship only do we become real and free, and I think its true. Daddy and Richard went to the White City. It was simply boiling hot.

### **Tuesday - August 2nd.**

It was a lovely day, boiling hot and sunny, and so we went to Tunbridge to take Jeremy to see a Mrs. Rooke. It was hot and uncomfortable in the car as both Jeremy and uncle Lionel were there. Every time I see him Uncle L. strikes me as being more fatuous. He tells long and pointless stories, roars with laughter at them, assumes a false "Hail-fellow-well-met" sort of heartiness, and is altogether very annoying. But the drive was very lovely through the lanes of Surrey and Kent with some sudden, breathtaking views in hedge gaps. We had our lunch in a beautiful heath and arrived at 3.30 or so. Mrs Rooke is a very attractive and competent woman with 5 sons, all of them obviously charming. Her life seems a pleasant if rather meaningless one, and her family are very nice. I was personally somewhat bored as I couldn't enter into the conversation. In the evening Mrs Chambers came to supper and afterwards we lay outside as a dusky darkness spread and a crescent moon came out behind the trees. It was strangely peaceful. Uncle Roy burst in in the middle. An inconsequential man.

### **Wednesday - August 3rd.**

Another hot day. In the morning we went to the pool, and for a change I really enjoyed it. There weren't many people there and we had the Lilo. In the afternoon I took a chair out and sat in the garden. I read "Greenery Street" again and was struck

again by its charm and humour. We had our tea out there. In the evening I listened to a charming musical comedy called "A Ship in the Bay". At night I read Somerset Maugham. Every night before I go to sleep I read a bit and it is strangely peaceful. He is a strange man and I am rather fascinated by his personality - entirely aloof and apart from the passionate lives of others. An observer rather than a participator - shy and disliking the company of his fellow creatures. And yet his mind is aware, and humorous and original. He has wit and subtlety and best of all a clear, lucid style without frills and purple patches. I want to cultivate a simple style too, though I shall find it difficult. His philosophy impressed me. I want to dip into philosophy but there's no time. Life ought to be 3 times longer if we want to begin to know anything.

#### **Thursday. August 4th**

In the morning we went into Guildford and as they had none of the books I wanted I got out "The South Wind of Love" by Compton Mackenzie. He was so adorable in his wife's book but this one is a bit disappointing. It's rather long-winded and technical. The best parts are the descriptions of children and of love. The rest is inclined to be boring. However, it is quite nice and I'm glad I've read it. I spent my afternoon reading and in the evening we went to the pool. It was pleasantly warm and there were very few people so I enjoyed it. I don't like bathing in front of lots of people - my figure doesn't stand up to it! I just waste my time I'm sure these sunny days. There's so much I could be doing, planning my life, finding out about my capacity, discovering what philosophy I'm going to take to etc. But I'm too lazy. I shall start soon though and I mean to begin writing seriously. The sooner I begin the better.

#### **Friday. August 5th**

In the morning, Richard and I went up on to Blackheath. It was very hot but well worth it in spite of the fact that I fell off several times. The light and shadow in the pine-woods was exquisite, and it was lovely sitting on the heather in the sun. By the time we got home we were in a muck-sweat, but it had been nice. Richard managed to break his camera and spent the afternoon trying to put it together but eventually gave it up and took it to Guildford instead. I read more of "South Wind" and it inspired me to take up my pen in a frenzy, but it soon wore off and the result was negligible, so I tore it up. The conversation was easy but uninspired, and it was all very platitudinous.(?)\* I don't think I shall ever manage to write a novel as I rush over the descriptions and concentrate on speaking. It comes quite naturally while description (unless of people) is only a boring and tiring process. I want to think of an original idea, even if I take years to do it.

#### **August 6th - Saturday**

Another scorching day. I never can quite decide whether I like this type of day or not. Last night I dreamt of Steve and so felt passionately attached to her for the rest of the day. Oh gosh, why must I dream of things like that? It makes my heart ache when I wake up and find it's not true. Yet I wouldn't give up those dreams for anything. They give me a few minutes of sweetness, which becomes Bitter Sweet too soon. In the morning we went into Guildford and I took back "Freedom in the Modern World" but couldn't get out anything to replace it. We went to bathe afterwards and

when we got back Uncle Roy and Leigh were here. Leigh is really extraordinary. He has been turfed out of 2 schools, yet he doesn't seem to be the slightest bit ashamed. He must be an interesting character psychologically. Perhaps he is sexually repressed or something. I think he is a bit deficient really. I spent the afternoon in the garden but it was fearfully hot and I got a headache. However, I washed it away by going to the pool in the evening. There were lots of people including Aunt Maud(?) and Henley.

### **August 7th - Sunday.**

A dull and wet day but hot and thundery which made it even worse. The atmosphere got rather on my nerves and I was feeling decidedly moody and cross in the morning. I really must try and improve my writing (I am trying to do so now!) Actually I like it - I think its darned attractive, but I suppose its best to make it legible. In the morning I helped Mummy to pack my things. She has got old-fashioned ideas - she expects me to wear school stockings and black shoes. However I jolly well won't - not if I have to buy everything out of my own money - it will probably end up like that. I must write an article for the "Daily Mirror" sometime - a hot article on youth bringing in religion, sex etc. and asking for a Faith for youth. It might get me a guinea or so. Wouldn't it be grand if Beverley Nicholls or somebody answered it? I spent the rest of the day packing and reading "South Wind". It is fascinating in parts but some of it is far too technical and high-flown. John is rather sweet.

### **August 8th - Monday**

I was disappointed not to find any letter for me from either Jill or Jack. I wonder if Jill is sick of me. Oh God I hope not. She's much more to me than the rest of them though I'm fond of them all. I do hope I get on really well with Juliet. I feel she or Pat Trav,(?) might get somewhere, and Juliet's a good sort though I do think she's a bit funny in some ways. Artistic temperament perhaps. Anyway she'll give me bulletins of Steve - darling Steve. I really don't think this writing is much of an improvement but I am attempting to make it more rounded. In the morning we went to Guildford and got me a pair of shorts, a blouse and a hat - all quite satisfactory. I do wish Michael would be there but he obviously won't. Next time I meet him I'll be much older and I hope more attractive. I like him better than anyone I've ever met (in the way of men, I mean!). I spent the afternoon in the garden reading and listening in. In the evening we biked to the pool and it was lovely.

### **August 9th - Tuesday**

It poured all last night, and the rain beat through my dreams - strange dreams, disturbing yet exciting - rather sexually inclined. Actually I don't remember what they were about but they left me with a queer, restless sort of feeling. There are times when an excited emotionalism fills me at the thought of sex. This was one of them and I revelled in it. I suppose its disgusting, but I think its natural. I'm reaching the age when I need sex fulfillment(*sic*) and as I can't have it, my imagination has to make up. The mood doesn't come often and I revel in it when it does. We went down to Alfriston for the day and saw Uncle Arnold, Granny James and Aunt Annie. The latter is wonderful considering she is practically blind. It was a pretty boring day; we went to Lytlington Gardens for tea, and on our way back we went up to

Changtonbery ring [sic. Chanctonbury Ring?]. It was splendiferous up on the top but the climb up and down was the hell of a nuisance. I should think the view on top is one of the best in England.

### **August 10th - Wednesday**

I dreamt I went back to school. Sambo said "Hullo, Darling" and kissed me on both cheeks! I wore a green velvet sort of blouse, a brown skirt, blue shoes, and a cotton black bonnet!! This extraordinary get-up didn't seem to attract any attention. It really was a mad dream - I seem to go in for them nowadays. I have all the fun in my dreams. Mummy and Daddy went off in the car full of stuff for the flat, and after finishing "South Wind" we went into Guildford. I liked it, the atmosphere is cleverly drawn, and I felt I really knew the people. But I think it was rather long-winded (as I think I've said before). I got out a new book - "Shadows around the Lake" which promises to be wonderfully good. It is about a Swiss-French boy Paul, and though free and easy in matter I'm going to love it I think and him especially. However, I can't say much about it at present. There was a sweet musical comedy in the evening - "At your Service Madame".

Patrick Waddington was in it.

I do love " "

### **August 11th - Thursday**

We spent the morning in Guildford but I didn't buy anything more for myself except a little thing of rouge. I put a spot of it on and it made me look much nicer, so I shall do it when I go away. Aunt Margery was at home when we got back and was very full of beans. I'm awfully fond of her in spite of a lot of unhappiness she caused me. She wasn't looking particularly well. It must be frightful having two children who are both washouts. Sheila is evidently very attractive but she's still slightly bats. Aunt Margery stayed to lunch, and at about 4 Aunt Maude [Maude Carles, died 1953, and Henley her son, born 1902] and Henley, Aunt Evelyn and Uncle John arrived. Richard and I had tea in the garden and afterwards we all went to the pool. It was fairly decent. Shirley Roper was there with her elder brother who is quite an attractive looking guy, and he was surrounded by a bevy of shrieking girls. I don't care for Aunt Maud or Henley much. The latter is impossible to talk and I should say quite lacking in imagination.

### **August 12th - Friday**

The Rookes didn't come after all as one of them had German measles. I was very relieved. In the morning I went to have my hair set. It was a bit awkward and the girl seemed in a bit of a pip. Daddy took me in. It was a hot thundery day and I spent the afternoon reading about Paul in the garden. He sounds very sweet, though I don't think I should attain to his standards. The book is about his two great love affairs, one for a beautiful, ethereal woman who is all soul and the other for an equally beautiful one, Antoinette, who is a sweet healthy girl, full of life, ready to give body and soul. At least he thinks she is mostly body I think, but I think she's got just as much soul as Louise. I like her much better, and I think he takes her in the end, and I'm glad. He's a musician - adorable. We did a lot of packing and I started to write a poem about

school ['Esprit de corps?'] which I sent to Betty (or rather I shall send it to her). Jill hasn't written yet - the cad.

### **August 13th - Saturday**

A thoroughly boring day which I spent mostly in the train. We got up at 7.30 and were off at 8.30. My carriage contained a most frightfully attractive woman who looked 23 but must have been 30 at least. She was accompanied by a large and immovable Nanny, and two golden-haired white-limbed children. The eldest, Joan was about 7 with blue dark-lashed eyes and a lovely mouth. She was talkative and rather wild at times, but she tossed her head prettily and her long legs swung with an easy grace. Richard was quite different. A pale-faced little boy with solemn dark blue eyes and a mop of reddish gold hair. When he spoke his voice was low and husky and he would break into an adorable completely disarming smile. That smile made me worship him the first moment I saw it. He was a serious little thing and gazed dreamily out of the window for hours. They came from Rangoon. Uncle Ernest met me in Padstow and in the evening we went for a walk.

### **August 14th - Sunday**

I tossed about for hours last night but otherwise slept perfectly (that sounds nonsense, but the tossing took place before going to sleep). In the morning we went to the beach and the water was freezing. In the afternoon we had fun trying to catch shrimps and in the evening we went into Padstow to church. It was lovely. I felt quite at peace in that dim place with soft lights and beautiful prayers, and I know now that however much I fight against it religion is a necessary and vital thing to me. Everything seemed to be specially for me - the Psalm (73) and the lessons. The beauty of the first passage made my heart ache (about Elijah, Ahab and Obadiah - lovely, lovely names and then when the 2nd bit ended "Come unto me all ye that labour and are heavy laden" I could have cried out for joy. When I go to London I am going to church every Sunday evening.

### **August 15th - Monday**

I couldn't get to sleep for hours yesterday night. I swallowed and got heartburn and tossed and turned until midnight. At last I soothed myself to sleep by reciting poetry. The result was I felt very reluctant to get up this morning. We went into Padstow in the morning and had delicious ices. At about 11 we started out for Tintagel and got there in an hour or so. We had lunch with a relation - Molly - she has been seriously ill with internal trouble and has had her womb etc. removed. Its rather tragic as it started with finger poisoning, the surgeon was careless, and though she has had the finger removed the poison spread. So her whole career was ended. It must be terrible for her. Supposing something like that happened to me! But I think I've born enough!! We climbed up to King Arthur's castle, and had tea there. In the evening we went to the beach but it was too cold to bathe I thought.

### **August 16th - Tuesday**

A wild night and an unsettled day - rather chilly on the whole. We walked into Padstow in the morning and my feet got very sore. After that it poured but in the

afternoon we went down to rocky beach and it was lovely. After tea it clouded over but we bathed. There was a lot of surf but it didn't seem much good for surfing. I didn't have any particular thoughts or ideas. I wonder if I am in love with Michael H. After that one solitary meeting I thought of him for days and I still do. I must meet him again. It's extraordinary the impression he made on me.

**August 17th - Wednesday** [There is no entry.]

### **Thursday August 18th**

Today I finished "Shadows Around the Lake". It is extraordinary the effect it had on me. I managed to copy out several passages which struck me, so I shall not lose all touch with it altogether. The chief point of the book is with the development of the hero's, Paul's, character. His struggle in himself between his two great loves, Louise and Antoinette, and the eventual peace of mind he finds in solving his love affairs. His character is beautifully and subtly worked and the writing is quietly forceful. Antoinette's is a beautiful and stimulating piece of character drawing while in Louise he gives us a delicate and convincing portrait of an ethereal woman who shrinks from bodily contact, and whose entire absorption(sic) in her soul proves eventually to be her undoing (she goes loopy in the end) I am thankful to say that he chooses Antoinette. I loved her from the start whereas Louisa's coyness irritated me.

### **August 19th - Friday**

We had intended to go into Plymouth today but it was a miserable day at first. I was terrifically pleased to get a letter from Jill. It was long and interesting, but was it lacking in her usual warmth? Perhaps it was my imagination. Anyway it was very interesting and there was a lot of advice about my career. She doesn't want me to start writing anything yet but I don't think I shall take any notice of her. At least I shan't send anything unless I consider it good, really good, but if I do I shall certainly try. The thought of a success fires my imagination, but I don't suppose anything will ever come of it. She says I must either be an Ursula Bloom or a Bernard Shaw. I don't agree at all. I shan't attempt to follow anybody but just write as I want and can. That's all I can do. If I find it good, all to the good. Otherwise it just can't be helped. We went into Plymouth in spite of the early rain as it cleared up. I changed my book and got out "Theatre". In the evening we went to Harlyn Bay and got soaked.

### **August 20th - Saturday**

We walked to and from Padstow and I got pretty tired and sore. I'm getting used to the agony of weak ankles and sore feet now but every time it seems a new and worse torture. I must enjoy a little self-pity to make up for it. There was some glorious surf and I enjoyed it. It was a queer day, as for the most part the sky was blue and the sun shone, but every half an hour or so there were short sharp showers which drenched you to the skin. We risked these in the afternoon and took our tea down. We got fairly well wetted at first but afterwards I found a cubby hole and sheltered quite successfully and comfortably. I did a little unsuccessful drawing and enjoyed myself. In the evening we went to St. Austell to see "Snow White" again. It was sweet and I think they enjoyed it. I got back very tired.

### **August 21st - Sunday**

I woke up - saying with relief that there would be no walk to Padstow, but not a hope. After breakfast I had to get into walking shoes and we started off. Be damned to all this. This diary is frightfully boring and "usual". I honestly don't think I can even have talent if I can't make more of my life than this. Admittedly its pretty dull but a real writer wouldn't be stopped by that. Am I a real writer thats the question? From the only standard that I can judge from I can say yes. But that doesn't mean I'm a good writer - far from it. It means that I have a desire to put my thoughts down, that everything I feel has to be translated into consecutive phrases before I am satisfied, and that without writing I could never be happy. Whether this attitude has any significance I am not in a position to say. Time alone will show that.

### **August 22nd - Monday.**

I woke up to find the rain pouring down in a miserable and steady drizzle. It was very depressing and quite impossible to go out. In the morning I packed and read, did a jig-saw etc. After lunch I got ready to go but it was decided not to go till after tea. Then at last we did set off, though it was still pouring and we arrived to find St. Agnes in a thick damp mist. They didn't stay long I was sorry to say goodbye but I hope we shall see them again soon. I do adore Uncle E. Hes(sic) the most perfect man I've ever met. He never loses his temper, in fact I don't think there is anything wrong with him. He is a perfect Christian, and a perfect pa---- (?). We had a talk about careers in the evening which made me feel angry and miserable. They're all so stuck and unimaginative. Oh gosh I have the most wretched ideas sometimes about wishing them dead. I know I should hate it really but I do feel so disgusted sometimes.

### **August 23rd - Tuesday**

I had a pretty rotten night and felt hot and uncomfortable. It was a misty but quite warm day, and in the morning the others went down to bathe. I went and sat on the cliffs and enjoyed my own company. I didn't actually make up any poetry but I felt like it. I also had a little imaginative interlude with M.H. It comforts me on every occasion and its obvious, oh so obvious that I've fallen badly. I don't know why the phase is so sudden and urgent. Perhaps it is the effect of the Mashiter's company. Anyway I love it and I hope it lasts. I keep on thinking of the way he looked at me that time. Was it interest, or disgust or astonishment or what? I've never been able to find out, but perhaps I'll get to know some day. I surely must meet him again some time, and I'll be older then. Perhaps Richard'll be at Oxford at the same time. Wouldn't Betty hoot if she knew. In the afternoon we went to Camborne to see "Damsel in Distress". I loved it and Fred Astaire was sweet as usual.

### **August 24th - Wednesday**

I slept with Robert last night to see if it was any better, but I had a ghastly night and woke up feeling thoroughly tired and disgruntled. I had breakfast in bed and got up afterwards but was feeling slightly liverish. Then I started to get a pain which rapidly got worse. By the time we got to the beach it was really glorious but I felt like nothing on earth. I couldn't eat any lunch and afterwards I felt like death warmed up. We

were on some high rocks and the tide got higher and higher. Eventually I could stand it no longer and climbed up the cliff to get away. That walk home was unimaginably ghastly. I was feeling sick and splitting tearing pains and diorea [sic] and giddy fits. However, I got home and found the house closed, howled a bit and then lay on the grass till the others arrived. The rest of the day was unpleasant but not so. This seems to be a pretty sordid days diary. Just another gruesome detail - we saw a man practically drowned if not quite.

### **August 25th - Tuesday**

I had a good night so woke up feeling better. I felt a bit groggy at first but this cleared up. Later in the morning we went into Truro and I got out "Busman's Honeymoon". I think I will like Lord Peter. In fact after reading a bit I know I shall love him. In spite of the fact that he is 45. In fact I think that only adds to his charm. I shall definitely marry a man a good deal older than myself. They attract me much more really. At least in books they do although in real life I've never met a really attractive middle-aged (35 say) man. I've got a Beverley Nicholish phase at the moment. I'm reading a book by him called "Self" which is really good only the heroine is exactly like Becky Sharp. Even to look at - red hair and green eyes! An odious creature and yet how like most of us. Or rather like what we would be if we weren't taught otherwise. She is only like what most of us are like - slightly exaggerated. Its unpleasant but true. The day was miserable. Drizzely and cold. I hope to God this weather doesn't last. Cornwall in this is unbearable.

### **August 26th - Friday**

It was a beautiful day - the best we've had so far. After packing up all our junk and lunch etc. we set off for West Pentire. I spent the rest of the day lying in the sun and reading "Busman's Honeymoon". Peter is certainly awfully sweet and the type I'd like to marry, only a bit too clever. At least he's always quoting chunks of French poetry and making allusions to queer writers. Rather disconcerting but Harriet seems to understand him. I've come to the conclusion that its wisest not to marry until you are in your 30s, and then to marry a man a good deal older. But whether I think that I shall not take any notice of it if I feel like marrying earlier. P. Walker says I shall marry at 22 but I doubt it. In the evening I went for a short walk. There was a lovely sunset, and the sea was a gorgeous dusty, glimmering grey-blue and the sky too beautiful for description. I felt a great inward peace and as usual I turned to religion. Whenever anything stirs me deeply I do that. Perhaps its God's way of revealing himself.

### **August 27th - Saturday**

A definitely disappointing day. I had been looking forward so much to Uncle Ernest coming, but it wasn't really at all satisfactory. It was a beautiful day at first and we took the lunch down on to St. Agnes. But in the late afternoon the clouds blew over and the wind rose so that the day ended drearily. We sat on the cliffs for tea and they left in the middle. I felt very disappointed - but it can't be helped. I shall see them again I should imagine. I've come to the conclusion that this diary has got to be a study of my mental development and not so much of what I actually do. And yet -

well my mentality isn't so thrilling and vital as to need a closer inspection. It is all rather hopeless. I think such a lot of my brain but it is a singularly inferior instrument.

### **August 28th - Sunday**

It was a foul day again - I'm about sick of this weather. In the morning the Lemons came over and made a terrific noise and jumble, but eventually sorted themselves out and went for a walk. I went off by myself later and sat on the cliff out of the tearing wind. I have a passion for doing this lately. Its such a restful feeling to let your thoughts wander freely about or just to watch the waves rise and break - rise and break indefinitely. Its about the one time I feel utterly at peace and able to imagine things. I can't create at these times. Just lie and assimilate vague ideas and sensations which come back to me when I feel in a creative mood. Its extraordinary how content I am with my own company. Its egocentric maybe, but I'm glad of it. I should hate to feel absolutely reliant on other people, and yet I wish I were a bit more sociable. It would be such a help in life. I nearly finished Lord Peter. He is utterly adorable and so is she. He's just the type I'd like to marry.

### **August 29th - Monday**

A cold day though not quite so dreary as yesterday. We decided to take our lunch to Kynance Cove and went via Truro. I changed my book for "Nya". I was sorry to say goodbye to Peter and Harriet but I hope to meet them again soon. Here are some lines.

All other things to their destruction draw  
Only our love hath no decay  
This no tomorrow hath nor yesterday  
Running it never runs from us away  
But truly keeps his 1st, last, everlasting day.

Lovely, and I shall send it to anyone I love.

Nya promises to be to be marvellous. The heroine is aged thirteen and it is all about her school life and I think her love affair. There is a description of how she discovers the curse which is poignant and realistic, and the whole thing is peculiarly personal because she is round about my own age. I think I'm going to adore it. And I shall try to write one like it. The only thing I can do is to take from my own experience.

### **August 30th - Tuesday**

Though not boiling hot it was pleasantly sunny, and we went down for a bathe in the morning. Later on we took our tea down. Betty was right when she said I would either like or dislike Daddy. I dislike him. Its a foul thing to say, but its mostly his fault. And he always mauls me and caresses me. It makes me feel sick. Its not that he's nasty in himself but that there's something in his nature that revolts mine. He's probably too like me! I read a good deal of "Nya". It is a charming book and I like it particularly because Nya is so near my own age, and I also like Simon so much. Why can't something like that happen to me? Because I haven't the courage I suppose to start it. I really am looking forward to my time in London. Betty will be there and later Mary Mackish who I might make friends with. And there'll be plenty to do and see. I do hope there are a lot of celebrities at school and that I make friends easily.

### **August 31st - Wednesday**

It was a lovely day and after a lot of fuss and arguing we decided to go to St.Ives in the afternoon. We packed up our tea and when we got there it was lovely - frightfully quaint and picturesque. Richard and I looked round trying to get photos of the cottages and harbour but I doubt if I(sic) mine come out as that camera is as old as the hills and far rustier. Afterwards we had tea in a field in the mellow sunshine which was v. pleasant. I can't think of anything else particular about today. Oh yes, I got 2 letters and a postcard. The latter from Barbara and the letters from Annemarie and Betty. I wonder if I shall ever become really friendly with A. Its so difficult when you don't know their language. However I mean to learn it. The foreign situation became tense today. I hope to God nothing happens. Betty wrote a long and far better letter. Its surprising how fond I become of her when we're apart. It ought to be fun with her in London.

### **September 1st - Tuesday**

I woke up to pouring rain and a cold dank atmosphere which was depressing to a degree. However we pinned our faith implicitly to a favourable weather report, and packed up our lunch things. The ride was thoroughly unpleasant and I honestly thought we'd let ourselves in for something, but when we got there it had stopped raining and was quite warm. I sat and wrote to Betty on the rocks and was very pleased with life. I do like writing letters - at least certain letters. The Mashiters arrived and we had a nice afternoon. It seems to funny to think of Uncle Ernest and all his love affairs. I wouldn't have thought it of him, though I can well understand people falling for him. He must have been adorable as a young man and even now he exerts a definite charm. I do hope I go to stay with them again sometime. I feel happier with them than with anyone else and I should like to spend my holidays there. The situation is still tenser. It seems inevitable that war must come and its really ghastly. I don't mind being killed but the thought of being torn half to bits and living - --

### **September 2nd - Friday.**

A glorious day. This weather is batty. We took our lunch and tea down to the beach and had a lovely bathe. There was practically no surf but it was beautifully warm and one of the nicest bathes I've had. The rest of the day I spent lying on the rocks and reading "Nya". I want to rush through it, but I have to stop myself because I hate the thought of finishing it. It is extraordinary how he manages to get her character "across" by just her conversation. I'm sure I couldn't do that. It looks so easy. Her friendship with Simon is extraordinary. I wonder if anything like that ever happens. I suppose it does only it must be rare. I love it and I'm so glad I got it out. I haven't forgotten about Paul de Villais or Peter and Harriet. They're all friends of mine - permanent ones and unchanging. I can't imagine life without reading. I would miss  $\frac{3}{4}$  of the pleasure of life and wouldn't have nearly as many friends.

### **September 3rd - Saturday.**

A glorious day which we spent on the beach. We got quite pally with the Maori Queen. She is a very plump, very brown, very cheerful female who prances round in the briefest of two-piece costumes as if she were the slimmest seventeen year old, whereas really - . But she's cheerful and good-natured and quite amusing and shes got crowds of friends. Among these are Peter Bull(Ball?) (who is only 26!) and Hugh Sinclair. I'd like to get to know them or rather speak to them. In the evening we said goodbye to the Lemons.

Here are some rather good lines:-

"And learn that we are better than our clay  
And equal to the peaks of our desires."

I got this out of Aunt Mabel's calendar which was in her lavatory!

### **September 4th - Sunday.**

A disappointing day in spite of encouraging weather reports. In the morning I went onto the cliffs by myself and sketched one of the disused mines. I had rather an exciting imaginative meeting with Jack Buchanan and so real did it seem that I was quite disappointed to wake up and find that I had never really met him. I felt quite carefree on the cliffs by myself with the wind in my face and the Jack of my imagination by my side. I don't think I could ever be really happy with one person all my life. I'm too fond of my own company. I should like to live with someone for as long as I liked and then leave him. But a marriage makes this impossible and I haven't the courage to do it without. Besides I want children, or at least one, and it would be rotten for them if I wasn't married. In the afternoon Richard and I walked down to St. Agnes and then we had tea on the beach, or rather on the cliffs. It was rather too cold to be really enjoyable. In the evening I heard John Gielgud appealing, and felt suitably uplifted. Even his voice has a strange fascination for me - quick and low and very English - Angel - -

### **September 5th - Monday.**

It was rather a cold and cheerless day but we started off for Looe in the morning. Last night I finished "Nya" and because I was reading late my dreams were of "Nya" and Simon and Eve(?) more mixed up. It was really frightfully vivid as I seemed to have got Nya's character so firmly into me that I was her. I remember in my dream that I gave up going to see Noel Coward because Simon was coming, and I really experienced her intense love for him. I wish I could always dream like that. It leaves me warm all day. We went into Truro and I got out a book called "The Young Desire It" which is about a boy of 14. I don't think I shall like it as much. We had lunch on the way and arrived at Looe at 2.30. The afternoon was unexpectedly pleasant, and I enjoyed it. Aunt Mabel is so easy, to talk to, and really an awful dear. I don't think she likes me as much as she did, but I don't really mind that. Theirs is rather a wonderful friendship if you come to think of it. They never seem to be in the least bored with each other. I couldn't live with somebody like that without getting furious.

**September 6th** (Tuesday) [No entry]

### **September 7th -Wednesday.**

In the morning we went on with our packing. It was rather a boring process and back-aching, but it had to be done. In the afternoon I went for my last solitary walk. It was an uncertain day and as I started out a heavy shower burst over me, but I was glad and sang for the rest of the walk. I wish I could describe the pleasure of those walks over the heather to the deserted mines by the sea. They filled me with a strange light-heartedness and I shall always remember them as a little phase apart from all the other parts of my life. The prickly feel of heather round my bare knees and the sight of wet yet somehow dusty blackberries will always bring it back to me. It really is impossible to put down but I think it was the sea air which went to my head like wine and made me want to sing and dance and dream. My idea of bliss is to sit on the edge of the cliffs and watch the waves rise and break in a steady and soothing procession, holding a banana in one hand and a milk chocolate in the other. After tea we went to Newquay to see "Yank at Oxford".

### **September 8th - Thursday**

This day was taken up with the journey up. We didn't start till 11 but once we got started we fairly buzzed along. It was a glorious day and the countryside of Somerset and Wiltshire was exquisite. I read "The Magpie" which was by Lois Vidal. The whole family went mad including the authoress! I hope the strain isn't in our part of the family. The house looked a bit depressing - frightfully dirty and dark, but the rooms are nice and large.

### **September 9th - Friday**

These days are really too much bother to say much about so I shan't bother. All I shall say is that we spent the whole day tidying dusting sweeping etc: until I at least was sticky and choking. In a few odd moments I started a new story. Rather a crib of "Nya" I admit, but it can't be helped. The girl is called Jacqueline, the dark, slim, passionate type. if only I can put her into some of my own sensations. I never get enough time for writing and in term time I shall get still less I'm afraid. Term - ugh!

### **September 10th - Saturday.**

Sheila [Lemon] took Robert for a walk and came back for lunch. She is very pale with scarlet lips and dark thick eyebrows. The effect is quite attractive, but there is something wrong about her eyes. It may be a cast or it may be the fact that she shifts them all the time. We went over to tea there afterwards and Sheila and I got quite pally. She told me about all her young men. One of them even writes to her! Afterwards we played Mah-Jong and then trotted off to the Wights. Betty was away staying with the Alstons and Mrs Wight wasn't frightfully gracious. I wonder how B. will get on with Michael A. She does annoy me sometimes.

### **September 11th - Sunday**

A quietly uneventful day of the kind I like. In the morning I read Van Druten and was thrilled to discover that in so many ways he was like me. At least he has always had, as I have - that craving to get somewhere, by his writing and the feeling that he

would eventually become famous. I feel that too - and its so insistent and certain that I think it must happen. All the time, when I know people are despising me, or when I feel bitter about my leg, I say to myself - "Well anyway it will be alright then". And other things point to it too - my desire to write; other peoples opinions of my work, my conscious dramatising of every situation and my strong imagination - quite apart from things like "White Magic Book" and Pat Walkers forecast etc. But on the other hand if there's war my talent won't have a chance and I shall probably be blown sky-high. Another thing about Van Druten is his various crazes - "Sentimental Journey(? tommy?)" "The Hill", Rupert Brooke and The Shethy(?) all affected him as they did me. He sounds an adorable creature.

### **September 12th - Monday**

A breathlessly hot day, foggy in the morning but brighting(sic) into a still and windless sunshine. Perhaps it is going to be the last day of peace I shall know for a long time. Perhaps for ever - - But if it is I must impress it firmly on my memory. I put my thickest clothes on and went for a walk so came in clammy and sore-footed, and immediately stripped(.). In the afternoon I read Van Druten and then went to have my hair done. They did it v. well but I don't know if it will last. It came out softly waving and not the usual sticky mess. After that I joined Richard, Robert and Nanny at the gardens for tea. It was lovely under the trees - sunflecked and just quivering from green to brown with their trunks dappled and a faint breeze rustling the leaves. I read a bit and lay and looked at the hazy shimmering vistas of grass and trunks and bright-haired children. Surely war couldn't touch a peace like this. It was all so secure and enchanting and drowsy that thoughts of war were almost impossible. But now as the buses rumble by in the dark world outside I am afraid - - Oh God - no

### **September 13th - Tuesday**

We spent the day down in Guildford, seeing the Doctor and Granny James, and it was quite pleasantly boring. We had lunch at the Tudor Café and tea pic-nicing with the Turbetts. The chief point of the day for me however was the formulating of ideas for my story. They were somewhat vague and topical, but filled me with a desire to get back and write it. I shall just go on in the strain I am then when I have finished go back and pick out the best parts, the general impression of the character etc: and work on them. If I haven't got bored with the whole subject by then! However in this particular case I don't think I will, as it is so connected with my own life and feelings as to be always new and interesting and very vital.

### **September 14th - Wednesday** [No entry]

### **September 15th - Thursday**

I was rather overawed by the prospect of a day's shopping but it wasn't quite as awful as I expected. My actual purchases were a brown skirt and blouse, blue frock, stockings, gloves, 2 hats and a brown jumper-cardigan. I felt as usual a trifle embarrassed in the semi-nude stages and looked awful in some of the things. I'm so broad that unless I grow a bit I shall always look out of proportion and unattractive. However the things I got were for the most part slimming and suited me, so I was quite satisfied with my purchases. I loathe these shopping expeditions as the effort of

wrenching things on and off makes me sulky and irritable for several hours. In the afternoon Richard and I went to the park and I read quite a lot of "Gone with the Wind". I shall reserve my opinions of it till I finish. Today Chamberlain startled and pleased the world by his dramatic visit to Hitler. Just for a little the tension has been removed and everyone is sitting back with a sigh - relieved and alert, hopeful and anxious. I pray God that this man with his courage will save the peace for how could there be war when the whole world is with him?

### **September 16th - Friday**

Another morning of peace and sunshine. The sunshine will remain - but the peace? If not I must cling to these last days of it, which may seem later to be an almost dream-like paradise. Somehow I cannot bring myself to believe that - even if war comes I shall be killed. Perhaps everyone has the same certainty. Perhaps it is only a form of egocentricity which makes each one of us feel that we are "different" and destined for something higher than our fellow creatures. I am quite prepared to believe that is so, but I shall go on feeling that I myself, am meant to be some special use in the world, and will be saved from death. Even if I am killed it won't be so awful. Death doesn't present me with a ghastly aspect. Eternity, because I love God, is nothing to be dreaded because I know that he is all-just and all-loving and that even for the worst of us there will be hope and comfort. But I want to live because I'm young and there's so much I haven't experienced. I've gone through the worst years - the years when I am impotent - yearning for things beyond all reach and being buoyed up only by the thought that one day I shall "get even(sic)" - and I want to get to that phase of my life when I shall be able to do things not dream them all day long.

### **September 17th - Saturday**

In the morning Richard and I went to the Gardens. He sailed his FROG while I lay on my tummy and watched everything. There were three golden-headed five year old boys playing near - David Antony and Timothy! I should love little boys of that age and calibre. Robert, though more intelligent and grown-up - has not their innocence and untainted joyfulness(sic). In the afternoon we went to see Billy play Rucker. It was fun watching and he played very well. R.M.C. won 9-3. Afterwards we picked him up and made our way towards London. After a bit of fuss and bother we had tea and went to see "Tovarich". I thought it simply wonderful - in fact it is a long time since I have been so impressed by a film. It was mostly humorous - and what glorious, side-splitting humour! - but there were touches of pathos and excitement and an adorable spirit of devotion between the two chief characters. There was a light-hearted but infinitely tender and passionate love, and it touched some chord in me that responded with a breathless and half-tearful delight. I don't know what it was about it but it filled me with a queer aching half-happiness.

### **September 18th - Sunday**

We got up early and started off for Sandhurst at 9.15. We saw the parade which was quite impressive, and then squashed into the chapel. The singing was very loud and rather moving - hundreds of lusty young men raising their heads and shouting their praises - and I enjoyed it all, though the sermon was rather fatuous. It was given in a loud, pompous, impersonal shout and was full of sentimental platitudes. After the

service we took Billy off to have lunch during which we argued a lot re(?) Army and Civil etc: then we drove to Auntie Evelyn's and found her out so drove back and dropped Billy. All rather boring for him, but still. We had tea by Virginia Water and then went home. I'm tired tonight so this will have to be a frightfully boring entry.

### **September 19th - Monday**

Another morning of shopping. I dislike these times because I hate having to see Mummy spending her money. It goes so quickly - over a pound for my underclothes! It gives me a horrible feeling but I have to have the things. Some day I'll give it back to her and more. I must do something for her after all she's done for us. I don't know why I never show more gratitude or helpfulness towards her after all she's done for us. But I do really appreciate it. This morning I got a pair of shoes, B<sub>2</sub>'s [bra], belt, knickers and macintosh. The shoes are quite nice but unfortunately they rub my heel. I hope I shall get over that though. In the afternoon Mrs Gravestone and Rachel came to tea. R. is about 12 and quite a nice kid, and fairly easy to get on with. After tea we played ping-pong. When I was out I saw a girl with a leg like mine. She was standing outside our front door, and she stared at me so hard that I had to stare back. The sensation was quite extraordinary. She had to wear boots but otherwise she was exactly the same. Poor kid. I'd like to get to know her. We could sympathise and she'd be the only person I could talk to it about (sic). I tried to get on with my story but it didn't work really. However I shall struggle on.

### **September 20th - Tuesday**

It was a driselling(sic) day and in the morning I telephoned Betty. I had the hell of a time getting her but after several tries and a quarrel with the girl I got her and we arranged to meet and go to the flicks. Then we took Richard to Euston (met the Hammerslys but I didn't say much, if anything) and then we went and changed my macintosh. By that time it was too late to go back and so they left me at Lyons. I had practically no cash and all I could have was some mutton and tip the waiter 1d! However as an experience I enjoyed it. I met Betty and we went to the Curzon to see "Sabotage" and "The Man who knew too Much". They were both very good, and in the latter Leslie Banks and Nova Pilbeam were sweet. After the flick we had tea at Lyons (an ice each) and went to her flat. Mrs W. was in which embarrassed me rather. I like her but I always feel rather inferior in her presence. Rather like Mr. Cory. I suppose its because they are both rather the witty type. I came back quite successfully which was surprising. I wonder if Betty will become famous. I somehow have a feeling that she won't. Not because she hasn't the talent but she (*hasn't?*) the deep urgent feeling that I have. At least not that I know of.

### **September 21st - Wednesday**

I spent the whole day with the Wights. I arrived at B's at 11 and we went to Selfridges to meet her Mother. Then we made our way to the Cumberland grill where we had curried eggs. Oh gosh, I do want to have money and be able to have lovely food in super-posh restaurants with soft lights and sweet music. And adorable French waiters like we had. Perhaps some day - oh I'm sure some day I will. I dare say the novelty will wear off after a bit, but even if it does, there are other things - books to get, and some gramophone records and theatres - (hundreds of those and all 1st nights!) and

clothes and houses with beautiful furniture and gardens and swimming pools. And think of all the places I'd visit - Venice and Capri, Rome, Naples, Paris, New York, Hollywood, Tahiti and Waikiki and the island(sic) of the Aegean. Glorious names and hundreds of others I've never heard of. All of them on my private yacht or a super luxury steam liner. All the afternoon we spent buying clothes for Betty which I enjoyed.

## **PHOTOGRAPHIC GALLERY**



Iris bottom left, Violet, Billy, father William in top row





Iris and Billy







Family meal



Uncle Ernest, (right) Richard (centre) and another with Iris about fifteen



Uncle Ernest and others at sea, Iris about 13



At Guildford, Violet, Iris and boys

## 6 Queen's Gate Finishing School, aged 16, 1938-9

### Iris Diaries

#### Queen's Gate School, Autumn Term

[Miss Spaldings, known as "spec", principal until 1951]

##### September 22nd - Thursday

The awful day has come and gone and I am still alive. I woke up feeling frightfully sick in spite of all my intentions. It was quite beyond my power to control my feelings, at least my internal ones, although I managed to do it well enough to eat a usual breakfast. Unfortunately my insides were feeling rather uproarious and I had short but sharp diorea(sic). I am glad to say it wore off or it would have been a trifle awkward. When I arrived I was handed over to a girl who took me upstairs, and then the mistress put a girl called Lavender Glyn. (sic). She is a sweet kid and I hope she becomes my friend. Awfully attractive even if she is plump, and adorably kind. There are two other frightfully pretty kids, Joy Hunt and Wendy - . Also a French girl called Yvonne. In fact they're all of them rather attractive. There is another new girl sitting next to me, fat and like Jean Canning, but obviously very wealthy. I might pal up with her but I'd rather have Lavender. The lessons are very interesting - History of Art and Interior Decoration. The latter was particularly good with lantern slides. In the afternoon I went back and after a struggle to get in I did prep for the rest of the afternoon.

##### September 23rd - Friday

I felt just a little bit nervous this morning but not much. I found that Lavender had given me up, considering her duty was over, which disappointed me rather. However, I talked to her in break and it went off alright. We had English and French. in English we are starting at Browning and coming right up to 1937 which ought to be super. In French we are doing the sixteenth century, and though the Mamselle talks very fast and furiously I understood everything she said. We had a Dictée to test us and she said mine was "bon" so I hope to stay in that division. I know I am capable of it even if my writing is a bit shaky. Just before lunch the attractive girl called Joy Hunt asked me to go for a walk with her. I was frightfully pleased as she must have had some reason for doing it and I do hope we become friends. When I arrived in the afternoon I found Yvonne was with her and we started off in a crocodile. At first my shoe was loose but then my toe began to be rubbed and by the end it was absolute hell. I could hardly hobble home.

##### September 24th - Saturday

Mrs Chambers was here in the morning and we discussed war a good deal. It appears

that the situation has become a great deal worse, and war is looming larger and larger on the horizon. Mrs Ch: is more worked up than I have ever seen her which is bleak. I cannot somehow pluck up courage to face up to what (it?) will mean to me and mine. What will I do in a time of emergency? I think I'll rise to the occasion but I can't be sure. Supposing I just go under. That book says my strongest characteristic is "Calmness in the face of misfortune" but one can't be sure. What I must do is remember that everyone else is undergoing the same thing, that they matter just as much as me, and that in helping others in their fear I shall decrease my own. If I'm married or killed or bereaved it will be no worse than what has happened to others. If I keep hold of that I shall be alright. We went down to Sandhurst but found there was no match and so after loitering about for a bit we went onto a hill for tea. A. Hilda, Barbara and Sheila.

### **September 25th - Sunday.**

These are uneventful days charged with a highly tense atmosphere, and coloured by the spell of "Gone with the Wind". I spent this one at home with my sore foot, and at tea we went to Granny's to gossip. A. Margery and U. Lawrence were there. The former was very shocked by "Wild Oats". She must have an extraordinary mentality and rather a dirty mind. I do adore Rhett Butler. I do hope there isn't a war.

### **September 26th - Monday**

When I got back I found Joy didn't recognise my existence at all. I was rather disappointed. I don't know whether I failed to make the impression on that walk, or whether she never really intended to be friendly. I was vaguely unhappy all day because I saw all the other new girls palling up, and I didn't seem to be able to. I walked to the Library in the evening, in the rain, but found it was shut. I wonder why I can't make friends as quickly as the others. And yet in the end it always seems alright. Perhaps my personality only works slowly. I don't see how I can get on in the world if I'm not more dynamic. Yet I know I will get on. The only thing is to wait, but its rather trying.

### **Tuesday (27th. Sept.)**

A definite improvement on yesterday. I talked to Midge Burroughs and Elizabeth Kennedy, both of them rather nice. Then we had Drawing and I did a lurid landscape with the setting sun etc! It had certain good things about it but I just failed. The trouble is I'm so afraid of colour. I can see exactly what I want to get but I don't know how to get that effect. I love painting more than anything except writing. In the evening I got a letter from Betty suggesting I should work in a canteen with her. The parents weren't keen and neither was I really, though it had a certain glamour about it. However though the spirit is willing I don't think the flesh (entry ends here)

### **Wednesday (28 Sept.)**

Chamberlain is a darling. He's saved us again, or at least is postponing war. When I heard he was going to see Hitler again I was sick with relief. Oh God, you must make him successful this time. Millions will be saved not only from death but from heart-ache, poverty and disillusionment. If only Hitler will see reason, because he must

realise the consequences. I think this time he will realise its his chance to back out gracefully, and give in just enough.

### **Thursday (29 Sept.)**

I went to school in the morning but not afternoon. There is a wonderful feeling of hope in the air, and I'm sure that everything will be alright. I finished "Gone with the Wind" at last. My feelings when closing were horribly mixed. I hated the end and yet I somehow felt sure that in the future Scarlett did get him back. It really is an extraordinarily vital book and I enjoyed every word of it. I wish all of them were that length. Then after reading 1037 pages I was miserable at having to finish it. The thing that attracted me most was Rhett. He is an absolutely devastating creature, oozing sex-appeal, and his fascination is mostly sensual. All the same he is awfully lovable, and it gave me a thrill every time he appeared. To think of Clark Gable - - ! Scarlett also attracted me a good deal. I don't think she was nearly such a horror as most people say. I was inspired to write a continuation in which everything comes right, but its damn difficult.

### **Friday (30 Sept)**

After the usual morning school we had the afternoon off and I went to Lewis's for Betty. We missed each other at first but eventually fitted the dress and came home. After supper we went to see "Dear Octopus". We waited in the pit and A. Margery came too. It was a fascinating play about a family, the Randolphs, and John was simply angelic. The thing that struck me most about it was what a lot could be made out of a little. I think the dialogue itself wasn't so superlative, but the way everybody fitted in, and the meaning that was given to the most ordinary lines was exquisite. One of the funniest bits of all was when the three children were painting and the grown-ups come up and take their places. One of the parts that appealed to me most was that of Scrap, played by Muriel Pavlow. She was the sweetest kid, and quite absolutely natural, without the other childrens inclination to shout. I wanted to go round to the Stage Door afterwards but wasn't allowed to. The result was I felt tearful and sulky and very morose. That always happens after a theatre. I suppose its anti-climax, but I think its partly because of my longing to be part of a theatre. I don't like being just the audience. Some day - - -

### Saturday - October 1st

The day that might have proved the beginning of disaster passed peacefully and safely. My attitude towards everything doesn't seem to have been very obvious in this diary. But I felt an overwhelming relief, quite beyond description, when I heard of the Munich Agreement. It seems to me that we have gone a long way if we can realise that discussion is by far the best way of settling disagreement. We went down to Sandhurst after lunch and watched ruggar. B. played v, well and I was proud to hear people behind saying how good he was. Afterwards we had tea in the visitors room and went off to Aldershot to see "Sailing Along". It was quite amusing and gay, but I was slightly disappointed and the film with it was tripe. After a snack supper we took B. home. I was seething with unexpressed ideas and desires about writing a play.. I couldn't get hold of any definite idea, but I felt that unmistakable twisting feeling which means "Pen and paper".

## **Sunday October 2nd**

A drowsy day which I spent mostly over the fire. It was bitter outside and I was seething with ideas about my new literary venture. It must be about a family, but the only person I can decide on is Jock, the fifteen year old. I can't quite decide to work this out, but I want its theme to be How(sic) little we know of each other and how different everyone is underneath. But I can't think how to show this in the slightest degree. I might have one act first, then a firelight scene in which they discover themselves to each other, and the third act could go back to their normal lives. But I don't think somehow that would really work. It would need someone a good deal more brilliant than me, anyhow. I have quick sort of "feelings" and sentences and situations, but I can't get them in any way connected. And I don't think I ever could put them on paper. It really is tormenting to feel things and be impotent. I think perhaps if I could sit down for hours and days and really think things out I might get somewhere.

## **Monday - 3rd**

I went back and nothing much happened. I'm going to give up trying to be friends with anyone, and nobody else seems anxious, and I don't really care 2-(?). In the afternoon I wrote to Juliet, but I think I shall re-write it as it wasn't what I meant at all. I read a little "Heaven and Earth", an absorbing if a little incomprehensible book. I am having glorious dreams about being famous and the world I have made for myself is more real at times than the world of actuality.

## **Tuesday - 4th**

Equally unsatisfactory as yesterday. We had drawing in the morning during which I did a lino cut rather badly. Granny James had arrived when I got back which made me feel moody and unsociable - God knows why. I just can't understand why I get these fits of not wanting to say anything. I just loathe being asked whether I enjoyed school and what I did, and I immediately withdraw into my shell. It's like that with everything and I can't really put my feelings down. I wonder if I shall ever make anyone understand this. I've decided that another person in my book will be a sixteen year old girl like me. Dissatisfied, wanting things, uncertain, and theatrical. Its gradually working itself into me.

## **Wednesday**

Oct. 5th No entry

A.B.C.D.E.F.G.H.I.J.K.L.M.N.O.P.Q.R.S.T.U.V.W. (sic)

Thursday. (Oct. 6th)

A desolate tree-laced blue-green afterglow  
A wind heavy with smoke from forest fires  
~~A bank of sodden leaf-mould for my couch~~  
~~You asked my love and now you know~~

the best of my desires

A sodden mist-enshrouded gloom

A

A desolate tree-laced blue-green afterglow  
A wind heavy with smoke from forest fires  
A couch of leaves in which to sink my woe  
And conflict of desires.

A heavy sodden mist-enshrouded gloom  
A silence undisturbed by love or fear  
A heart that turns and sees its empty tomb  
Filled by the dying year. [crossing out and alterations in lines 3  
and 4]  
A little space within the tear-stained tomb  
Of this the dying year.

**Friday (Oct. 7th)** [No entry.]

**Saturday (Oct. 8th)**

In the morning I had my hair done - quite well but not exceptional. Directly after that we had lunch and made our way to Sandhurst. I love the routine of Saturdays - the early lunch and the long leafy drive to Camberley, the match then tea (toast and eclairs) and on to a cinema, a snack supper - then home. However, this was different, because we came home after the match. It was a cold, wet day, but B. played quite well, only making one serious bosh. We got home at quarter to 7, had a hasty supper, and then on to "The Flashing Stream". Douglas came with us. I can't make up my mind about him. He sometimes attracts me and sometimes leaves me absolutely cold. I think he sets out to be amusing and that annoys me rather. The play itself was exquisite, from beginning to end, and filled me with a seething sort of excitement. Margaret Rawlings was superb, and quite unusually attractive, and Godfrey Tearle was rugged and acted beautifully. The love scenes between them were the most tense and passionate I have seen on the stage, and filled me with a longing to find somebody whom I could love unconditionally and exclusively, with an entire self-forgetfulness. The theme was single-mindedness (as repr: by Tearle) and it was really a struggle between that and love - the emotional struggle in both of them that sought an outlet in each other.

**Sunday (Oct. 9th)**

A drowsy day, spent reading first, but afterwards we had a sherry party. I rather dreaded it but it turned out to be the best of that kind of thing I've been to. I talked to Mary Macleish, and Joan Cooper, and didn't feel "out of it" as I usually do. I think - and hope that my powers of conversation are improving. Some people I find quite easy to get on with but others impossible.

### **Monday (Oct. 10th) [No entry]**

### **Tuesday - Oct. 11th**

A rather exciting day in many ways. In the first place I started what I hope is going to be a nice friendship with Elizabeth Kennedy. Whether it will develop into anything I don't know but I hope so. We actually got as far as holding hands! We had drawing in the morning in which I finished my lino-cut, and stamped it rather unsuccessfully several times. After that Elizabeth and I did prep and then we decided to go to 1st. Aid classes together. If only she'll be friends we might have quite fun because she's a jolly little thing, and quite intelligent. When I got back to lunch and I found Olive in and she stayed the whole afternoon. We had a gas-man in who professed to come from a company, but who turned out to be an imposter. Luckily I clung to him and he didn't get a chance to take anything. It gave us quite a pleasurable thrill. Later on Douglas came to give some money, and I felt slightly embarrassed and he only stayed a few minutes. Oh why can't I be really intelligent instead of awkward and tongue-tied? If it had been Betty he would have stayed for hours. I started Dunnes "Experiment in Time" which I found v. engrossing especially about dreams.

### **Wednesday Oct:12th**

I learnt that the gas-man really was one, so all that hoo-ha was about nothing. In the evening I got a letter from Uncle Ernest which for some reason made me extremely unhappy and howl into my pillow. He said "I think you have been a very brave young thing" and also that he loved me etc. I don't know why it suddenly hurt so, but I've got over it now. He wants me to confide in him but I can't get over my awkwardness, and dread of scenes, but I shall try. All very kindly written this but I'm so blasted tired.

### **Thursday (Oct. 13th)**

I went to school had the usual lessons and stayed back after lunch. Elizabeth and I got on very well, and I think we're certain friends. I can't be fagged to write more now. I'm getting so slack about this diary but it can't be helped.

### **Friday October 14th**

In spite of the fact that I had Elizabeth to look forward to I was rather disgruntled at having to go back. All the rest of them are so unimaginative and silly and not nearly as interesting as the St. Catherines (sic) girls. When I think of our form - even the rowdiest and silliest ones like Hamlet and Joy had their sensible serious side. Whereas I don't think Phoebe or Joy Hunt could be really intelligent about anything except clothes. Not that I want somebody all soul and completely lacking in humour, but I do like something with a little sense. After lunch I stayed in and started writing to Uncle Ernest. I was slightly nervous at Elizabeth coming; I know its silly and snobbish, but I couldn't help it. When eventually she did come, she was sweet, and took it all quite naturally. She really is a dear kid, and though very young in some ways is quite old in others. I hope our friendship continues as well as it has started. We talked quite a lot about ourselves families etc: The lecture was awfully good and afterwards we bandaged each other. I felt rather embarrassed as she was - not exactly rude - but rather outspoken with her mother. It was all fun and I arranged to go to tea

there on Sunday. I hope she doesn't expect to bandage my legs. Its the one thing that bothers me.

### **Saturday October 15th**

A lovely day all through. In the morning I did a little work and wrote to Uncle Ernest. I am not going to be too confidential but I shall have to make some mention of it. Olive came to lunch and we went down to Sandhurst afterwards. The match was the best I've ever seen, there. It was very fast and Sandhurst played much better than they have before. During the course of it Barbara told me that I had got the English prize, but Anne had got the History and Years Work. I felt a pang of jealousy which soon wore off. I know I was better at History only she got a Distinction so they had to give it to her. And I knew perfectly well I wouldn't get the other, though I worked damn hard. I don't know what to get but I presume someone is going to write and inform me officially. We took Joly out to the flicks and supper. He is a perfect dear and I think he quite liked me. It is so unusual for me to be able to talk to anyone, a young man too - that I felt positively elated. I sat next to him in the flicks and we got on rather well. He likes Bing Crosby and so forth, and he is not at all stuck up. I'm sure I outshone Olive which gave me a lot of satisfaction. I knew I could, and Barbara and Bluebell too.

### **Sunday October 16th**

I stayed in in the morning and attempted some French. I hope its the right lot. After lunch I set out for Elizabeth's house, and met her at the Albert Memorial. We walked and talked across the park and seemed to get there in no time. When we arrived we started bandaging each other and her small sister. They have an enormous house, very posh, etc: but not terribly homely. I don't think I should prefer her life to ours, because she spends most of her time in the nursery, and isn't considered nearly as grown-up as I am. Actually I found her extremely amusing, and really rather witty. She looks so young and babyish, but she is quite different underneath. It'll be nice to have her in the holidays to go to flicks with, and her father must be a pretty influential sort of creature in the literary world. Altogether I'm very pleased with myself for having got her away from Alison and Midge. That trio seems to have completely broken up - thanks to me. To think how I desperately wanted to be friends with Lavender! I wouldn't take her of(sic) the end of a barge pole. She is a most frightful goody good and the only thing that warms me to her is that she is a Gielgud fan.

### **Monday (Oct. 17th)**

The usual dreary feeling at having to go back to school. All the Phoebe Ebblewhites and creatures were shrieking around the place as usual. They are an uninspiring crowd really, quite lacking in any sort of imagination. When I think of St. Catherines - - - However its no good moaning about that now. I shan't be staying at this place much longer, only two terms at the most. And after all have met Elizabeth, and it was worth it. But the lessons are so boring, and everyone's so good and industrious. In the evening we went to the usual 1st Aid lecture, and it was quite interesting. I like the bus journey back particularly. Oh dear, I want to write so much but I'm too damn tired.

## **Tuesday October 18th**

The chief point of the day was a lecture by J.O.Beresford in the evening on "The Novel". It started off well, but he rather lost himself in the middle. However he sustained the interest all through, He had a charm of manner that made up for a certain lack of continuity, and unfortunately he hardly touched on modern novels. At the end there were quite a few questions asked, none of them frightfully intelligent, and I was bursting to say several things but didn't just have the courage to do so. Of course I regretted it afterwards. When I got home I found a letter from Juliet which pleased me a lot. She is a dear kid and I must keep up with her as I'm sure she'll get somewhere, or rather we'll get somewhere together. She has had about 8 letters from Pat Walker. I wish I'd had one in a way.

## **Wednesday (Oct. 19th)**

Elizabeth wasn't at school which made it all rather unpleasant. Apart from her and an uninspiring creature called Judy Anderson I hardly talk to anyone. But I don't care, as I know it always takes some time for me to make friends and when I do - well I do! I had a chat with Spee(?) about German which I'm not taking much to my relief. I must write to Annemarie soon, although I really don't see the point of it as it doesn't teach me anything. In the evening I went to my lecture and I was glad to see Elizabeth was there. We had burns, artificial respiration etc. I've given up writing down my dreams as I never remember it in time to remember them. I wonder exactly how interesting this diary will be in future years. Extremely dull I should imagine, but it might afford me a little quiet amusement.

## **Thursday (Oct. 20th)**

Elizabeth was still away and the day passed uneventfully. After lunch I went round to the Library and looked disjointedly through a few magazines, wandered on and bought "Theatre World" and walked back for tea. It had some gorgeous pictures of John in "Dear Octopus" which set my young heart fluttering. That, coupled with a dream I had last night, has made me slightly delirious about him tonight. I hope I dream again. It leaves me warm all day. (I think I've said that before somewhere. It sounds familiar.) In the evening Mary arrived. She is a sweet-looking kid and so nice, and I know Joly will lose his heart to her. Oh well it can't be helped. I shall find somebody who wants me alone for what I am worth. At least I hope I shall.

## **Friday 21st (Oct)**

Elizabeth still wasn't there which annoyed me a bit. The morning was unusually boring. How I loathe and detest French I used to like it so much more before. It seems to me that St. Catherines was a perfect paradise compared to this place. Of course I wouldn't tell Mummy that. I left out - what an awful thing to do - that Daddy left yesterday. I felt a little pang but no more. Actually I got to like (him?) a good deal more before the end, and I know he meant well. I wonder if Mary and I will ever become friends. I think we could but we see so little of each other. Mrs Macleish came for lunch. She is one of the people I feel awkward with. I've come to the conclusion it must be the "wits" so to speak - her and Mr. Cory and Mrs Wight specially. If only I could get over this beastly shyness. I think I'm better but I can't be

left with a person in a room for 2 minutes without feeling a sort of cloud of silence and awkwardness hovering round. I suppose its a form of selfishness but I'd do anything to stop it. I went to my V.A.D. in the evening and the others to the R.M.C. dance.

### **Saturday 22nd (Oct.)**

I missed the usual lovely Saturday routine and felt a bit lost. In the morning I went to get a paper and got "Woman's Journal". My affections are divided between that and "Theatre", which I really like better, but in the other I get furniture. After lunch I potted off for my bandaging practice. It was in a dark stuffy basement and I spent my time doing Mrs K. Elizabeth came back to tea and afterwards we went to "Scarlet Pimpernel" which I adore. Leslie Howard is is amazing - he must be 45 if he's a day but he sets my heart fluttering like fury. Oh if only I could see Jack more often. Its awfully difficult to be faithful when I haven't seen him for such years.

### **Sunday 23rd (Oct)**

In the morning I sat over the fire and learned my V.A.D. I think I'll be alright if I keep steady. I know my bandages anyway.. After lunch we went to Westminster Abbey for a service and I enjoyed it, though not the sermon. The singing was glorious. After a short walk we came home and they went off to a sherry party. I was glad to be left behind. They brought Joan Cooper back to supper and Douglas dropped in and we sat telling ghost stories for some time. He was obviously more appreciative of them than me, but I kept my end up and said quite a lot. Douglas hasn't really got much sense but that inevitable smile makes up for most things. I'm still thinking about M.H. "I know it, I know it, this time its real!". "I took one look at you and then my heart stood still." I wonder when I shall see him again - if ever - - -

### **Monday 24th (Oct). V.A.D.!!**

A most horrible day which I shall remember as long as I live. Morning school was as usual but at lunch time I trotted home with Elizabeth, and we spent the whole afternoon asking each other questions. I thought I knew it all pretty well, but oh dear, I was mistaken! We had the Exam at the Red Cross Centre, and the written part wasn't too bad - though I made a good deal of it up. But the aural - oh God it was hellish. I went in one of the last and was in a state of nervous collapse. He was an adorable doctor, young with fair wavy hair and a very gentle manner. But he started asking me about arteries and that stumped me and then he asked me if an old ladies' varicose veins in the street (sic). I ask you! I hadn't the vaguest idea and made a hash of it. Then he lead me to the patient and with his arm round me told me very sweetly to bandage a Potts fracture. I thought wildly but nothing happened so I applied a splint and a few bandages and hoped for the best. Of course they were all wrong and I felt as miserable as hell. Oh I know I've failed.

### **Tuesday 25th (Oct)**

A horrible day, cold with a pea-soup fog. In the morning I stamped my scarf with the lino-cut and it really looked rather hot. Of course it was rather splodgy and uneven but thats inevitable at first. When I got back I found Mr. Williamson here - Mummy's

first young man. He was a very uninteresting old stick and Mummy and I spent lunch making conversation at each other! I fail to see how she could ever feel romantic about him, but I suppose age makes a good deal of difference. Mummy has been round to see about typing and has found a place where it is 6 guineas for 3 months. There are quite a lot of students there and if Liza and I go together it ought to be awful fun. Much nicer than the First Aid though I enjoyed that and it will be useful in future years if I pass that exam. I couldn't sleep that night because of it

### **Wednesday 26th (Oct)**

A thoroughly uninspiring day, foggy, cold and boring. We had Latin in which she persisted in calling Cicero "jolly" and told us that we were not as good as usual. She says that every lesson so I can't think where she sets her standard from. Last night I had a ghastly time. I was still worried about that blasted Potts fracture and I couldn't get to sleep. I tossed about until 12 and then went down for an aspirin. I read a bit but even then I was wide awake, and suddenly all my misery came to the top with a rush and I lay and howled for half an hour. I suppose it was half the strain on my nerves, but it was a black half hour. I felt as everything would always be horrible, I should always be plain and tongue-tied and sensitive and my leg would always cause me torture. I can see now why people commit suicide. It is those moments when hell seems to be let loose, and we feel for ourselves, personally, "the eternal message of mankind". I eventually turned to God and went to sleep.

### **Thursday 27th (Oct)**

Nothing worth mentioning here. I went to the Forum with Granny and Auntie Margery in the afternoon and heard Mtrs Lambert Lack(?) talk on Celtic poetry. I enjoyed it most awfully and she recited beautifully. . Most of them were rather mystical and Irish.

**Friday 28th (Oct)** We had Parliament in the evening.

A boring day in the morning. I wish old Alison Trower wasn't hovering about all the time. I think Liza likes her just as much as me. Anyhow this typing business ought to settle matters once and for all. I'm just longing for it. I hope there some nice students there and we have fun.. Anyhow quite apart from that I shall benefit from it all my life. Then I can buy a typewriter and type my plays. I really shall send one to John Gielgud, or someone before long. I'm sure he'd write back. Anyhow there'd be no harm in trying, and if he did - - !! I've got so much to do nowadays that I never have time to think about a play or even get on with the one I've started. I really must try to work out a plot and some characters. The worst of it is I don't know anything about - well anything - and I can't make my adults talk interestingly. All rather a bore. I suppose one must have experience but I don't want to wait. In the evening Tony played to us and we went to "Algiers". It was exquisite. Charles Boyer gave me a sick pain when he made love - really physical as if someone were stirring my insides round.

### **Saturday (29th Oct.)**

I was up in high spirits as I had passed my First Aid Exam and also got a letter from Toddler. in the morning the others went to the National Gallery. I stayed in and

browsed. In the afternoon I did the same to the accompaniment of Tony Murray's music. In the evening we went to see "Elephant in Arcady". Douglas, Joan Cooper, and Leigh came and we went by tube. It was all most exquisite and musical and delightful with charming settings. Douglas fell for Joan, though I can't think why. Mary's much more attractive.

### **Sunday, (30th Oct.)**

Spent the morning indoors but in the afternoon Mary and I went for a walk. It was misty and wet but I enjoyed it. We went across the Park to Hyde Park Corner. We talked quite intimately of nothing in particular. I don't think somehow I shall ever become really friends with her. I think she must be very bored staying with us after the Coopers. She is very pally with Joan. In the evening Sheila and Joan came to supper. The others played Racing Demon but I went up to bed. Sheila came up too and we gassed for quite a long time. She was telling me about all the young men she kissed. Its queer to think she could attract people. I suppose they were a lot of sex-starved young subalterns buried in the back of beyond who hadn't seen a female under 40 for months on end. Rather pathetic. She is also going to leave Aunt Margery and live next door because Leigh is so beastly. I'd like to strangle that boy. He is The - well I'd go on all night if I once started.

### **Monday - (31st Oct.)**

A horrible day, boring and drab. Elizabeth likes Alison much better than me, and the worst of it is I don't really like her much. She's so young and giggly. But I suppose I must have someone. Thank God I won't be staying there long. I must start writing stories so

**Tuesday - (1st November)** [No entry.]

### **Wednesday - (2nd November)**

I'm in a fuming, raging, white hot temper and feel quite sick with rage and misery. Betty has just rung up and she wants me to go to Switzerland with her for a fortnight. Its only £15 for a fortnight including everything and when I asked Mummy she was simply infuriating and said "Yes, yes", in that idiotic way and that I couldn't go!! She "knew that kind of party". Oh I could strangle her, literally strangle. Why should the only pleasure I've had for years be snatched away from me. Its mean, utterly and unscrupulously foul, and I know if it had been the boys it would have been "Yes darling" "Of course darling" "Here's lots of money darling". They've been to Switzerland so why in heaven can't I go? Instead of just frousting round in London or Rudgewick with nothing to do? Its always like that directly I want anything badly somebody (usually Mummy, blast her) steps in and is pig-headedly mean about it.

### **Friday November 4th**

I should have started this on 1st but I didn't get it till today. It was half-term so we left school at 12. I started lunch at 1, and arrived at the Empire, Leicester Square at 5 past 3. Betty rolled up and we went in to see "Marie Antoinette". It was a good but extremely harrowing film, and rather too long I thought. In the middle she told me

that Mummy had rung up hers in a flaming temper and said I wasn't to go to Switzerland because of my leg. She was evidently fearfully rude. Oh she makes me sick. What does it matter about my leg? Even if I couldn't ski I wouldn't mind because I should be having fun with people I liked and really enjoying myself. Instead of frousting about at home with nothing to do. I talked to Betty about it all afterwards. It damn well isn't fair. Haven't I had enough suffering - oh bitter, bitter suffering - from my leg? She's the most possessive-minded creature I've ever met. I don't care if its wrong to talk about ones mother like that. It's true and its hellishly unfair. Its always been the boys and not me, and now when I've got the chance to have a little fun its snatched away. Anyway I'll have it back on her. I'll make money and I'll get away from my family. I've never been really one of them. Mummy and Daddy, Billy, Richard and Robert would be such a snug, contented little group without me.

### **Saturday November 5th**

Got up in a rebellious mood. Betty had to have her hair done so after buying some things at Marks and Spencers I came home. We had an early lunch and then went to Sandhurst. It was a nice match, very sunny and then we went to have tea upstairs. Billy didn't come till rather late and I was getting agitated. However we drove off eventually and on the journey a gloomy veil of silence descended on me. At least I was quite happy in it. It was a thick veil through which I could see and hear perfectly, but which I couldn't speak through and it was with me all weekend. Directly I arrived there and saw the laughing groups of people I was out of it and knew it. At supper I sat between two of the cousins and didn't say a word to either. It was an interminable meal during which Mummy shrieked and shouted a lot and was utterly feeble and childish. She makes me sick. Afterwards we sat in the drawing room and I eventually retired to bed, singularly undistressed by my uninspiring performance, and read "Operette". It is quite impossible to explain my feelings of this weekend. Usually I feel awkward, but I didn't now. I didn't want to talk as I usually do.

### **Sunday November 6th.**

Got up at 8.30 and had breakfast. In the morning I read poetry and "Tonight at 8.30" which for some reason I got bored with. Then I saw a poem Jock had written for the Observer and I felt quite sure I could do something like it. So I sat down and started and eventually got something quite good which I shall send up. Even if it isn't published I must make a start somehow. My chief desire at the moment is to get away from my family if not in body at least in mind. I must be independent of them somehow, Mummy especially. Oh if only I could make some money and get away into another society. I'm sure I can, and perhaps all this is happening to force me to do so. In the afternoon we went for a walk through some gorgeous woods. I wasn't tired though it was a fair distance. Mary is obviously attracted by Billy and she was trying to get him away from me all the time. Eventually, on the way back, I let them. Anyway I was too absorbed with my own thoughts to want to talk. We had tea at Gibbs(?) Hatch and then came home in the Green Line. A most queer and unhappy weekend.

### **Monday November 7th**

Started the day off by having a fast and furious row with Mummy. She said I had sulked all weekend and that I hadn't said a word to anyone, and that I thought it clever or funny or something to behave like that. I was simply furiously and gave her as much as I got which only made matters worse. God, I just hated her at that moment, and even now that I've cooled down I've still got a slight sore. She doesn't realise that if I'm in one of my silent moods I just can't talk. I don't think it clever or funny. I hardly think about it at all in fact. I wish I wasn't so blasted moody. I try to console myself by saying its artistic temperament, but its cold comfort - and I know its really just childish. In the morning I had my hair washed and cut and curled differently. It looked ghastly at first but I think will settle down quite prettily. Anyhow its a change. After lunch I went with Mummy to Queens Gate and then walked from there to Boots. It was quite a long walk through the park, but I didn't feel tired. I got out "Spella-Ho" by H.E. Bates. It looks good. The day ended quite peacefully but I'm still cross about this morning.

### **Tuesday November 8th**

A really hectic day. In the morning we dashed off to Whitehall and leant against some railings. We also saw Hore Belisha etc: After the procession we took a tube to the Mall and there I got into the front. After waiting an hour or so they came back and I saw them within about 3 yds. She looked simply sweet, glorious complexion etc: and he looked brown but rather tired. We went home for lunch and at 2.30 started out again. We went to Evans with my dress, then hared on to Martin Sherwoods. We had the frightfully pretty fair nurse who I like . He seemed quite pleased with me. Oh I hope my leg becomes a little better, at least. We were rather late and we hared still more, dashing up and down moving staircases until I was in a muck sweat. We arrived just after 5 and couldn't get in to Peter Fleming. I was frightfully disappointed and wandered round the stalls rather disconsolately, though they were all most interesting. I was compensated in the end by getting Peter F's autograph. He was awfully sweet - rather good-looking too.

### **Wednesday November 9th.**

Horrible getting up and going to school again. When I got back I was slightly bucked because Elizabeth seemed very friendly. However at the end of the morning she completely ignored me. I don't know where I stand with her. I don't think she really wants to go through with this typing. Still I don't really care for her much. Though I do like her better than nobody. Anyway next term she'll have all her other school pals and I shan't count in the slightest. Oh what the hell does it matter anyhow? In the evening June came to supper, and Betty rang me up. We talked for an hour

### **Tuesday November 10th**

It was the usual rather boring morning - but I got on fairly well with Eliza. In the afternoon I went to a poetry meeting with Granny. During tea she told me about a good but intensely sad play called "Glorious Morning" she had seen. Oh I must write a play soon. Perhaps when I go to India I shall have time and the experience. I think I ought during that year to gather a lot of valuable experience. I'm looking forward to

it really. If I have decent clothes and am not too shy I ought to have fun. At the poetry meeting I sat next to a cheerful old man called Mr. Walters who burst into conversation with me, and never stopped. He knows the whole of "Hound of Heaven" "Lycidas" and "Immortality Ode", and during the speech whenever they were mentioned he nearly knocked me off the chair in his excitement. He really was an awful dear. I enjoyed the lecture "Mystical Poetry". Granny came back to supper and Richard arrived rather late. He looked much better. He showed me the papers which didn't seem at all bad. I think he ought to get through and I think he ought to too.

### **Friday November 11th**

The morning boring as usual. In the afternoon I met Betty at 2.30 and after a bit of trouble we wandered off to the Book Fair. When I got there I found I hadn't my purse so she had to pay. We then went to Day-Lewis's lecture on War Poetry. He was too sweet, quite young and very attractive. He recited a lot of war poetry but the one I liked best was his own. Afterwards I dogged his footsteps and after a lot of trouble I found a chap who went and got it for me. I was awfully pleased but wish I'd had the courage to go up to him myself. After wandering round some more we went home. There after a long search, I discovered I had dropped my purse. Too hellish as it was all I'd got. It would happen to me. Oh well - - We went home and Mrs. W was there. I was shy and stupid as usual. Then I sat down and wrote to Juliet. After supper I read "Journey's End" and listened to the Armistice service on the wireless. This made me feel decidedly weepy but I got over it. It is a damn good play. Whenever I read it I am filled with an intense longing to write one myself. I know I shall some day.

*(12th November ) Heading: Saturday. Typing. Rugger. Billy.*

#### Books read while writing this diary

The Old Century*	-	Siegfried Sassoon
Spella Ho	-	H.E. Bates
Testament**	-	R.C. Hutchinson
Three Homes	-	Lennox Robinson
Crippled Splendour	-	Evan John
Charles Laughton* and I	-	Elsa Lanchester
Königsmark	-	A.E.W. Mason
Anatomy of Oxford. Ego 3	-	C. Day-Lewis and Fenby
Madame Curie*	-	Eve Curie
Death on the Instalment Plan	-	Celine
Swiss Sonata	-	Gwethalyn Graham
The House of Quiet* People	-	Brian Bulman
Gaudy Night*	-	Dorothy Sayers
The White Monkey*	-	Galsworthy
Ballet Go Round*	-	Anton Dolin
Bad Manners	-	James Agate
Youth Goes Over	-	Bracillach
The Daughter	-	Bessie Brache
My Friend Toto*	-	Chenie Keaston

Riding - nothing after

### **Sunday 13th (November)**

Older People	-	Hector Bolitho
Turnip Tops*	-	Ethel Boileau
Royal Escape	-	Georgette Heyer (unf:)
The Arches of the years	-	Halliday Sutherland
Down* the Garden Path	-	Beverley Nicholls
The Thatched Roof	-	" (2nd time)
Why didn't they ask Evans	-	Agatha Christie
Three Act Tragedy	-	" "
Nightingale Wood	-	Stella Gibbons
The Colonel's Daughter	-	Richard Aldingham
Brighton Rock	-	Graham Green
The Du Mauriers	-	Daphne Du Maurier
Broome Stages	-	Clemence Dane
Grand Hotel	-	Vicki Baum
O Absalom	-	Howard Spring
Christmas Holiday	-	Somerset Maugham
Worst Journey in the World	-	Cherry Garrard
Something Short and Sweet-		Bates
A Hope for Poetry	-	C. Day-Lewis.

### **Monday 14th (November)**

I felt an extreme nausea at the thought of the week ahead. When I got there it wasn't as bad as I thought. Elizabeth was quite friendly and altogether it was bearable. In the afternoon she and I went off to typing together. She didn't arrive till rather late but we got there eventually. I did book-keeping. There was another girl there just starting and I'm glad to say I got on a good deal faster than her. I should hate to feel I was getting left behind. Afterwards I thought it would be a good idea to walk home, so we started up at high speed (I've never seen anyone walk quite so fast as Elizabeth!) but after walking for about 1/2 hour we found we'd gone miles out of our way so took an 11 back to our starting point. The result of it all was that she was late and I was extremely hot and tired. I listened to a jolly good programme of Gramophone records in the evening.

### **Tuesday 15th (November)**

A usual day at school. Missed my pen badly. In the afternoon went off to typing, and did shorthand. Rather amusing.

### **Wednesday 16th (November)**

Another uneventful day. Its not worth recording them in detail. M. had a bridge party and in the middle we got a wire to say Richard had got a Hastings Scholarship at which there was much rejoicing.

Thursday 17th. (November)

Boring morning. In afternoon I went to Martin Sherwood. Thank goodness the curse was just over. Granny came to tea and I stuck in pictures.

**Friday 18th. (November)**

Went to hear Godfrey Winn speak. Shall never laugh at him again as is obviously sincere. Rather boyish and very sweet, but didn't touch on his subject. Went to "Awful Truth" with Wights and Mario. Mario nice but not at all romantic.

**Saturday 19th (November)**

Woke up to find Betty standing over me with an extremely grubby B2 and making rude (and somewhat justifiable) remarks about my personal cleanliness. The next thing I heard was the sounds of an argument between her and Mrs W. which didn't seem too promising. However it cleared up and she and I walked across Hyde Park to the row. It was a heavenly day, cool and crisp but overflowing with sunshine. We leant against the railings and watched the riders for some time and then I went home. Directly I got back I rang up Elizabeth who asked me to lunch, so I put on my hat and coat and went back to Marble Arch! I met the famous Mr. K who is awfully nice I didn't know whether to talk about his work or whether he disliked talking shop so I sort of hovered about in between. In the afternoon we went to "Pygmalion" which was too lovely for words. Wendy Hiller was so attractive and exactly like Sonia, and Leslie was his usual adorable self. The others went to the Coopers in the ~~afternoon~~ evening.

**Sunday 20th (November)**

Went for my ride in the morning. Unfortunately it poured with rain all the time and the ground was 5ft. deep in mud so I didn't enjoy it as much as usual. Sheila arrived late and went home by bus. I sat cold and wet in the tube, but felt better after a hot mustard bath. In the afternoon I wrote letters to Jill and Godfrey Winn. I must send the letters off as he might reply and it would be such a thrill. I don't feel crazy about him, but merely filled with terrific admiration. I must send that poem up to the Observer too. Supposing they accepted - oh heaven! Won't it be lovely to see my first work in print! Of course my things have been in the school mags but I don't count that. I wonder when somebody will deign to send me my School Cert etc: I think its the bally limit.

**Monday 21st (November)**

Vile getting up early specially as it was a cold foggy day. However when i got to school Eliza was very friendly and I didn't mind so much. In the afternoon we went to MissB's and it was rather fun for me - book-keeping. Dead tired so won't go on now. Finished Spella Ho. A fascinating book, in spite of the fact that the heroe(*sic*) was not a particularly attractive character.

## **Tuesday 22nd**

Boring school. In the afternoon went to Miss Blakeney and then on to Martin Sherwood. Didn't go to lecture.

## **Wednesday 23rd.**

Eliza becoming cold and distant again. Its always like that towards the end of the week.

## **Thursday 24th.**

Eliza quite faded out, fearfully boring. Afternoon to Miss B. Evening to Woman's Fair. I got lost so didn't enjoy it much. My feet were so sore.

## **Friday 25th.**

Got off Parliament. Went out with Betty and another girl to Pygmalion. Adored it. That night read a bit of Scott and talked till midnight.

## **Saturday (26th November)**

Betty and I chased round in the morning to see the Changing of the Guard. After lunch I went off to Granny and met an Elizabeth Smith and we (+ Sheila) played Mah Jong. It was quite amusing in a quiet way.

## **Sunday. (27th November)**

Had a divine ride. It was a day of frosty sunshine and I rode an adorably frisky horse. The park was looking exquisite and I was filled with an intoxicating "joie de vivre". In the afternoon I sat over the fire. A. Marjery was there part of the time.

## **Monday. (28th November)**

Loathsome school. Eliza extremely cold. Warmed up a bit in the afternoon when we went to typing. I'm just beginning to get the knack. Met Hazel Walwyn in the bus!

## **Tuesday. November 29th**

The chief point of the day was a lecture in the evening by Antony Tudor on "Ballet". He was too adorable, quite young, attractive, slightly foreign and with the most delicious sense of humour. It was not wit, but the exuberant, unself-conscious kind, taking off people beautifully, and with a wonderful spontaneous poise, He made me feel my old bitterness at my leg. I know I could dance, and jolly well too if it wasn't for that. I've got rythm(*sic*) and I think I would have a certain grace if I wasn't hindered all the time by it. I got his autograph afterwards. He really is a lamb.

### **Wednesday (30th November)**

Nothing particular. Had Robert on my hands and after kicking up a fearful shindy he was alright.

[Undated]

Here is a long gap. School has been going on the same as usual. I have been giggling with Elizabeth and she has gone round with Alison most of the time. Its been the usual dull, silly, miserable and girlishly happy routine. We had a sherry party in which I got on rather well with a Captain Low (Sheila's boy friend!). A most uninspiring creature but very verbose. All rather feeble.

### **Saturday December *(no date)***

Now at last theres something to write about. Its something important and vital but I can't think how to put it down. I'm all stirred up inside and thats fatal to coherence. I've just finished reading "Testament" [Testament of Youth]. Its the most wonderful book I've read for years - perhaps ever, I can't explain the feeling its roused in me. I feel as if all that was a part of my life, and yet I was an onlooker. Like dreams when you are watching a play and at the same time acting. Alexei and Anton - they are so wonderfully vital. Oh, its all so difficult but its roused in me a queer, aching longing - but what for? I think its a longing for a perfect friendship such as theirs - a friendship that can only I think exist between men. I want that more than anything but I shall never get it because men and women cannot meet on the same basis. There is always between them a barrier of sexual difference - there must be - and also a feeling that man is superior. Besides there is something trivial about women's minds - not catty necessarily but petty - that will not let them rise to the same heights of perfect unspoken love. They must always talk about their feelings and in doing so those feelings lose half their sacredness. I want to love without being in love - to get away from sex absolutely and completely. Perhaps its possible but I doubt it. There can never be between me and another human being a sense of unity so complete and everlasting that it will defy eternity. I love Jill - yes but its a love that is jealous and easily provoked to anger. That can't be real. I want the kind that never falters, asks no questions and is prepared to make the final sacrifice. I want somebody who wants me and who will bring out in me the best as I will in him. Perhaps it will be a woman. But whatever it is and whoever it is I must find it. Oh I dont know why I'm so worked up tonight. If only I could put down a little of what I feel. It is in Jesus only that I will find this something for which my soul longs, it is in his perfect, all-comprehending, blazing love that I will eventually find peace. But I can't find Him yet. Oh this is all rot. What am I trying to say? I want something - love, Jesus - I don't know what. I want to do something which I really believe in fight for some cause. I want to be a man. I dont want to write I want to live. I'm trying to find something or somebody who which will solve for me the awful problems all round, and in whom I shall find perfect understanding and perfect fulfilment.

### **Saturday December 17th**

This seems to have relapsed into a weekly diary. But I'm usually so dead tired after school that I can't be fagged to write. This week has been slightly better than usual. We had 2 exams in which I don't think I did very well. I may have come top - or

bottom. Actually I don't think I did badly in either. I was quite friendly with everyone and Eliza seemed amiably(sic) inclined. But I'm glad schools nearly over for this term. On looking back on it it seems quite harmlessly boring. Rather a waste of money except History of Art. Anyhow I've got one new friend which is something. We went to the National Gallery and to Albert and Victoria Museum where I met Betty Osborne! On Friday went to "Carefree" which I enjoyed v. much. Today bitterly cold. Got a letter from Pat Trav: and wrote one back. Wrote to Daddy. Also wrote to Juliet. They are lucky going on the stage.

### **Sunday and Monday 18 and 19th (December)**

My hands are so cold that I can hardly write. At the moment I am reposing gracefully in bed with a heavy cold. The snow is whirling past my window, and my room is like a refrigerator. My hands are aching with cold but my feet are fairly alright as I have a tepid water-bottle. I have a wireless (which has just run out) and am reading poetry in a desultory sort of way. My nose is hot and runny, and aching with potential pimples. My only comfort is that I am missing school. I went for a ride yesterday and nearly froze stiff on my seat. I want to write poetry but can't get started and anyhow I'm too cold. Got a letter from Daddy this morning. Am reading "Three Homes" by Lennox Robinson (+ Tom and Nora "). Rather nice.

## **Christmas Holidays 1938-9**

### **Sunday and Monday 25th and 26th December**

Well Christmas is all over and actually I'm rather pleased. All this forced gaiety and hearty joviality rather bores me. Sad, but true. We went to early service and spent the morning sitting over the fire, opening presents etc: My best thing was a blue jumper from Auntie Marjery. We didn't get many things really. In the afternoon we went for a long walk through the snowy lamplit streets to try to shake down the lunch. Rather enjoyable until my feet began to hurt. After that we just sat over the fire in a drowsy fashion, had some sausages for supper and then played games with the Coopers till 12. It wasn't frightfully successful. Today I got up at 11.30 and went straight off to the Wights. Arrived just on time to find them all making their beds. Lunch was rather sticky. We went to see "Scarlet Pimpernel". It was exceedingly bad and Derek de Marney looked hideous. Made the further acquaintance of Ubbon(?) who I rather like.

### **Tuesday 27th December**

Got up at 10 as usual. In the morning I hovered about tidying up and generally amusing myself. Had lunch at about 2 and at 3 Billy and I started off for a walk through the park to Victoria to see "Pygmalion". It was an extremely long walk but enjoyable. We neither of us said much. Its funny, we don't seem to have anything to talk about. He never attempts to expound to me and all my attempts at conversation are received with blank silence. However I think we're better than we were. I think that in a way he respects me more than he did. He realises I'm beginning to grow up. Its funny, but at 16 I'm at the same age of mental development as he is at 19. I suppose girls are bound to be more precocious, but I think I'm actually old for my years. Except for my awkwardness (which may be permanent - I hope to God not

though) I'm equal to any average grown-up. I'm sure of it. Its all so damn silly to be treated like a juvenile. I shall never treat my children as children once they reach their teens.

### **Wednesday 28th December**

Did a bit of desultory shopping in the morning (consisting chiefly of wandering round Smiths to see if "Theatre World" was out.) In the afternoon went to tea with the Gravestones. Richard has changed a good deal for the better, and is a tall husky creature now. It was all rather boring.

### **Thursday 29th December**

In the afternoon went to see "The Citadel". It was extremely good and made me feel all medically worked up. She and I got on like a house on fire!

### **Friday 30th December**

In the afternoon went to see "Alexander's Ragtime Band" with Eliza. I enjoyed it very much. She has a grand sense of humour that kid, and is a strange mixture of childishness and wit.

### **Saturday 31st. December**

Well, 1938 is drawing to its close. It is ticking out its last painful minutes, as I lie in bed with my feet on a hot water bottle and my leg throbbing slightly with a queer insistent ache. Outside I can hear the cars swish by through the wet streets and voices call to each other - gay and defiant. Somehow there is hope in the air. It has been a miserable frightening year but it is over now. It can be buried and forgotten, and we can look to the future gladly. I expect I am being dramatic and silly but I don't care. What has the past year meant to me personally? It has been very full and very significant. This time last year I was a timid, rather unhappy schoolgirl, wistful but uncertain. I have changed a good deal. I am still timid and sometimes unhappy, but I have confidence, assurance and a certain poise. I have matured a good deal and am standing on the brink of life (!) just a little afraid but eager and excited. By this time next year I shall have matured oh so much more. This will be childish garble to me. And so it should be. For each year is bringing me closer to that thing for which I have been longing - that position, that fame, that complete and uncloyed happiness. Five more minutes of the old year. We are glad to be rid of you 1938. I have enjoyed parts of you but on the whole - No. Oh God, let this year, this 1939, be one of recovery. Let us balance ourselves and our ideas. Let us have faith in you, faith in ourselves, faith in each other. We want you so much really, though we sometimes try to hide it and forget it. We know you cannot fail us.

It is the NEW YEAR. Welcome  
1939

**Sunday Jan. 1st.**

The first day of 1939 passed in a quiet unassuming way. There is really nothing to write about but I thought I'd better start the year well. I spent the morning over the fire, writing to John Gielgud and starting a feeble story. Though I know I shall be famous one day, I think I'll have to wait some time. I've given up all infant prodigy dreams. The stuff I write is hardly better than that of any other 16-year-old, and the only thing that's going to get me on is my wanting it so badly. If I have enough confidence I must succeed, and I will have that confidence. That must be one of my aims for this year - CONFIDENCE. Went to tea with Granny

**Monday Jan. 2nd**

Rather a disappointing day I think. I'm never quite sure if my instinct is right about these things, but I felt it didn't go off too well. And it cost me about 9/- !! Ghastly, and though I ought to have felt the satisfaction of the generous I only felt a rather sick disgust at such an unnecessary waste of money. I met Toddler at Waterloo and from there we proceeded to Piccadilly where we had lunch. But afterwards we had simply hours in which to do nothing and we didn't do it very successfully. The film "That Certain Age" was rather sweet but I was a little disappointed. Inevitable I suppose - Toddler, as I knew she would be, was much more interested in Betty -----  
Oh well -----

**Tuesday 3rd January**

Extremely dull. Got up late, potted out for a little shopping and then after a hasty lunch dashed off to meet Billy. It was all a waste of time and trouble and energy. In the afternoon I had my hair done. Most uninspiring.

**Wednesday 4th. January**

A definite flop as far as days are concerned. We all dressed up to go to Low's Club and when we got there none of us said a word except Mummy. We all sat in grim silence and Billy was extremely shy and awkward. The play was very good I sat next to Betty who confessed to be suffering from her same infatuation. I accepted with a good will but began to lose patience eventually. Henry Low buzzed off without saying goodbye. A definite flop.

**Thursday January 12th**

Another aching void - never mind, all the more space for the exciting things I shall have to write later in the year. (I wonder! I shall most likely be a bored and dejected little wallflower!) Anyway as far as I can remember the following have happened. Yesterday, Tuesday, Wednesday - I got up late, rang up Eliza, had lunch and then went off to do typing. I was rather bad and backward. At 5 took a tube and went to meet Sheila. We waited for hours in one and eventually got into "Pygmalion" and

"The Lady Vanishes". Both heavenly of course. I didn't get in till 11 and Sheila till 12. Helluva row as Granny had to wait up. On Tuesday I felt like death warmed up in the morning, but regained my composure afterwards sufficiently to have tea with Eliza and go on to Stephen King Hall. He was rather angelic. Came back, pushed up a little, and then we - family plus Sheila, Michael, Twinkie, John T - went to "Under Your Hat". It was heavenly. Michael obviously fell for Twinkie.

### **Saturday January 14th**

Spent a lazy morning hogging the fire and reading Agate's "Ego's". A stimulating and amusing book - worthy of him. I wish my diary could be even a quarter as humorous, but inevitably it couldn't. Half of his work is taken up with stories he has heard from other people. As I never hear any and never remember them when I do its not much good. Anyway if I was writing this for publication I would endeavour to enliven it slightly. As it is I shall quote the more worthy chunks in my later autobiography as examples of the beautiful innocence of my adolescent mind. Quite charming I'm sure.

In the afternoon I sallied forth to see Betty off at Victoria. She seemed quite cheerful and I certainly envied her. Funny to think I shan't see the old fish again for two years. I expect we shall be much the same then - slightly more sophisticated perhaps. She'll be running several wild love affairs and I'll be just preparing to settle down at Oxford for 3 years. I'm glad I'm crashing into the world so young. When I arrive at Oxford I ought to have definite poise and social sense which'll be a great asset. I shall probably still be a gauche and tongue-tied young thing suffering from "the pathos of youth's inevitable disillusionment."

After seeing B. off Mrs W. K and I had tea and then went into a News Theatre. She paid for me thank God as I hadn't a sou. She is really a charming woman only frightens me into the middle of next week. I suppose that's the last time I'll see either of them.

In the evening it was pouring and Nanny and I set off to see "South Riding". However when we got there we found 2/6 seats were the only ones left, so she retired in haste and I went in alone.

The film itself was absolutely beautiful. Having read the book it all seemed much more real, and although it was different in many ways it was not spoilt at all - in fact rather improved. In the book I had never been able to feel Caine of Maythorpes charm. I had always imagined him to be like Godfrey Tearle. But Ralph Richardson was completely devastating and won my heart right from the beginning. He is not in the least good-looking but oozes charm and in some parts I felt an almost sick pain - gloriously horrible as if someone had put a finger on my heart. He has jumped up in my estimation almost on an equal with John and Jack. Edna Best was sweet as Sarah Burton but the one who struck me most was John Clements as Astell. An attractive young man and a wonderful actor. I remember noticing him in a 2-minute part in "Knight without Armour". Altogether I enjoyed it as much as any film I have ever seen. Caine doesn't get killed and it all turned out alright. I hope I'll see R.R. again soon.

### **Sunday January 15th**

Woke up after restless but satisfying dreams about films - Ralph R. etc - all mixed up. Had breakfast in bed and spent the morning mucking about - reading Ego chiefly.

After lunch we dashed off to Covent Garden with a view to hearing Thos: Beecham. Unfortunately disillusionment awaited us and we had come the wrong day so we traped [sic] home again. Olive and Bluebell turned up and stayed for tea. We chatted aimiably [sic] of this and that until about six. They are rather wets. Studiously correct in everything they say or do but lacking any spark of humour and general intelligence. They rather patronise me too - which annoys me. They could be attractive if only they sat up and took notice. I shan't let my youth pass me by like that. No sir!

### **Monday January 16th.**

Got up fairly early for me - was down at 10.15ish - and after a bit of general meanderings Mummy and I set off armed with gas masks in a large suitcase. It was all rather amusing. Everybody opened the door with a "What-the-hell-do-you-want-and-if-so-you-won't-get-it" sort of look on their faces. But at the magic word "gas-mask" they oozed with a sort of guilty politeness - hoping against hope that the blasted thing hadn't cracked being shoved behind the dresser, or had they put it under the chest-of-drawers after all? I was filled with a still greater conviction that my real calling in life is to work in the slums. I adored getting a glimpse into these people's lives - seeing their reaction and the conditions they lived in. They were all the same houses but whereas some were neat and comfortable others were indescribably squalid. It was these that I was drawn towards most - strengthening above mentioned conviction. If I had been the tender little flower sheltered from the cruel winds of worldly affairs as I should be I should have been extremely shocked as every other house seemed to contain unmarried couples living together. Actually I wasn't in the least shocked - merely a little surprised that people did it so brazenly.

In the afternoon Granny and A. Marjery and brought 3 of Sheila's frocks which turned out to be extremely nice and very thin-making. They mentioned having had Bill Harisson to tea whom they declared in ecstatic tones to be a "darling". This left me cold but when they said that he had taken Sheila to the slums and that he worked there himself on Sundays I pricked up my ears to their full extent. I do hope they mention me and my adoration for latter to him, as I can't, being a feeble female - go there by myself but I'd die to be escorted thither. The future looks extremely bright - except for school. Oh damn!

### **January 17th - Tuesday**

A few sparklesisms from Ego 3.

Selwyn Jepson's

I've given up making love to actresses. They put their arms round your neck and murmur "Do you know Sydney Carroll?"

Wit of friend.

His heart is as big as a theatre and every seat is bookable.

A journalist saying that his editor was ill

Lionel Hale murmured "Nothing trivial, I hope".

A serious translation of Mitlons [Miltons] "Hail, Horrors, Hail", - "Comment vous portez vous, les horreurs, comment vous portez vous?". This I consider a gem.

# Queen's Gate School, Spring Term 1939

## **Wednesday 18th** (1939)

Awoke in the dark and dreary dawn and shuffled off to school. Odious. Wasn't so bad when I got there. Everybody is quite friendly and I shall settle down to the same somewhat drab routine. Finished a letter to Betty, not overful of wit, and wrote rather a good ditto to Toddler. I never write it for her to read but as if she was going to show it to Steve!! Had Latin in the afternoon. She was quite cheerful and we were rather bright.

She said "This is beautiful Latin. This is the kind of Latin Lord Baldwin speaks in English".

Others went to see "Geneva" and I came back and read Shaw's "Prefaces". Pretty hot.

## **Thursday January 19th.**

Received two of the letters I have been expecting - from Juliet and Pat. Both of them charming especially latter. She says that she has no particular boy-friend but just gets asked out to dances etc: by different ones. She wants me to go and stay with her which I should adore and I hope it comes to pass (becoming all biblical for some unknown reason!) School pretty drab, Eliza liking Alison obviously better. Blast that Joan Pitt child, she's spoilt everything. Anyway I don't really care. It's my last lousy term. In the afternoon went with Robert to "Peter Pan". I don't think he saw or heard properly, but he talked loudly the entire time. causing the child in front to ignore the play completely and stare at him open-mouthed.. I think it is rather a pity I went as the glamour has entirely faded. The only things I felt the slightest thrill at were the rush of wind at Peter's entrance and the flying. Unfortunately I couldn't hear or see properly. We came home in a taxi, R. in a very bad temper. Started "Anatomy of Oxford(?)" which I perceive I'll have to buy.

## **Friday January 20th**

Got a letter from Jill in the morning in which she apologises profusely for not writing. Said some strange person had burst in on the family - a "he" - and had apparently come to stay. It all sounds very odd as she's not allowed to breathe a word about it. It might be her father - but why should she want to hide that? I suppose its a friend of her mother's. Her friendship is the best thing I have found in life. I hope to God it remains with me to the end. School was as usual and I was rather friendly with Pam Ferrers-Guy of all people! In the afternoon I went to typing and got on rather well - starting a beautiful letter to Pat Trav. Talked to Juliet Connel and Priscilla Thomas. I like former very much but can't get over her age - 21! Every time I think of it astounds me more.

I have decided to write a story called "The Mews", about all those people we saw t'other day. It would make a marvellous story I think. The dirty old woman at the end with drunkard husband and two sons, one of them a nervy drug-fiend (homosexual?) and the other in a turmoil between religion and a prostitute. Mrs Sketchley, an aimiable woman, attractive but weak-kneed with a Mr. Deane, a forceful man of great attraction - domineering and bitter - who lives with (?) to try to forget a passionate and unhappy marriage. Then the little red-haired woman next

door newly married. The trials of early married life. Over the road Mr and Mrs King. She a nice, large, cheerful woman - he a rather thin, cultured - quiet man of great attraction. Both of them resenting childlessness in a different way but neither telling the other. A steady marriage with a quiet, unemotional happiness that is easily ruffled. N.B. Story worked out by showing the effect of the arrival of another person or persons on the scene. The way all their lives are mixed up together.

Plot??

### **Saturday** (January 21st)

Saw England beat Wales at Twickenham. Very good match and great fun. Met an old friend of Mummy's, an extremely attractive man of about 60 - Bertie Webster? Had an amusing train journey back owing to drunk Welshman in carriage. Very sweet. Met Barbara and Uncle Lionel. She is back at school poor wretch.

### **Sunday 22nd (January)**

Went to Beecham at Covent Garden. Exquisite concert though uncomfortable conditions in gods - v. cramped and hot. Played -

Haydn's 99th - very tuneful

Schubert's Unfinished - Marvellous esp. 1st m.

Beethoven's 8th - Superbly moving

Sibelius - "En Saga" - Heavenly - reminded me of raging blizzards.

### **Monday 23rd (January)**

Horrible going back to school - a warm wet day, depressing to a degree. Pretty gloomy lessons. Its odd how I can always talk to somebody if I get them by themselves, but in a mass its hopeless - todays Great Thought. Went to typing with Eliza - rather amusing. Went to Martin Sherwood. Vile. Joan Turbett (a blonde now) came in and June who stayed to supper. Had a long discussion about Richard which got me into ferocious temper. Letter from Betty who is very happy. Sounds a heavenly life. Lucky pig. Also mingy ditto from Toddler.

### **Tuesday 24th. January**

A satisfactory but somewhat dismal day, Went down to Guildford by Greenline in the morning - a sunny sleepy journey with the country looking exquisite. Had lunch at Tudor Café, and then went to Dunsfold in A.Hilda's car. Was fitted and chose various patterns and then drove back to Guildford. Had tea and then came back arriving at about 7.15. The day was made dreary chiefly by worrying about Richard. I feel sure, more than I've ever felt sure about anything before that he ought not to go on working. He needs relaxation above everything as he's frightfully run down - practically concave in fact. The thought of him flogging on through the summer makes me feel acutely miserable. As for all that about the prefectship being necessary "to bring him out" "give him responsibility" etc. - that is one of the delusions common to all species of the teaching profession - male and female (particularly the latter I imagine, having had innumerable and quite useless jawings on the subject myself. In my experience of retiring people, authority hasn't given them confidence but merely been an embarrassment. Anyway a trip abroad would be just as beneficial, more so in

fact. If only someone would listen to me. I'm sure they'll ruin him if they persist. I shall write a long letter to Daddy on the subject I think.

**Wednesday** 25th January

A bitter, snowy, slushy day - very ordinary. No letters - no nothing. Wrote to Betty.

**Saturday 29th** (January)

Have just returned from seeing "Quai des Brumes. It is strange how we in England cannot approach the French for beauty and a strange sort of mysticism. We are afraid of reality I suppose and shy away from anything that is in the slightest suggestive of life. "Too near the bone" we say and turn away, a little shocked. It upsets us to be presented with strange, passionate individuals, working out their lives in a splendid sort of isolation. We like to have our emotions carefully sorted out and labelled and the characters presented to us wrapped up in brown paper with a notice saying "such and such a type" and tied up with a big blue ribbon. They must move in a certain social circle, act according to the "character attributed" to them, and their love affairs must be well-balanced and beautifully modulated with not a suspicion of anything so degrading (and inevitable) as passion. In other words it must all be sublimely ridiculous. But in France it is different. Being much more sensitive, intellectually and artistically, their work has a haunting, throat-catching beauty. One feels that the people who move through the film are controlled by a destiny that they half-realise but cannot fight against. Chance has thrown them together and each, in his solitariness, is yet forced into the lives of others. They are helpless, passionate, real. Jean Gabin and Michele Morgan head an inspired cast.

In the morning got the following:

Royal blue and white evening dress - lovely Hungarian dress with tight waist - 2 heavenly blouses and a dress from M&S.

**Saturday 4th** February

Another hectic, boring week has passed, a rather miserable week on the whole. At the beginning I was weighed down by an aching loneliness and pessimism and at the end by a calm but quivering dread. I had one of my indescribable moods at the beginning, when everything jarred and I spent long hours of the night in wild outbursts of tears and prayer. This passed but only to be replaced by a horrible fear. I was writing a letter in Interior Dec. All about the female who was taking it. Not too complimentary either! Which she grabbed and bore off with a look of grim determination to Spee. I spent many fearful hours preparing to be expelled but it ended by a long heart-to-heart talk with Johnny: She was extremely nice, but I felt acutely embarrassed as always. I infinitely prefer a good blazing row. It's funny, I have quite a good capacity for making myself seem intelligent. She burred a lot about my superior mind which was utter rubbish but gratifying. I shall probably get another jawing from Spee. What a bore.

Have just returned from seeing "Prison Without Bars" which is a stupendous film I think. It may be, and I think was, because I liked all the principal characters so much. Corinne Luchaire, the young girl, was the most fascinating thing I've seen for years. Young and fair-haired with the most oddly compelling face. I adored her. Barry K.

Barnes was the young doctor, and though not so devastating as usual, was definitely heart-throbbing. And Edna Best was wonderful as the superintendent with new ideas. The more I think about it, the more I think my vocation in life is to do something for other people. But then what about my writing? Half of me wants to do that desperately and the other half pulls against it. And marriage and a home? Oh God, what a life. What a hope for a woman. If only I could find something or someone which could occupy me absolutely and forever.

This is a glamorous poem written to me by Eliza in Carrant (sic) Events.

Hitler is skittish  
Musso's a flirt  
Stalin's a gay dog too  
But the sun is on high  
And Gods in the sky  
So I don't care, do you?

### **Thursday Feb. 9th**

Its years since I wrote this - about a week. This week has been considerably better than last and on the whole alright. Eliza has come back very full of beans - an amazing child, absolutely bursting with vitality and an unfailing flow of wit. Have finished Mme Curie. Marvellous to have a vocation and to find some sympathetic soul to share it with. Wrote to Betty, Pat and Juliet. Started "Death on I.Man(I.Plan?)". Sordid but good. Richard had his appendix out successfully thank God. Am desperately tired.

### **Wednesday 15th**

Am now in bed with a heavy flu cold, feeling like death warmed up. Actually I'm not so bad today as yesterday, and the streamingness of it has gone. I couldn't read then but lay in a heavy, hot head-achy coma. Today however I have read the whole of "The White Monkey" which needless to say I adored. Michael of course was an angel as always, Fleur fascinating but not quite worth him, and Wilfred Desert bowling me completely headlong - as always. His pale dark passionateness is irresistible to me. Oh I want someone like that - - I'm sure I could make him happy, fit in with his moodiness and desires. The only thing lacking in Wilfred is his lack of humour, but I'm sure that underneath he has a certain cynical wit. Of course I love Michael almost as much, he's a nicer sort of person and my only wish is that he could have fallen in love with someone who really loved him.

Though this diary does not reveal the fact I'm feeling very poetical but can think of no outlet for my inspiration. I want to write something on Youth and Disillusionment which is my chief preoccupation at the moment. Don't know if I've already recorded the fact but I've discovered Matthew Arnold. I wrote a bilgy poem t'other day which Eliza showed to her renowned Papa and which he declared to show great promise! She certainly is the person to know, as she says her father could get me a job in The Times if I wanted it

Oh Michael, Wilfred, Fleur, why aren't you real, why aren't you living just round the corner so that I could go and see you. I can just see you, Fleur with Ting on her lap and Michael leaning over the back of her chair while Wilfred lounges opposite watching them with hungry, unhappy, darkly passionate eyes. Wilfred, oh Wilfred I

do love you so. They've got each other and you've got no one. Except me - you've always got me, my dear.

(My God.) [Written in a different pen – presumably later]

### **Sunday 19th February**

Am up and about again after a lot of lousy headaches - and feeling O.K. Saturday went down to Country-Dressmaker, Coopers, lovely day. This morning it was so heavenly I went for a walk in the park by myself, and was blissfully happy for two hours. It was a day of still, misty sunshine, with a soft, cool wind blowing ones hair. I wandered among the trees, long-shadowed on the bright grass - slowly savouring the beauty of it all. Then down by the Serpentine where the water glimmered golden and the trees and gulls and buildings were all wrapped in a haze of misty stillness. I leaned over a bridge for hours, the wind caressing my cheeks and hair, the burnished water stretching into the grey and russet distances. It was so peaceful in spite of the people, that I was drowsy and intoxicated by the cool caressing warmth and wanted to stand there - like Fantasio(?) - counting 1 2 3 4 - - till I die. So home, reluctant, but happy, full to overflowing with the loveliness of it all.

I'm reading a heavenly book called "The House of Quiet People". Its about a young man who has T.B. and the man who wrote it has just died of that foul disease. A great wave of - how shall I describe it - longingness, sweeps over me as I read. I want to do something to help suffering people. I've suffered enough to know what its like but my misery is nothing to some peoples. I've spent so much of my life looking upon myself and cursing my fate that its about time that I realised that there are others worse of(sic). I am sure that only in serving others will I reach that stage of self-forgetfulness which will induce happiness. Serving others or loving one. It comes to the same thing. As I write an odd, almost terrifying feeling overcomes me as to who I am. Who is the person with the thin arms and the long fingers lying in this bed with the gold eiderdown? It overwhelms me. I quite often get it. It is a half-realisation of the Soul and a glimpse into eternity.

### **Wednesday 22<sup>nd</sup> February**

Mummy and I set off for Southampton in a depressing drizzle, and still more depressing was the fact that I had frightful sore throat and glands. However when we got there it was clear and sunny and it was amusing looking over the ship and a novel experience (for me) We had lunch on board and sat opposite three assorted officers, one of whom I liked. Uncle Lawrence arrived and afterwards we wandered round and stood about on deck, talking spasmodically. I felt very sick and sore generally. We were turfed off quite early and stood in a perishing wind waiting for the blasted thing to steam off which it eventually did - looking most impressive - white in the sunshine, the sky and sea very blue, everyone waving and shouting. Rather an anti-climax afterwards and on the journey back I felt most horribly unwell. I flopped into bed on arrival, nearly did a dramatic faint and registered a temperature of 102°. So the next 5 days were spent in bed, with flu. I will duly describe them - but not tonight.

### **Thursday 23<sup>rd</sup> February**

Dr. Lee arrived and chestily(?) informed me I had 'flu. The next few days were enlivened by sore throat, ear-ache and inflamed eye. "The House of Q.P." was followed by "Gaudy Night" which I lapped up in two days, even then restraining myself, and needless to say adored. A mixture of Peter Wimsey and Oxford was almost too much for me. Peter is undoubtedly "my ideal" to put it in a thoroughly objectionable and schoolgirlish way. Of course he never could have loved anyone but Harriet, but perhaps in this wide world there might be someone who resembles him enough to be enough. I must get to Oxford if I die in the effort. Three years spent in that sunny, tree-laced city with its bright quads and grey buildings, its river its atmosphere of serene and rather stately contentment, would to me be bliss, absolute and complete. I wouldn't worry my head with parties or morals, ideals or principles, but just relax and be happy in that "home of lost causes" where so much that is good emerges from so much that is worthless. Books and friendship would suffice. Perhaps my dream will never come true. Even if not it will have been worth while just to have dreamt.

I started a play called "All other Things" which I'll describe later.

### **Wednesday 1st March**

Returned to school and found that everyone had quite forgotten my existence and I was definitely depressed. Thursday and Friday passed ordinarily.

### **Saturday 4th March**

So much has happened since I last wrote that it is oppressing to think of describing even half of it. I really must try to make this a day-to-day affair again. I think as far back as I will go is Tuesday before last. This was significant only because I went stage-dooring with Juliet, Pam and Alison. John was as rapturous as ever, and we also saw Ronald Ward, Angela Baddeley and Joyce Carey (who is infinitely preferable off stage). I must go to a "Dear Octopus" matinee one day soon.

Went to Twickenham in the morning and it poured solidly and icily until 3, so that we couldn't eat our lunches and felt thoroughly depressed. Juliet and I had lovely ringside seats and saw perfectly and it was a lovely match and fine afterwards. Met Uncle Lawrence and Aunt Helen and Juliet came back to tea.

### **Sunday 5th March**

A lovely morning when we three went into the park and watched the riders, and Mummy went to Guildford to fetch puppy. Afternoon was drowsy until relations starting to pour in, when it became chaotic. I do adore Aunt H, though I'm sure she despises me. Marc(?) Antony too sweet.

### **Saturday 11th March**

Have quite given up the attempt to make this anything but a spasmodic affair, and perhaps it is better so. It is odd that though I am often quite humorous in my letters, this diary is utterly devoid of a single sparkle of anything approaching wit. My true self - without attempts at decoration I suppose. What a sad thought. I am now reading Agate's "Bad Manners" which is amusing but not quite up to his usual

standard I don't think. He uses too many exclamation marks which makes it appear just a little fourth formish. Am also re-reading "Present Indicative" and revelling in it. Coward's wit is far in advance of James when dealing with manners. Took Robert to his nursery school today and he seemed terribly happy. Nanny sniffed and snuffed all the way home. Proceedings were also enlivened by us running out of petrol in the middle of a congested crossing. Had a long letter from B. enclosing a first scene to a play and several bits of poetry. One of her own efforts was not at all bad - as follows

The eternal strife of truth with wrong  
Eternal love, eternal hate.  
The steadfast chant of holy song  
From lips that find they sing too late  
All hope, all faith, all patient work  
They pass at length into the murk.

That last line spoils it. It should be "They pass at length into the night" and I must think of summat to ryme(sic). "Right" is the word. "All wrong, all right" Perhaps but I don't think so. The first scene of her play was good in the atmosphere, normal and with a theatre sense, but I altered it in bits as I thought the humour wasn't developed enough. Its funny how she always goes for action - mystery - drama and I go for character studies, situation and psychology. Hers is the wisest course. My own play has not progressed at all. There's no time. Had a foul row with the Latin mistress and she said all the staff said I was getting lazy. Which is quite obvious.

I am now going to compose a poem of which this fascillime(?) will be prized and published in years to come. Its object is to win a prize at the B.B.C.

"Must you bark "That feller Kipling  
now look what he has to say  
And then misquote large chunks of  
"On the road to Mandalay".  
Must you tell me all the illnesses  
you have or haven't had  
And intersperse each sentence with  
"By Jove, sir" or "By Gad"  
Must you talk of "Chota harzery" when  
breakfasts what you mean  
Or repeat jokes which were ancient  
when they sang "God Save the Queen"  
Must I listen for the hundredth time to  
stories of the war  
Or of "pig-sticking in Poona" or those  
days at Bangalore  
Must you bawl "You young things  
nowadays don't know what good songs are"  
~~—And then start to hum quite out of~~  
~~—tune "Pale Hands of Shalimar"~~  
And then sing, quite out of tune  
about pale hands of Shalimar  
Must you moan "This frightful climate"  
must you talk about "the wife"  
Must I relish every aspect of your  
past and present life.

Must you, must you, must you -  
oh but I'll forgive you all your tricks  
If this verse, inspired by you, wins  
me that longed-for 10/6.

To a Colonel late retired from the Indian Army.

### **Wednesday** 15th March

Just a line to say Band Waggon is over and I'm feeling too miserable. I feel as if I've lost my nearest and dearest. Also a prospective tenant is coming to see the house, so we may get off. Also Uncle Ernest has written and sent 2/6. Also we are broke.

### **Thursday** 16th March

Hitler has annexed C-Slovakia and a balloon barrage is flying over the house. I don't think words are much use. Hell! I'm sick with fright and hope and disgust and just a weary sort of resignation. Why oh why - its all so pointless. I'm being rather dramatic but quite sincere.

### **Saturday** 18th March

Hitler has sent an ultimatum to Rumania. That man is the devil incarnate. I think we will get off eventually. I'm beginning to feel a little scared. But here I make my resolution. I won't let my leg make a difference. I'll play tennis and dance (if I can) and try to conquer it. Its a challenge. Anybody can get on if they're physically fit but to get on with a serious disadvantage like that is worth aiming at. And I will. Its bound to make a difference, but there must be some reason for it, and I must have been compensated in some way. God alone knows how but there it is, Anyway, I've made that resolution and I'll stick to it. God will help me I'm sure - he dash well ought to anyway! Sorry God, I didn't mean that rudely.

All through the day I have laughed  
Laughed and talked and forgotten  
Out in the streets there was sunshine and winds  
had begotten  
Laugh in the sun and the rain  
I might  
But now it is night.

### About B's play

(i) You may be better at tragedy real grim tragedy, but your characters are too much inclined to sob convulsively and moan "Oh God why was I born" I think that the essence of tragedy - or pathos rather. I think that's more suitable to our puny efforts - is reserve. Its much more effective to see people holding themselves in than letting themselves go. There is a lot of self-pity in tears and quite often a lot of temper too. When you're really bitterly upset you don't fling yourself about in frenzied eloquence, and thats why my tragic episodes probably seem rather lifeless. I know I dont succeed, but I try to convey the numbness of pain. Help that sounds too Godfrey Winnish cum Eileen Ascroft for words. But you see the idea.

(ii) I don't think its a good idea to play about with sex-maniacs and prostitutes, knowing nothing about it. Your idea was that after going to bed with Tony she was knocked endways, moped about the house and at suitable periods collapsed on the stairs with heaving shoulders. Well, quite obviously I know nothing about it, but I really don't think that going to bed with anyone would have such a grotesque effect on a normal person. I suppose it might but I think you're inclined to lay too much stress on what seems to me a fairly usual everyday fact. I think our natural preoccupation with the subject distorts our views. In my own plays I keep firmly away from the whole question if I can, but when writing that scene I honestly couldn't think of any other way out. What with Jack and his prostitute(s?) and Thea and her sex-maniac we really aren't doing too badly. I think it is better for us at present to leave sex in its sterner aspects alone.

(iii) Its quite obvious we've got totally different ideas about Thea. You think of her as a hysterical child who needs a good spanking. I didn't at all. I thought of her as intelligent but rather uncertain faced with a difficult situation. Not a silly little scatterbrain, and good God, a spanking is the worst thing in the world for her. I agree, if she was so upset about going to bed with someone she would be a little idiot, but it never entered my head that that was the trouble. Its quite hopeless really to write a play together as our ideas are so utterly different. Still, its an awful help - produces all this constructive criticism, what!

(iv) I agree, I am rather inclined towards oldish men of the well-balanced type but its only a revolt against the odious heartiness of the modern young man. And from my idea of her a man of 35 was ideal for Thea. When I say "cultured" I mean intelligent and "quiet" means that he wouldn't bounce about in a fatuously bright way. It doesn't mean that he wouldn't have a sense of humour or be interested in anything except Art and Literature. Your ordinary healthy love-affair was nearly too much for me.

Now in the world outside  
Dark ~~and wet and remote~~ starless and wet  
~~There is a tenseness~~  
Terror is loosened - the terror of hearts  
Which have tried so hard to forget  
Tell me, how can I help but take fright  
Now it is night.

Loneliness presses down  
Longing the years have suppressed  
Rises and tears at my heart  
to demand  
What I have never possessed  
How can there be a God of right  
When it is night.

Looking forward and back  
Seeking out of the years  
~~Some little sign, some hope I am find~~  
Hope for the future, my  
soul is weighed down

With the ~~pressure~~ burden of unshed tears.  
Gone is all happiness, all delight,  
Now it is night.

Moment of hell on earth  
Moment of private pain  
Out of this white-hot  
dream restore  
Me to myself again.  
I have passed through  
the fiery night  
Now it is light.

[At this point, the Diary of England ends, and the diary of the journey to India starts.  
This takes the story to the next volume, *India; Beginnings and Endlings*]

### **From *Daughters* early version**

I left St Catherine's just after my fifteenth birthday when my mother came home for the last time and took a maisonette in Earls Court over a greengrocer's shop, and sent me to my last school. I remember the name of the headmistress, Miss Spalding, but nothing else about her at all. I think she sat all day in her study sending out prospectuses to rich parents about the advantages of being Finished with her. I presume my mother thought my own chances would be enhanced by an establishment in Queens Gate to which there was some talk of Princess Elizabeth being sent.

We learnt interior decoration and flower arrangement, ladies from Fortnum and Mason and Constance Spry coming to the school to demonstrate. We learnt how to write cheques and use makeup. Most of all, we learnt of our role in the world: to be elegant, submissive, feminine, and thus a credit to our sex. All the other girls, who were called Lavender and Priscilla and Charmian, went along happily with this programme. They talked a lot about Coming Out, and were swept away in chauffeur driven limousines while I climbed onto the bus and headed back for the greengrocer's. I dreaded one of them suggesting visiting me at home.

It was a waste of time and money because the next thing on my agenda was India and having a man to write my cheques for me, and servants to do the flowers. The winter of 1938 was spent collecting clothes, for the boat, and for the club when we got to India. A dressmaker in Dorking pinned evening gowns round my short, stout figure: a chintz one like a chair cover; white net covered with green moons; royal blue organdy with a frilly collar; black taffeta with silver spots and a bolero to disguise a hefty bust; white lace to wear at Government House. As we rumbled back from Surrey in the winter mists, I leant my head against the window of the carriage and imagined myself floating under tropical palms in my carefully darted dresses, while men like Noel Coward made staccato love to me. Curates had long gone the way of all my holy crushes, even Jesus had turned to stone in the cold airs of St Catherine's chapel.

### **From *Going Back***

Her mother took a flat over a greengrocer's in Earls Court that summer before the war, and Maria took a bus every day to a finishing school in Queen's Gate. In this expensive establishment her mother hoped that she would be transformed, in the few months before they got onto the boat, from a stout pallid girl with crooked teeth, into the slim and pretty girl who would please subalterns. Mrs Melville Jones, Maria discovered, was a woman who needed to be gay seven days a week; a gay crowd was what she sought, relentlessly and fretfully.

"Buck up" she urged her daughter, prising her from the corner of a sofa where she was curled up with a book. "Go and see your friends, don't just sit there sulking on a settee all day."

It was sulky to be silent at meals, or to go to bed early at weekends; it was supremely sulky not to put herself out to attract her brother's friends when they went down to Sandhurst to watch him play rugger, or cricket. Maria would like to have attracted the young men to whom she was introduced, but she was speechless behind her lard-like cheeks, and most of her attention was concentrated on how to come into or leave a room without exhibiting her fat legs.

All the other girls at the finishing school seemed to be smart and pretty, with names like Lavender and Penelope and long shiny curls dangling on the shoulders of their Jaeger twin sets. They were also very rich, and arrived in chauffeur driven limousines, to learn about interior decoration and flower arrangement and a subject called Current Affairs, which taught them how to write cheques and book hotel rooms.

The opening talk by the headmistress made it clear that these were the only accomplishments they were likely to need. "Your role in life" she declared, staring sharply through lorgnettes at the submissive twin-setted audience before her, "is to be Women; to do the things well that women can do; to embellish life with your skills and graces. It is not a second rate role, it is one to be proud of. If you can be good wives and mothers you will live as fully as it is possible to do, you will be doing the most important of all life's tasks. Do not crave for what is not yours to ask. Live graciously, elegantly, fruitfully, and you will live happily."

To help them towards this future the curriculum included visits to Fortnum and Masons to study room arrangement, and to Constance Spry Salons to learn how to arrange grasses for informal dinner parties. Maria, stultifyingly bored, wrote long letters to Betty lampooning the staff. One of these was confiscated and sent to her mother, who told Maria that this was ingratitude of a particularly hurtful kind; the school was one of the most expensive in London to which Princess Elizabeth had nearly been sent, and she and Daddy were denying themselves severely so as to give her this chance to acquire polish and make ripping friends.

Her mother wanted to meet Lavender and Penelope, and Maria, mortified by the greengrocer, made excuses and went for long walks in the park. Her thoughts were always of India, and she began to write a long saga about herself in the far Himalayas, awaiting the arrival of her soldier lover. She hid the exercise book under her mattress, and then fearing her mother's prying eyes, under the carpet. By torch light she wrote of snow and bugles and whispered words of love and longing on the verandah, her pencil hampered at every line by carpet fluff.

\*

One day her mother said they had been invited to stay with an old friend from India. The friend was an author and lived in Sussex, and she had also been in Burma. Maria, longing to please, washed her hair in a brightening rinse and put on a navy pleated skirt and sweater which slimmed her. Her mother said she looked like a hedgehog in mourning, for goodness sake what had she done to her hair to make it frizz up like that and go and get into something gay and pretty.

“And for heaven’s sake don’t sulk all weekend” her mother warned as they drove in a hired car through the awakening landscape. Maria stared out of the window and imagined how she and the author would walk over the downs, talking about books and about Burma. The author would ask to he see her writing, and would show it to a publisher. Maria had just got to the place where the publisher, who was thirty five and saturnine, was asking her to dine with him and discuss a contract, when her mother said, “Here we are, now buck up and try and be sociable.”

The house, thatched with a pear tree in bloom beside it, was exactly where Maria had imagined her author to live, but the woman who emerged to welcome them had a thin scarlet mouth and sharp black eyes which flickered disdainfully over her, and then returned to glint happily at her mother.

“Darling” said the author, embracing Mrs Melville Jones, ‘How wonderful to see you! And this delicious creature is your daughter. Martha darling!’

“Maria” said Maria, stiffening under the scented kiss.

“Maria, of course, after your darling grandmother or aunt or someone. Such a heavenly old-fashioned name. You’re not a bit like her though.” She surveyed Maria’s slouching form. “But the darling ducklings turn into the sweetest swans in the end.”

That author, whose name was Dorothy, led them into a room full of black beams, flowers and blue and white plates. Over tea she and Maria’s mother talked and exploded into fits of laughter, crumbs spraying from their mouths, as they remembered their Indian friends. Then she showed them to their room, which was pink and deliciously pretty. Maria sat on the rose sprigged quilt and wanted to cry.

“For goodness sake cheer up at dinner,” her mother beseeched, laying out sprigged organdie for her to wear. Maria bathed and climbed into the organdie gloomily. When she was rich and famous she would wear nothing but black velvet, with perhaps a flutter of white lace at the neck. Her hair fizzed out like a rocket above her scowling forehead.

“Ye gods” said her mother, snatching her hairbrush and trying to subdue the red brown snakes that were rearing from her skull. “What on earth have you done to yourself?”

In her girlish frills she followed her mother into the sitting room which was now softly lighted by beige lamps and the mellow crackle of a wood fire. A very pretty girl, slim as a rod in a navy dress, came over to greet her. She was exactly like Lavender and Penelope and Maria was instantly full of envy and hatred.

“Hullo there,” said the girl, dropping gracefully onto the arm of Maria’s chair. “I’m Charmian, the gal of the house. Its super you could come. Terry’s coming too, he’s perfectly sweet, you’ll adore him.”

“Who’s Terry?” Maria always asked questions of strangers, hoping that their answers would fill the gap until something else happened.

“Terry? He’s the boy next door, he and I have known each other since we were knee high to grasshoppers. He’s got an M.G. and he’s going to drive me round the world any day now.”

“Oh. It was the common room all over again, the circle from which she was excluded. There was a silence. Charmian tapped a foot and puffed energetically at a cigarette.

“And what” she said at last, “do you do?”

“Do?”

“Well I mean, are you still at school or what?”

Maria said no she had left school but her mother shouted across what nonsense, she was at a finishing school in Queens Gate.

“Gosh” said Charmian, “What a scream! A couple of my friends are being finished in Switzerland, but Mummy didn’t think much of the idea. Mummy says travels the thing for broadening you, so we’re off cruising soon. That is if I don’t go off to Timbuctoo with Terry in his two seater. Oh here he comes, Terry darling yoo hoo.”

She jumped to her feet and skipped gracefully to the door and put her arms round the neck of a tall young man in a dark suit. He lifted her and swung her round so that her skirt and hair flared out.

“What a pretty sight” said Maria’s mother enviously.

“Aren’t they?” agreed Dorothy. “He worships her, but really they’re so young, and every man that looks at her wants her, so she really should wait a bit before making her choice. Daughters are such a worry aren’t they, with all their suitors?”

“Mine is still at the puppy fat stage,” said Maria’s mother. “Boarding school makes them so gauche doesn’t it? But we had no choice. Of course we were lucky having my sister to send her to in the holidays, so she got plenty of home life.”

Maria hung her head, feeling for her mother a bitter hatred that she dared not life her eyes and show.

“Awful to have to leave ones children” said Dorothy. “I couldn’t face it, I left the old man instead. He went on living in that old rice mill in Burma till he retired you know, a million miles from anywhere. I went out for the occasional cold weather to get material for my books but that was all I could stand.”

Maria leant forward, her heart beating.

“Burma?” she said. “By the river in Burma?”

“Yes darling” shouted Dorothy as if she was deaf. “As boring great grey greasy inlet on a malarial swamp. Burma was where your mother and I first met you know.”

“Oh.” She cleared her throat and said with a great effort: “Did you know my grandmother?”

“Of course Dorothy knew her,” said her mother.

“Oh my dears, of course” cooed Dorothy, “She was the most glamorous lady I ever met. Those hats! She used to wear them to breakfast. Will you ever forget those breakfast parties and those hats.”

“What’s the joke?” asked Charmian, her hand in Terry’s.

“Hats” shrieked Dorothy. “With celluloid cherries all over them. At breakfast.”

“Where?” Charmian began to laugh too. “Whose hats?”

“In Mandalay” whooped Maria’s mother. “My mother. She wore them all the time, as if she was expecting the Viceroy to tea.”

“Or breakfast.”

Maria left them whooping and ran up to the bedroom, and was lying with her face in the pillow when her mother came to find her.

“What on earth are you sulking about now?” demanded her mother.

“I’m not sulking” Maria’s voice, linen-muffled, sounded extremely sulky.

“Well, whatever it is you’re doing, stop it. We’re going in to dinner now.”

“I don’t want any dinner.”

“Oh rubbish, for gods sake don’t spoil things more than you can help. Brush your hair and try to behave like a grown up. Look at Charmian, she’s only a year older than you and she’s...”

“I don’t want any dinner, leave me alone.”

Her mother came and stood over her then, and said in Aunt Madge’s voice through clenched teeth, “Do what you’re told! Get off that bed and clean yourself and come down to dinner. I will not have you disgracing me in front of my friends.”

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The trembling rage in her mother’s voice woke an equal rage in her. She slouched down through the rest of the weekend, without saying a word except in answer to a direct question. When they walked on the downs next day she trailed behind the other couples; her mother and Dorothy, Charmian and Terry. Presently excluded, she knew this exclusion would spread across seas, and on board ship, all across India, in the Himalayas, she would always find herself the one without a partner.

The four of them disappeared over the brow of the hill, and Maria paused. It was a day of egg-shell blue, the spring air pouring down onto grass sprinkled with wild thyme. Next spring she would be in India, there would be no larks, no silky leaves. She didn’t know what, apart from Indians, mosquitoes and old I.C.S. men, there would be; she couldn’t visualise her life at all, except as a girl that nobody would want to dance with, flirt with, marry. If she was such a girl in India, it didn’t matter what she was.

She sat on the grass with her back to a tree, aching with loneliness, and a longing for someone, just one person to whom she could cling. The books she would write couldn’t comfort her present mood; she would give up all her ambitions to run like Charmian and Terry hand in hand, eye to eye, together.

“I have nobody, nobody,” she whimpered, but silently in her throat, afraid to make a sound because she knew it would lead to a storm of weeping and she didn’t want them to come back and find her with wet crumpled cheeks, and grass on her lips where she had bitten at the earth.

In the silence she heard the sound of something fluttering. She looked round and saw a bird hanging head downwards from a barbed wire fence. One leg was caught in a piece of string, and when she went up to the bird she saw that the leg was almost severed. Its eyes, upside down, were bright and hostile.

“Ah wait, I’ll free you” she murmured. “I’ll free you.” She took up the little body in one hand to ease the pressure on the leg. It was a starling, almost weightless in her hand. It tried to peck her finger, taking her flesh between its pointed beak, but with no strength to hurt. She tried to unwrap the thread from

around the bleeding leg but it seemed impossibly twisted. She tried to break the thread but the more she pulled, the more the string cut into what was left of the leg.

She muttered: "What shall I do, oh little bird what shall I do? Oh little bird I'll let you go. Oh little bird."

She longed for someone to come, with a pen-knife or a pair of scissors. She picked up the bird's leg and bent her lips to it to try to bite through the string. So close to her face, the round eyes looked at her with loathing, and she couldn't get her teeth round the string. The tears she had stemmed on her own behalf now threatened to pour all over the angry starling, tears of helplessness and frustration.

She wondered if she should break the leg in two, since it was so nearly severed, but the thought of tearing the tiny claws away from the splinter-thin bone sickened her. She started again to work at the string, pulling each strand apart and breaking it. At last, with a gasp of pleasure, she broke the last thread and the leg was free. She turned the bird the right way up, and it didn't move in her hand. The leg was just a dangling foot hanging on a thread of flesh.

She bent and brushed her lips against the glossy head of the bird, and she thought it's eyes were less accusing. Then she lifted her arm and opened her hand. For a couple of seconds the starling stayed balanced on one leg, and then it leapt up into the air, swooping higher and higher in an ecstasy of freedom.

Tears came then, but they were tears of delight. The bird's rapture entered into her and she stood discarded on the downs, the soft spring air about her bared throat. Swooping and swooping with it into the sky, she knew that there was, for the injured and unwanted, the fat, ugly and speechless, a freedom nobody could deny.

When the four of them came back they found her with blood on her lips and hands, lifting a tear-stained face to the sky. She told them briefly about the bird. "Ugh! I hate things that flutter in my hands" said Charmian. Maria looked at her pityingly. She pitied them all; the two silly middle-aged ladies, trying to recapture their youth; the pretty bored boring couple who would never leap up into blue freedom. From a supreme height she looked down on them.

"Well I'm glad you've cheered up at last," said her mother. "Just when we're leaving." Maria smiled secretively. Her secret was that she had an escape from her mother. Gibes about lack of success, unflattering comparisons with other girls, would leave her unruffled. She would simply shoot up and away into the freedom that the starling had showed her. She never would – she never did – forget how her heart had lifted with the injured bird in the rapture of recovered flight.

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When she returned to school on Monday, she was surprised to be invited out to tea by a girl called Jonquil, to whom she had hardly spoken.

"Any old day" said Jonquil, handsome in a horsy rather than a flower-like way.

Maria said she would come tomorrow, and her mother was delighted that she had at last made a friend and speculated on how this might lead to other friendship, the heady possibility of a gay crowd. Maria was pleased at the invitation, for herself, and to still her mother's insistent voice demanding why

she never received any.

She drove to Jonquil's house next day in a Daimler, with a chauffeur who opened the door for her. The house was as grand as the car, with acres of polished wood, and mirrors, and expensive looking rugs. Jonquil had a suite of private rooms up a sweeping staircase; a bedroom, bathroom and sitting room. The sitting room was lined with shelves carrying glass animals and silver cups which Jonquil had won at pony shows. It was very tidy and smelt of polish.

Jonquil ordered tea down a tube beside the fireplace, and after a few moments there was a knock on the door, and a tray was brought in, carried by an elderly woman in a white starched apron with a high collar.

"This is Nanny," said Jonquil. "We've had her since I was born."

Nanny put down the tray with a small gasp and said yes indeed she had taken Jonquil right from the arms of the doctor on her arrival. Jonquil didn't thank her for bringing the tea, or offer her a cup though she looked grey from climbing the stairs, and the wrists under her starched cuffs were as razor thin as the starling's leg.

She said she hoped they would enjoy their tea and Jonquil said they would ring if they wanted anything, and when she had gone told Maria that they didn't really need her any more, but Mummy kept her on because she had nowhere else to go. Mummy let her dust and do odd jobs and she was ever so grateful.

"Where does she eat?" asked Maria.

"Eat?"

"Yes, have her meals." "With the servants of course."

"We shall have hundreds of servants when I go to India," said Maria. "My parents live in a huge bungalow, they have six gardeners."

Jonquil was unimpressed and didn't ask about India and there was silence while they crunched their toast. After tea Jonquil asked if Maria would like to see her albums and she said she would. Most of the photographs were taken at her grandmother's house, and they kept their buttery fingers off the snaps of Jonquil in jodhpurs. Her grandmother had twenty acres and seven ponies. "I shall have a horse in India," said Maria. "I shall play polo." This was the last thing she expected to do, but it made pony shows sound insignificant. Jonquil said she was going to Switzerland to learn to be a ski instructress and then she was going to be Presented.

"And after that?" said Maria to keep the conversation going. There was an hour and a half to fill before the car was ordered to take her home. "Well I'd quite like to take a proper Constance Spry course, and then I'll probably go and live in the country and get married."

There was another pause and Maria said:

"And what does your father do?"

"Do?"

"Yes. His job."

"Oh, I don't know. Nothing much. He attends meetings, he owns a lot of companies. Some in India I think, most in Singapore. He goes to his club mostly, and he and Mummy travel a lot. They're in Italy at the moment, lucky dogs."

"You haven't any brothers or sister?"

"No worse luck. It's quite boring."

"Yes, it must be."

There was still an hour and twenty minutes to go. Jonquil put on a record of

“Oh for the wings of a dove” and said would Maria like to play something. She opened a cupboard door and revealed a pile of cardboard boxes of games. All these needed three or four players, so Jonquil rang the bell for Nanny who arrived breathless and said there was nothing she would like better than to shake dice onto a board and push miniature horses round a track.

“Choose a colour then,” ordered Jonquil, placing the board on a table. “I’m having blue, you can have red Maria.”

“Green’ll do me nicely,” said Nanny. Her bird wrists shook and shook at the cardboard container but the dice didn’t give her a 6 until the two other horses were well on their way. Nanny’s nails were almost white, fading, Maria supposed, from the constant washing of children’s clothes. The backs of her hands had flakes of dry skin, like washing powder, stuck to them. “Oh Nanny buck up, you’ve got a 6, move for goodness sake,” said Jonquil, but Nanny landed straight in the water jump and had to go back to the beginning. It wasn’t her lucky day was it? She demanded, and Maria wondered what day was lucky for Nanny. She suggested they let her off but Jonquil wouldn’t hear of it, and Nanny said fair was fair, she had always taught her little ones that if you played the game right you would get your just rewards.

Jonquil had been disqualified for two throws after knocking down the third of the treble, and crossly jogged the board so that the counters fell on the floor. When they had picked them up she put down hers several squares ahead of where it should be and Maria said:

“Hey you weren’t there, you were behind me.”

“I was not. Was I Nanny?”

“I’m not sure dear” Nanny looked flustered. “Honesty is always the best policy,” she added limply.

“Well if you’re going to accuse me of cheating I’m not going to play any more” said Jonquil, and she tipped up the board so that everything fell to the floor once more.

“Now, now, temper, temper” said Nanny, getting on her knees to rescue the counters.

“Whose in a temper? Said Jonquil loudly. “I’m just bored. It’s been a jolly boring afternoon if you want to know.”

“Now that’s not being very polite to your guest...” began Nanny but Jonquil shouted “Shut up. It’s none of your business. You’re only here because I say so, if you want to know. If you want to know Mummy would have got rid of you years ago, so there! You don’t do anything do you?”

Nanny rubbed her whitened hands down her skirt and said that was as may be, and some people’s tongues were too sharp for their own good was her opinion.

“Nobody wants to know your opinion,” said Jonquil. “Go and get Groves and tell him to bring the car.”

“Golly, you are rude,” said Maria when Nanny had departed. “How can you speak to that poor old lady like that?”

“Lady?” laughed Jonquil. “That’s a joke. She’s a servant. I can speak to her how I like.”

Maria said she didn’t agree and she was glad to be going, it had been a jolly boring afternoon for her too. She made the chauffeur drop her two turnings before the green-grocer’s shop, and when her mother asked her how she had got on she said she had had a lovely time. Her mother said that was lovely, they

could ask her friend back and perhaps some more, perhaps they could have a little party.

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In fact Maria never spoke to Jonquil again, but on Friday she overheard her asking another new girl to tea. "I shouldn't go" Maria warned the girl, but Elizabeth ignored her warning and it wasn't till Monday that she met Maria and admitted her mistake. They laughed during break time about the albums and the board games.

"And Nanny" hooted Elizabeth. "She just wasn't true."

Their laughter carried them together into the next class, a talk on 'Making the Most of Yourself' by a lady from Debenhams, and then they found themselves together at lunch. Elizabeth admitted she was only filling in a term at this boring establishment while waiting to go to university. Maria said she was also a time filler, with India as her destination, and Elizabeth said there would soon be a war anyway and that would probably put an end to all their plans. She was going to attend First Aid classes soon, why didn't Maria come too? Then they would be ready to put on those sexy starched collars and bind up handsome Majors when war broke out.

Maria floated home and asked her mother if she could go to First Aid classes with Elizabeth Ferguson and her mother said she thought Jonquil was her friend.

"Jonquil?" said Maria, "She's the biggest bore ever, nobody ever speaks to her, that's why she sets her net for new girls."

Mrs Melville Jones asked what Elizabeth's background was and when told that her father wrote articles for the Times said yes of course Maria could learn First Aid with her, and would she like to come back to supper afterwards? Maria said she would ask her. She didn't think Elizabeth would mind the greengrocer, but she wasn't ready yet to risk this new, promising friendship. Her mother was disappointed to hear that Elizabeth had a mother, she had rather hoped for a rich widower to entertain her till the boat sailed in October.

After that the Queen's Gate School became a huge joke. Elizabeth found everything in life funny, and they split their sides together over the ladies from Fortnum's and the guided tours to the Tate. On two evenings a week they bandaged one another for compound fractures, and then decided to take a course in Shorthand and Typing on Saturday mornings. Mrs Melville Jones didn't know what use this would be to Maria, who was unlikely to need either in India.

"I shan't be in India for always," said Maria with as much conviction as she could manage.

She had failed in her pleas to be allowed to go to university with Elizabeth. It was what she most wanted, so she knew it was what she was least likely to get. Her mother said it was impossible, even with a scholarship they couldn't afford the fees. Her younger brother was going to Oxford and on top of Sandhurst there was simply nothing over. In any case, clever women were what men liked least. First Aid and Typing, on top of the finishing school, was surely enough for any girl.

For the present Maria knew that it had to be enough, and the approaching war began to fill her horizon, a cloud that was filling with frightening speed. She

and Elizabeth talked about it a good deal, and about the prospects of their lives ending before they had begun. Elizabeth said she would marry the first man who asked her so that she would have that experience before she died. In any case she couldn't resist uniforms, the first man who pressed his brass buttons against her chest would have her she said, it would be straight to St Margaret's Westminster with Maria as chief bridesmaid in mauve organdie with a satin sash. Maria said she already had a hideous organdie her mother insisted she wore for weekends in Sussex and they laughed away all the pain and embarrassment of that long ago experience.

Elizabeth invested the Typing and Shorthand classes with glamour by expressing the conviction that they were just a cover for drug smuggling. Mrs Campbell, their teacher, was undoubtedly secreting cocaine under her baggy tweed suits with the mauve cardigans beneath them. Elizabeth declared she could smell opium too, and it was not, as Maria insisted, the mouldy old macintosh covers over the typewriters. The cold and dingy room in which they worked was all part of the cover up, said Elizabeth, when Mrs Campbell got home to her Belgravia pent house she slipped straight into minks and pearls and seduced the sons of earls on velvet ottomans.

In fact Mrs Campbell's face was as mauve as her cardigans, pink round the nose from a constant cold, and she rubbed her numb fingers together as she watched them poke at their typewriters in the tepid, paraffin-warmed air.

"A gay serene soirit is the source of mich that is noble and gook," prodded out Maria three times, and followed it with "Trith is the goundation of knowledge and ce.ent of society."

She passed her paper to Elizabeth who returned a sheet covered with "We have jad to raose the /rice of many items, we jave had to raise the price of mamyt irems, we refret that there had been so muj delay in hilling in your order" and finally in block capitals "NIXT DAY THEY WERE ALL EQUALLY AMASED TO SEE THE GRISSLED VITERAN."

They both bent over their typewriters and wept tears of laughter over their efforts, and Mrs Campbell clapped her chapped hands together and said Ladies, Ladies, concentrate please. In Shorthand they wrote, shoulders heaving "May Dame Bates show the pale hero the way to weed?"

They took their hilarity back to Queen's Gate and sent each other notes in class: "Dead Eloebeth, Piss me my good on History o Fart", "Bear Maria, Kindly write butter. I mich regret no gooks on Farting supplied by me. You would profit by listening to the roman who is tilling us how to apply pewter to our noses. It is a putty she doesn't follow her own advice, she would look less like a limp of batter."

Elizabeth's ability to find everything funny was a great consolation. The approaching war, the girls, the staff, their own podginess and lack of boy friends (Lavender and Penelope were always talking of their dances and conquests) all these sent Elizabeth into gales of laughter. When Maria told her about her awful aunt she split her sides. She had one equally made she declared, and planned a party for the pair of them, and the lady from Fortnum's, and Jonquil, and Nanny, and Mrs Campbell in that awful sweater peddling drugs which she would carry in her bloomer pockets. She was certain Mrs Campbell wore slimy beige bloomers with pettys to match.

Under all the laughter, Maria was often afraid. One Saturday she and her mother took gas masks round to all the houses nearby and asked the inmates if

they knew how to use them; and her mother brought forward the date of their departure to India. She took Maria to a dressmaker to have three evening dresses made, and the dressmaker said quite a big girl wasn't she, well they would have to see what they could do with darts. She drooped her shoulders all the time, partly to hide her bust, partly out of a sense of despondency about the future.

She didn't divulge her serious dreams to Elizabeth, who would have made a pale hero out of Rupert and a grizzled veteran of the saturnine man with the sad past. One day when she went to school – of course, inevitably – Elizabeth wasn't there. Her delicate mother had suddenly died and she and her father were going on a long tour round the world she wrote. The letter was brave, she even managed a remark as to how she hoped to return with a tiny waist and a gay serene soirit, but Maria sensed that the bubble was at last burst.

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As autumn approached and they began to pack for India, Maria suddenly wished there had been a war after all, that Chamberlain hadn't returned waving that paper. Then there would be no boat, no India; no India full of men not wanting to dance with her, marry her. She didn't know how to reconcile her desire to be a success, and thus a bride, with her terrible reluctance to open doors and let men in.

She read a lot of poetry, and pressed her head to the panes of windows, waiting for she knew not what; her grandmother perhaps, Jesus perhaps.

“Who knocks? I who was beautiful

Beyond all dreams to restore,

I from the roots of the dark thorn am hither

And knock on the door.”

She was going to the land of palaces and huge rivers, leaving the dark thorns behind. Why the sadness then, was it just the glass against her forehead, reminding her, reminding her? The mother she had lost then had gone forever; the handsome, relentlessly gay person whom she could never please was not the one who had left her with the laurels tapping against the window pane.

Beyond all dreams to restore were all the people she had relied on. Now, her fantasies failing her, she felt terrifyingly alone, faced with the immensity of India. She knew it had been coming; India had been waiting out there fore her all her life. If only she could have gone to it unafraid, with nothing expected of her. If only her grandmother had been out there, with the silver hairbrush and the photograph albums. Then she would have had the strength and confidence to choose her future, not have it thrust on her by strangers.

Perhaps there would be no war, and she would return next year, and go to university, and be free. She thought of the starling, dragging it's broken leg up into the spring sky, and vowed that India would not claim her. But behind the vows there was a softness of purpose, a sugary lack of energy that would melt her into the first arms that opened for her. Her longing to be loved and believed in was stronger than any ambition for a full creative career. Even as she planned her return to Oxford, she was picturing the moonlight on tropical water and the dear acquaintance, dressed in white ducks, who would bend his head above her to blot out the moon.



Iris on the boat to India, April 1939, aged sixteen