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1910-2002

Photo September 1986

SOME THINGS REMEMBERED

Helen Kraemer

1910s

A childhood memory: Early in the morning in the street, I remember seeing maids kneeling on a mat by the house steps, whitening them with some paste or powder. They were always dressed in white aprons and caps.

As a child, I remember lamplighters going along the street with a ladder, and lighting the gas streetlights. There were also peddlers selling lavender and singing a song which I can remember to this day. The muffin man also came, selling his wares.

There were some terrible fogs, due to so many coal fires. I once crossed the road to post a letter and quite lost my direction. The fog smelt horrible.

During one of the air raids in the First World War, there was a Zeppelin raid in the evening after dark. We saw the Zeppelin coming down in flames out of our window. I think it was shot down in Hendon.

1914.

We were staying in Dunwich in Suffolk on December 4th, when the war broke out. We were taken to see the battleships.

Many people at that time had chilblains because food in wartime was so bad. I went to school with my hands bandaged because of broken chilblains. We also had an air raid drill. We had to get under our desks; we loved that.

1914/15

Aged four or five, I sang 'Where the Bee Sucks' in the Hampstead Church Hall. Afterwards, someone tried to kiss me and I got under a chair.

When any of us had a birthday when we were small, our parents engaged a man with a magic lantern. One time I remember he brought his small son. I noticed that he needed a pee. When I told the maid she laughed at me, but she did look after him. I can't remember what the moving pictures showed.

1910s/20s

As a child I often walked in my sleep. Once I woke up in the kitchen (a floor below the bedroom) in pitch dark. I also screamed so loud, that a policeman knocked on the door. Another time I woke up holding on to the railing of a yacht that was in the harbour.

1915/16

Before the First World War, we had a Cook General in my home. She got up early and lit fires and got breakfast, which was at 8 o'clock sharp. We also had a nanny. The cook and nanny came into the dining room before breakfast and joined us kneeling down for short prayers.

Being very small, I remember seeing their shoes and petticoats under the table.

1917?

Caught in an air raid with my friend Elspeth Fuller, (aged about six or seven) on Hampstead Heath during the First World War. Taken into a home in Downshire Hill.

Sometimes during the war, we had rather awful food with a lot of fat on the meat. I hated it and wouldn't eat it, so my father sent me out of the room. I stood out in the hall and giggled with the maid.

As fridges were not invented then and it got very hot, we bought ice from the fishmonger in the High Street in Hampstead where we lived.

Up near Whitestone Pond there is an observatory for stargazing. My father built this at the end of the 19th Century. We used to look at the stars in the winter on Saturday nights.

My father used to give lectures on scientific subjects. Once he lectured at my school (South Hampstead High School). I can only remember him rattling his money in his pockets. He also lectured on rainbows, at the Finchley Rd. Library, Arkwright Rd.

Elizabeth, Peter and I, often played together with several other children (about 8 of us in all). Sometimes we wrote plays and performed them to our parents. They had to pay a little. The money went to charity, I think to some Children's Home. One of the plays was called "Through the Crack." The dining room table on which we acted came apart in the middle, and *that* was the crack.

The streets were so empty when we were children, that we were able to walk on very high stilts along Willoughby Rd

1918

Armistice Day. Sent home from school in the morning. Some time later there was a bonfire on Hampstead Heath (Parliament Hill). My mother got Peter, Elizabeth and me out of bed and we walked in our pyjamas to see the bonfire. Alongside the bonfire, there was a big anti-aircraft gun.

Nov 11th - The morning the war ended, the whole school gathered to sing "Land of Hope and Glory" before being sent home.

1920s

Aeroplanes were very rarely seen, so when we heard one everyone rushed out to have a look.

On the canal around Regents Park, the barges were all drawn by horses along the towpath.

1920?

I went to a fancy dress party with Aunt Gertrude in a horse drawn carriage, dressed as an Indian girl.

1920s

We got a penny a week to start with when we were children. I sometimes bought liquorice laces (four for one penny). Later we got more. We were not allowed any sweets during Lent except on Sundays. Normally we had one 'shut-eye' sweet after lunch.

On Saturdays, we were often taken to museums or to the National Gallery. I looked forward to tea at the ABC teashops. Although we only had bread and jam, it was something to look forward to.

There were many miners out of work from Wales. They came to London and sang 'in parts' in the street to get money. They sang so beautifully, we gave them money each time they came.

On Bank holidays and sometimes weekends, the whole family, mother, father, brother, and sister, got onto bicycles and rode into the country with a picnic. The country wasn't as far from London as it is now (2001) Every Good Friday after church, the family bicycled to Kew Gardens.

1920s/30s

In the late 20's and early 30's, Mother, Elizabeth and I sang a trio every year, written by Mrs. Boulter. It was for an Epiphany play. We were the three angels and sang high up in the church. The piece was 'Gloria' which I later taught to my children, and which now as adults, they still sing. It has since been passed on to the grandchildren.

When all the family lived at home, we sang madrigals after Sunday dinner. My brother Peter took command. He sometimes got very cross when Mother, Elizabeth and I got the giggles.

1920s

My brother Peter went to school at Clifton College. Our family went to visit him when the school performed Macbeth. Michael Redgrave played the part of Lady Macbeth.

1923/24

When I was about 12 years old, my mother and I were asked to play some music at The Sailors Daughters Home at the top of Fitzjohns Avenue. The reason for mentioning this is that Admiral Beattie was present. He was a very famous Admiral during the First World War.

In 1924, I was told to leave school. The Headmistress (Miss Walker) who sometimes sang madrigals with my parents, thought that a boarding school would keep me in order. It didn't. The Headmistress of the boarding school (Miss Matthews) didn't like me. She called me an ignoramus in front of the class, and told the whole school at breakfast, that they must not speak to me because I went on a swing in the school ground on my way to my violin lesson.

I went to school with two plaits. This was very awkward because of the inkwells we used for writing. My plaits fell into the ink, so I had to have one plait. Later, I had a 'bob'. (That is short hair).

In Junior School in South Hampstead High School, I led a small orchestra. In my next school, (boarding), I led another slightly bigger orchestra- about eight people. After some illness as a child, I was sent to stay with my two aunts, Florence and Janet (a headmistress), because they lived near the sea, which was supposed to cure everyone from all ills. I was pushed into a Victorian bath chair which had iron handles for guiding it I guided it into the ditch!

1928

When I left school, I went to the Royal College of Music in London. In order to get in, I played a Bach Violin Concerto accompanied by my mother. Before I started, the Principal asked me what key it was in. As I didn't know, he asked me to sing instead, which I did, and consequently, became a member of the RCM. Nowadays it is much more difficult to get in.

1930s

While I was at the Royal College of Music, I was asked to sing at Covent Garden in the chorus of Boris Goudinov, together with some other students. The performance was sung in Russian and Italian. I think we had several rehearsals in Italian. We learnt nothing. For the performances, we dressed in lovely Russian clothes and had long blonde plaits. We stood at the back of the stage and pretended to sing. A very famous Russian singer took the lead, and came in on a huge white horse. His name was Chaliapin. We were paid seven shillings and sixpence a night.

Music students at the Royal College were often asked to teach children in very poor districts. We got paid 2d a lesson. One Jewish boy I remember teaching (about 7 years old), was a complete natural, already capable of playing professionally, and could easily have played in Lyons Corner House. He would now be 78 years old. I wonder what he did.

Another job I had was to dress up as a gypsy and play in a band in Waterlow Park. In addition, I played the recorder (alto) for the Shakespeare open-air company in Regents Park, together with the two Boulter sisters Beatrice and Clare, who played treble and bass. We were dressed in Shakespearean clothes and played on stage in Twelfth Night. Sometimes we played off-stage in a string quartet with Mrs Boulter, and we once sang off-stage in parts. It was all Elizabethan music. For all this, we were each paid £5 a week.

I played violin in Blackfriars Boxing Ring. It was Elizabethan music for performances of 'Much Ado About Nothing'. Jack Hawkins and other famous actors were playing in it, who were then unknown. .

In my late teens, I was a Sunday School teacher in the church hall behind the Everyman cinema. As I was unable to teach, I took the children onto Hampstead Heath and gave them sweets instead.

The church hall was also used as a 'drill' hall, and it's where Elizabeth and I were 'drilled' whilst marching to music. During the First World War my Aunt Janet, who was then the headmistress of a girl's school in Broadstairs, had to house the two Princes (Duke of Windsor and George VI) because of the danger of bombs in London. The school was called Villeta House, but after she retired it was re-named Bartrum Gables after her.

1930s

One of my jobs was to play country-dances in Cecil Sharp House, and in Lambeth Palace in the open-air, with the Girl Guides. The latter was unpaid.

I also had several jobs looking after children. I took a child to the zoo once, and lost my purse. I didn't know how to get home, so I went up to a policeman who was directing the traffic. He gave me a florin (2 shillings) and the next day I returned it.

Sometimes I did social work, helping Elizabeth who worked professionally in Fulham. On these occasions, I helped taking children on country holidays. These children had never seen the country before. To get them through London in buses was rather hair-raising. One of us stayed in the front and the other one behind to form a long crocodile. The children were quite disgusted when they discovered that the milk they drank came out of a cow instead of a nice clean bottle. When we fetched them from the station after their holiday, it was difficult to believe they were the same children. They looked so well and happy, and came back loaded with fruit and vegetables.

Sometimes I went sailing with friends. On one occasion, I sailed with a friend of my fathers who lived on his boat. He was quite an old man. Two younger men also came with us. We were on our way to the Isle of Wight, when a tremendous gale blew up. The channel steamers were stopped it was so bad, and there we were in the middle of the English Channel in a very tiny boat. It was very frightening. We never got to the Isle of Wight. After tossing and turning, Mr Lewis managed to get us safely to Guernsey. Everything that was on the shelves of the boat was shattered on the floor. Another time when I was going to sail with Mr. Lewis and a girlfriend, we saw headlines in the papers the day before we were due to sail, that a man had been found dead on a small yacht in the Channel. It was Mr. Lewis.

Some of our summer holidays we did on bikes. One time, Peter and a friend of his, Elizabeth and I, took our tents, pots, and pans on our bikes. We camped somewhere in Wales. One night there was a very strong wind and our tent blew down. It often rained and I was always cold. We went by train some of the way home.

1930s

My mother had a maid called Hildegarde. She came from the Schwarzwald (Black Forest), in Germany. When she married the village postman, she asked me to be her Maid of Honour, so my Aunt Gertrude and I travelled to her village. In the church, I wore a velvet dress and a wreath of roses on my head.

It was a real peasant wedding, lasting through the night, with hot meals presented every hour. The feast took place in a Gasthaus that was run by her mother and was Hildegarde's home. Peter Hodapp, her husband, was taken prisoner in the 1939 war, and was kept in Russia doing hard labour for several years after the war was over. When he eventually got home, he was not in good health.

Sometimes when I went out with an Austrian friend to see the Royal Military Show at Olympia, I was taken to Tottenham Court Rd. to catch the tube home, and found it closed. I didn't have enough money for a taxi, so I started walking home to Hampstead. Once as I walked along, I noticed a taxi driver keeping up with me. He then beckoned to me and told me to get in and sit on the floor, saying, 'a nice girl like you oughtn't to be about at this time of night'. I told him that I only had 2 shillings. He took me all the way home and I gave him my 2/-.

Every summer we all went in the train to Capel Curig for a climbing holiday. Uncle Robert, (Aunt Margaret's husband) was a very good mountain climber, and guided us (the children) up terrifying places. No ropes. One night we set out to climb Snowdon in order to see the sunrise. There was a full moon to help us along. Crib Goch is a ridge with steep precipices on either side. We were expecting to walk over this, but the moon disappeared for the whole night and we were left in darkness. However, as we were already on the ridge, we had no choice but to continue. Crawling on all fours, we spent six hours trying to cross it instead of the usual two, arriving on top of Snowdon covered in bruises and very cold. And no sunrise.

We often took our bicycles on our summer holidays. One year, after climbing mountains in Wales, we cycled to North Scotland to a place called Gairloch on the West Coast. We always stayed in Youth Hostels, and I remember one night I slept walked and found myself getting into someone else's bed. This was not unusual for me. I often did this at school. Getting lost at night is very frightening

1934

I went to Salzburg as an 'English Miss', nowadays known as an au-pair girl. On one of my train journeys there, I was in a carriage

with a crowd of black shirt Nazis who smoked my cigarettes and flirted with me. At the time, I was ignorant as to what they stood for and how they had been trained.

I stayed in a beautiful house on the outskirts of Salzburg. It was the children's grandparents' house. Their father was a music critic, and once or twice, he took me to the Music Festival. He was a terrible bore. He never taught his children any music. He had a copy of Figaro, so I taught the two girls the duet (the letter duet). They were quite musical. In my free time, I played in a string quartet.

The children's uncle was a friend of mine. We bicycled and climbed mountains. On one of our outings a shepherd stopped us and asked if we would like to buy a puppy. We did. I carried it in my rucksack for many miles, and my back got very wet from the peeing puppy. In the winter, I skied.

Mid 30s

I sometimes went to the cinema. The Hampstead Playhouse, now the Odeon in Pond street. I went with my father who was retired by then. The film was probably a Will Hay film. My father knew him because he was an astronomer as well as a comedian. The Pathe Gazette (the news) was showing. It showed the wedding of Bunny Austin (a famous tennis player) at the Hampstead Parish Church, where a big crowd had gathered. The film showed someone climbing a lamppost, which was me! Just up the road from this cinema was a hospital, and during the First World War, the wounded soldiers, wearing bright blue suits and red ties, would lie on beds on the balconies in the sunshine. The hospital was called The Hampstead General.

1937

During this year, Glyndebourne Opera House opened. Mother bought tickets for us and our friends, to see 'The Magic Flute'.

1938.

I did an exchange this year with a German boy about 19. First he stayed in my house for a few weeks, and then later I went to his place. This was a holiday cottage by a lake. There was just the daughter and her parents there. It was very near Munich. I was just entering a shop, when she shouted to me to stop. It was a Jewish shop, which was not allowed. We had some angry words together. She won.

1939

The day war broke out (Sept 3rd), an air raid warning sounded. We panicked. I had left my gas mask in my car, which was parked in a garden at the bottom of our road. I was sure there would be a gas attack. It was months or a year before the bombs dropped. During the raids, mother, Manfred and I, sat in the hall hoping for the best. After some months, mother and I went to live in Headington, outside Oxford. It was my Uncle Robert and Aunt Margaret's house. (At this time, William was released after six months internment on the

Isle of Man, and had a job as a secretary to a psychiatrist, John Layard for 30 shillings a week. He was pleased, as he had no money at all).

Uncle Robert's house was large with big grounds, and every year between the wars, the family went to stay for a few nights. We arrived a few days before Christmas. It was freezing cold, except for the drawing and dining room, where there would be a huge log fire. There was no gas, no electricity or telephone. He had no car. (None of us had cars, only bicycles). Making beds in the cold, and lighting oil lamps and washing up was uncomfortable. Nevertheless, we enjoyed ourselves and looked forward every year to these few days. The food was wonderful. He also had a pianola which had all our favourite classical pieces. There were about 12 or 13 of us, including all the Bartrum aunts and cousins.

While living in Oxford, I hitch hiked to London every week to have a violin lesson with Bratza. He lived in Mill Hill. I always hitched in a lorry. If the driver got fresh, which didn't happen very often, I just asked him to stop and let me out. No one would risk that now.

One day, travelling from Oxford to Berkhamstead where I was living, I had a ghastly accident in my car. I overtook a lorry on a hill, while at the same time, a car was travelling very fast down the hill. Coming straight at me, he squashed me sideways against the lorry. The car was concertinered. I was unhurt except for a bump on my forehead. As it was wartime, I had to wait a year before my car could be mended.

1930s

Peter worked as a meteorologist abroad in West Africa and Bermuda. Elizabeth was a social worker and later during the war, a nurse. After my father died, I was still living at home, and one day was shopping in Hampstead High Street, when I met a school friend whom I hadn't met for years. She asked me to tea in Chalk Farm to meet a German friend of her boyfriend. I wasn't very keen but she persuaded me. The German friend was William Kraemer.

1938.

After meeting William that day in June at Chalk Farm, we met every day until he went to live in a community near Stroud. His father-in-law (William was married at the time to Libby) belonged to this rather precious group. It was so precious, that when France fell, William wasn't allowed to mention it at breakfast time. No politics at meal times. Before he went away, he had to register at the police station in Hampstead, as a refugee. While he was in the country, two policemen came to arrest him and put him in the local prison for one night. He asked the prison officers to promise to wake him if there was an air raid. They didn't, and there *was* one. He and the police travelled miles around the country trying to find a place in a camp. They were all full.

After they had stopped to drink in several pubs, taking turns to pay, they eventually found room in a camp in Prees Heath, where there was very little to eat. After this, he was sent with the rest of the camp to the Isle of Man. This was a huge place with several camps, where all the European Jews (men and women) were being held. While he was there, the bombs were dropping in London and all over England. Meanwhile, Manfred, an Austrian refugee who had left Austria when he was 14, was living with us in our home in Willoughby Rd, Hampstead. The Nazis had murdered his parents. My mother gave him a home after William met him in the camp, as he was only allowed out if he had somewhere to go. Manfred and I firewatched. Firewatchers were supposed to wear helmets, but there were not enough to go round, so we had to have dustbin lids handy to keep off the shrapnel. However, there never was an air raid when we were on duty. Sometimes I served at a canteen in the Soldiers Daughters Home in Rosslyn Hill.

While William was interned, his wife Libby and I started to make arrangements for their divorce, so that he would be free to marry again when he was released.

Late30s/40s Some time in the late 30s, I was practising at home with the window open, when there was a ring at the front door. Mother went. Edric Cundell, the Principal of the Guildhall School of Music, was at the door. He was looking for a man who lived in Willoughby Rd. and played the violin. Mother told him who it was, but he said he was tired of looking, and asked if I would play quartets that night, which I did. I often played with him after that. Later he offered me a scholarship to study at the Guildhall for a year, with a Serbian violinist called Bratza.

Apart from firewatching, I also picked plums in the country near to the Cundell's, in Essex. I spent the day up a ladder up in the trees. In the evening, I played chamber music in the Cundell's cottage. One night driving home, I thought I saw a huge swastika at the crossroads. I alerted the police. There was a big scare of invasion. It was nothing. We were all rather hysterical. What I thought was a swastika turned out to be a large white painted cross.

There was petrol rationing during the war, so whenever you came to a downhill you switched off the engine and freewheeled.

1940s Just before Christmas in 1940, I was summoned to court for dangerous driving (re. the accident previously mentioned). My solicitor got me off lightly (35 shillings). He said I was a musician starting out on my career.

Wartime A quartet I played in was invited to play to the Bishop of Chester. We stayed the night. The cellist Rosemary Coppack and I shared a room. We were so cold that we put the floor rugs on our beds. At

breakfast, I sat next to the Bishop. We didn't know what to say to each other. He had no interest in music and I was very shy. A dreadful memory. He later became the Archbishop of Canterbury.

During the war, I twice played the Bach Double Concerto with Manfred in London churches, with mother accompanying us.

1940s

Enemy aliens (William being one) were not allowed to have radios or bicycles. Later, however, when he was released from the internment camp, bicycles *were* allowed. One day Elizabeth and I cycled to Oxford where William was living, and gave him the man's bike that I rode.

William and I were staying with friends in Sussex, when somebody rang up to say that the police were setting up roadblocks to catch refugees. As we were going to be driving back to London that day, we were a bit scared. Anyway, we decided to risk it. After driving for ten minutes we noticed a roadblock ahead of us. William said, "Go on, I'm sick of running away". (He wanted to give himself up). No way was *I* going to walk into that trap. I stopped the car by the barrier, got out, took the map, spread it over the bonnet, and pretended to be looking at it, while hoping that another car would come by and be stopped for questioning at the barrier. A van *was* stopped. I quickly turned the car round and found another way home. We saw several more roadblocks, but we always had enough time to find another route. We heard later, that the refugees picked up that day were sent to Canada on a ship called 'The Andora Star'. The ship sunk. Everybody drowned.

Nov.'41

Another violinist and I made a record for the BBC called 'Music in the Home'. It was Corelli, and was conducted by Imogen Holst at Kettlewells. I don't know where that is.

Dec'41

Dec.6th was my wedding day. William arrived in Hampstead the evening before from Shropshire, where Lancing College had been evacuated. William was a Master there. He taught German, Italian, Divinity and Science. There was a shortage of schoolteachers during the war.

We married first in a registry office, at Hampstead Town Hall. As William had been divorced, he was not allowed to marry in the Church of England, however, we managed to find a German Church in Kensington. The service was performed in German and in English, and instead of standing at the altar; we both sat in comfortable chairs. My Uncle, Robert Wylie, gave me away. Mother and Elizabeth had made sandwiches for us all, and wine was provided after the service, which we had in the Crypt (which was underground and safe from bombs).

We couldn't have a honeymoon, as William had to get back to school. We lived in a farmhouse near Ludlow in Shropshire, close to Lancing College. The four schoolhouses were dotted round the countryside and bicycling was the only way to get around.

When I was pregnant with Sebastian, the farmers in whose house we lived, told us that we would have to leave. They couldn't cope with babies and nappies. We eventually found a room sharing a house with the school doctor. Unlike nowadays, I never saw a doctor during pregnancy. There was no hospital anywhere near.

The farmers had a blue and brown-eyed mongrel called Turk. As he was no use to the farmers and they were going to have him put down, we offered to take him. Shortly after, Turk got distemper and became very ill. The only way to save him was to put him in the room we had prepared for the baby (as yet unborn) as it was a room with a fire.

1942

A few days before Sebastian was born, Lancing did a performance of St. Matthew's Passion. I led the school orchestra and Jasper, the music master, conducted. He insisted on my nurse attending in case labour started. It didn't. Some days later, Doctor Crisp, the school doctor, and William delivered the baby. Dr. Crisp's bedroom was next to ours, so he donned a waistcoat over his pyjamas. Six hours labour in all. The day Sebastian was born, the church bells rang for a victory at Tobruk in Africa.

While living in Shropshire I worked on camouflage nets, but one day, the police saw a light showing in our house. (Everything had to be blacked out). As William was an enemy alien, he was accused of helping the enemy aircraft. (Actually, he hadn't left the curtain open.) The outcome was that I was forbidden to do 'war work', as I was the wife of a suspect.

At Christmas time, we very often went home to stay with mother in Hampstead. When there was an air raid, William carried Sebastian round the house in the Moses basket, trying to find a safe place.

After about 15 months at Lancing (much longer for William), we went to Edinburgh. William found a job which was advertised in the New Statesman, to work in a clinic as a psychologist. For a time, refugee doctors were not allowed to practice, but now the law had changed.

William made use of his patients in a way that would later be considered wrong. If I was ill, a patient turned up to look after the children, and when we had children's parties, patients would come and would liven things up in a way that I never could.

At a meeting once at the Davison Clinic where William worked, a children's quartet performed. I think the players were Jan Schlapp and her sister Kay, Eva Gal, and Nicholas. On another occasion when

Father? came to lecture at the clinic, he brought his sheep dog with him. (The priest was a shepherd). In the middle of the lecture, the dog jumped out of the window. He was not happy being indoors with a crowd of people. The dog had never seen stairs before, and we had trouble getting him up the stairs once when they came to stay.

For about 3 months we lived in two rooms, then we bought a bungalow in Fairmilehead, a part of Edinburgh. We didn't have any furniture, but the last owners left a double bed. We kept all our possessions in our suitcases in the hall. Our 'respectable' neighbours were amazed. Soon Nicholas was on the way, and by then, we had collected chairs, tables, and cupboards.

One day, Sebastian and our small labrador puppy disappeared, and were later found walking together along the tramlines on the main road. On another occasion, we came home to find the front door open and no baby! The young maid we had at the time, decided to take Sebastian back to her home and to the cinema. The police eventually found them!

We had another girl once whom we paid as our maid She was only a girl of 11(Isobel), who was being treated for problems with theft, and she needed to get away from her mother who was a Jehovah Witness. A horrid woman. The first job I gave her was to buy some blankets. She was given a pound. All was well; the blanket and the change came back. After a while she did steal a little, but she soon gave up when I asked her for the things back. Her main job was to wash nappies and baby-sit.

When Sebastian came back from kindergarten one day, he was so angry that he banged his head on the pavement. Later, when we were living in Colinton he won a prize for the one who looked most like their dog.

1945

Nicholas was born (in 3 hours). Soon after we needed a bigger house, and I took Sebastian with me to house- hunt. Around this time, we heard about starving children in Germany and Austria, and people were being asked to give a child a temporary home. We took in a boy from Vienna called Joseph, aged 8 years. He was very good, but also very self-righteous, and we didn't hit it off. Fortunately a neighbour took to him, and found him a more suitable home.

1945

The war was over in May. We moved house again. Somewhere bigger, because Ursel (Williams foster sister) and Mutti my mother-in-law, were able to leave Germany, and were coming to live with us. Our new house was in Colinton, in a road, which led straight on to the Pentland Hills. After moving to Colinton, we lost our black

Labrador. He had run back to our old house in Fairmilehead. We hired a car to fetch him. It was so great to have a car, that we decided to buy it! Nevertheless, we still bicycled a lot. William had a basket on the back of his bike in order to carry Sebastian. One day, I was riding behind William when I noticed that Sebastian had half fallen out of the basket. All was well after I stopped William.

Some time before we moved I had a miscarriage (about four months). This child was called Polly before miscarriage, but it turned out to be a boy! My mother always came from London when I had a baby or a miscarriage.

On Guy Fawkes Day, I had bought some fireworks. Sebastian, Nicholas (in a pram), and I, together with some of the children who lived in our road, set out up the hill to the foot of the Pentlands. I put all the fireworks on a bench, and accidentally dropped a match, which set them all off together. It was very exciting, and saved me a lot of trouble. Nicholas suffered from shock.

1947. Sebastian and I often went house hunting in the spring. We saw many houses, and in June, we found one that was going to be auctioned, and so had a solicitor to bid for us. It was hair-raising, as we wanted that house so badly, as did many others. The bidding stopped just in time. This house was 42 Dreghorn Rd. At this time, Nicholas used to take a small stool down the road to stand on, to post the letters.

Soon after moving, we went for a holiday to the Island of Arran (a Scottish Island on the West Coast). Since Nicholas (aged two) was difficult to deal with and wouldn't eat, we took along a friend, Chris, who worked in the clinic for difficult children. I was pregnant with Timothy at the time. On the way to the Island, we had to drive the car over a bridge, which was made up of just two planks. William didn't fancy this. I did. The thing I remember seeing was a dog drowning. I called to someone for help, only to find that it was a seal.

Aug.'47 Timothy was born in just an hour and a half.

1947 When Timothy was one year old, he developed an infection in his neck. He was whisked off to hospital. This was the start of a disastrous three weeks in his life. No one was allowed to visit him. That was the rule in hospitals in Scotland at that time. When he came home he was in a real mess. William, Mutti, Ursel and I took it in turns to sit up with him through the night while he played, sitting on the floor.

Later, when we went for holidays, we put our dog into Kennels. When we fetched him home, he was, (like Timothy after his time in hospital), so upset, that it was difficult to take him out for a walk. On one of our holidays in Scotland, we had our dog (Daniel), with us. The three boys and I hired a boat on a very deep lake. After rowing for

a while we saw Daniel swimming after us. He tried to climb in, rocking the boat. With three small boys unable to swim, it was terrifying. The dog eventually gave up. All our dogs had Old Testament names, Jeremy, Daniel and Benjamin. I would have chosen any of these names for our children, but William was too frightened in case there was ever a Jewish problem in their lives as there had been with his.

1940's

On New Years day, the university orchestra which I played in, performed the Messiah. The rehearsal was always early in the morning before public transport started. I normally would have taken the car, but on this occasion the garage door was stuck, so I began walking in the hope of a lift, when a milk float appeared. I eventually got to the Usher Hall rather late, with the milk.

1948

Since the war was over, we were able to travel abroad again. William and I travelled to Italy. It was my first time to Italy and we travelled by air. The Travel Agent gave us the wrong flight time, so we missed our flight. We were then sent off in a taxi to Northolt, where there was an Italian plane which flew us to Rome. It was a plane without oxygen masks. After a little while, William felt ill and fainted. We were able to use a contraption to put in our mouths at a certain height, but Williams mouth was clenched so tight it made it impossible. The Italian airhostess quite calmly loosened his collar. He came to, telling me how happy he was, then promptly fainted again. This lasted only a few seconds, and we landed safely in Rome. However, the pilot brought the plane down so quickly, that our ears hurt for the next two days.

We travelled to Positano to stay with Kurt Kraemer, and met his friends who were painters. Kurt was paralysed from the waist down, and had to be carried down to the beach by his friends. On our way home, we went to Sienna to visit the second oldest hospital in the world, where William got his Doctorate. The oldest hospital is in Padua. On then to Florence and a cart ride up the hills to Fiesole to see a friend (Frauline Licht). On the way up, the wheel of the cart came off. Another wheel was fixed which also came off. We had to walk the rest of the way.

Next stop, Rappollo, to meet the Bacciagalupo's.

1947

We moved from one side of the road to the other, to a bigger house with a bigger garden. Dreghorn Loan in Colinton.

Later in the year, William, Sebastian, Nicholas and I travelled to Germany. We drove all the way to Diethardt; Williams home, near the Rhine. The nearest town is Wiesbaden. On the way we passed through Aachen and Duren, which had been so badly bombed that there was

hardly a house still standing. Amongst the debris, we saw a notice for a concert of music by Bach, in a cellar.

The Germans were very short of food at that time, so we had to get ration coupons for food and petrol. We bathed in the Rhine at a nearby town called St. Goar. While we were staying in Diethardt, the famous Schumacher of 'Small is Beautiful' fame, came to dinner. He later had dinner with us in London.

After three and a half weeks, we started for home. We had some trouble crossing the frontier. We turned back and had to try somewhere else. We arrived in Brussels, parked the car and had a meal. When we came back to the car, the windscreen was shattered, which we thought was a delayed reaction to a stone hitting the windscreen earlier on. There was no chance of getting it repaired, which meant driving from Brussels to Edinburgh without a windscreen. We were bombarded with flies, insects, rain and wind. Sebastian was stung by a wasp. We stayed in London with my mother on the way home, and spent a night in Doncaster. Leni our maid had put garlands of flowers round the front door to welcome us. Timothy didn't recognise me. Mrs. Pike and her daughter and Ursel were at home while we were away.

Late 40s

One morning at breakfast time, I had to give Timothy a clean pair of trousers before going to school. Not thinking what I was doing, I tried to put the trousers on the dog, and chased him round the table. The children were aghast.

Driving in Edinburgh one day with the three children, I turned to see if Timothy was all right in his Moses basket. At that moment, I bumped into the car ahead. There was a policeman conducting the traffic, and he signalled us to go. When the traffic moved, I found that my car was caught onto the car in front. Meanwhile, Timothy had fallen out of his basket. I got out of the car and the policeman asked me what on earth I was doing. He then stopped the car to which I was attached, as it was moving on without me. Timothy was put back in his basket, and on we went

1950

Our maid Leni was slowly going mad. She started leaving notes around the house, saying that she was receiving messages through one of her ears. Soon we had to get two doctors to have her certified. We took her to an asylum. Some time later, her mother, to whom we had written, arrived at our house at 4.00am. She had never been in a train before, and couldn't speak any English. Nevertheless, she managed to travel from a small village in southern Rhineland to Edinburgh. When she came upstairs to our sitting room, she took off her shoes before walking on the carpet. She wouldn't believe that her daughter was out of her mind, and was determined to take her home. Leni had been in the hospital for three months before her mother arrived, and within two or 3

days, they left to go back to Germany. We heard later, that Leni had tried to kill her mother, and that she died in a mental hospital. Leni had been a very good maid, and was very interesting and intelligent.

A Jewish friend of ours asked if we could look after a little girl that had been found abandoned in the streets in Germany. She was about 6 years old, incontinent and frightened. She stayed with us for a week, after which time her aunt was able to look after her.

1951 Timothy, aged four showed his strength by picking up a full coalscuttle and carrying it across the room.

1950s William and I were invited to a theatrical party, given by one of our friends. I was in charge of handing round drinks. The first person to take a drink was John Gielgud. Then came Flora Robson and Lewis Casson. Sybil Thorndikes' husband was also offered sherry, but I spilt it all over him.

1957 After 14 years in Edinburgh, we decided it was too cold, and I was getting homesick for London. William told his patients a year earlier that we would be leaving. Nearer the time, Sebastian and I left for London with a list of houses that were for sale not too far from my mother, who was by then, getting quite old. After seeing many unsuitable houses, I was getting very tired, but there was still one more to see. I thought it could wait until the following day, but Sebastian insisted, and it was this house that was 8 Basing Hill. When the family moved in August, we stayed first in my old home (my mother had died earlier in the year), while we got the house ready. One evening, we wanted to play cards, but found they were already in the new house. That was when we moved for good.

1960s The children gave parties quite often. One room was for jazz and another for classical music. As they each invited their own set of friends, no one knew who were genuine friends and who were gatecrashers. We knew there were *some* gatecrashers, because two precious photos of my father (daguerreotype) were stolen. William and I stayed away for the night with friends. The police came round once because of the noise. Once when we got home, Nicholas was scrubbing the kitchen floor.

William was on a committee with Anthony Storr, to make cannabis legal. He was also on another committee with the Archbishop of the time?

Our friends the Jansons, invited us to some big affair in Staffordshire, where there was dancing and entertainment. There were small tables dotted round the room for refreshments. William and I

were sitting at a table with a very shy man. He was the entertainer Ken Dodd, who at the time was quite unknown.

On one of our holidays in Germany, we took Wallace Hamilton. He and I had driven into Munich for some reason, when the car broke down. While the car was being mended, we stayed with Boris and Ellis, who were friends of William. That evening we were taken to a party in a hall with many young people. There was a piano on a platform, and as it was a very informal occasion anyone who felt like it, got up and played. I played the only piece I have ever known by heart, the last movement of Bach's Partita No.1. I got such applause, that I was dragged up to play it again. Musically this was the only success I ever had.

1963

After about four or five years in London in which we had spent Christmas at home, William thought of spending Christmas somewhere different for a change. Fritz's wife Britta was Swedish, and her relations lived in Goteburg, so we asked if they could find us somewhere to stay. They wrote back and invited us all to stay with them. We were going to sing carols and collect money for charity. Nicholas got busy arranging carols to suit our four voices. William would collect the money. The three boys and I travelled by boat at night, all in one cabin, rehearsing most of the way. William travelled by air later so he could earn an extra days fees. The Bjoekanders gave us a wonderful Christmas and New Year. Very Swedish. We (the Kraemers) sang in the streets, shops and hospitals, and raised money for a Swedish charity.

1964.

The following Christmas we went to Berlin to sing carols, and stayed with Williams's school House Master, Wachsmuth. The first place we sang was in the underground. On the way, we came across a woman holding a Red Cross collection box. As nobody was giving her any money we asked if we could borrow her box. She was rather taken aback at first, but finally agreed. Later we brought back the box, which was overflowing from what we had collected while singing. She had tears in her eyes. One day, Nicholas and I started to sing at Checkpoint Charlie, the frontier between East and West Berlin. We were soon stopped. The following two Christmas's were spent at home.

1965

We went to Italy for a holiday. A few days in Florence, then on to Naples where we hired a car. We stopped to eat at a small place outside Naples. We had only left the car for about 5 minutes, and came back to find an empty space. We lost everything, except what we had on us and a little loose change. Luckily, William spoke fluent Italian and was able

to find the police station where we spent an hour listing all our possessions. William had to describe exactly, the different colours in the weave of his suit. After that we were directed to the British Consul, who was to give us new passports and enough money to finish our holiday (£50, which was worth more then, than it is now). However, because William had lost his timetable and names and addresses of all his patients, he said he would have to go home soon to deal with the problems. We had arranged to meet friends, (Gordon and Alison Smith) who had booked us rooms, in Sorrento. We took a train and spent a day and night with them. We bought ourselves toothbrushes and travelled to Rome before making our way home. There was a Bishop's conference going on in Rome, which made it difficult to find anywhere to stay, but eventually we found a very grand hotel. As we had no luggage, they made us pay before we went to our rooms. That evening we went to the opera. It was a regular company for the Romans, not for tourists. Families with their children. The children ran about in the aisles. When the singer reached a very high note, the audience clapped and shouted. We had a meal later and I spilled tomato sauce over my blouse. As we had no clothes with us, we couldn't leave the hotel until my blouse and William's shirt were dry. When we got back to London, we had to write down everything that we lost for the insurance. We bought a car for Sebastian with the money we claimed. Six months later, some of our things were returned, including my Five-Year Diary and Williams timetables. They were found in a letterbox in Naples. It was Easter, and the thieves must have been to confession.

1967 Christmas this year was spent in Rome with Frida and Lucy Robinson. On the way, we stayed in Rapallo with the Bacigalupo's. This year we sang motets by Vittoria, Marenzio etc, which meant a lot of rehearsing. In Rapallo we sang in a library, and made £30. The following day we went to Rome, and were met by Father Aelwyn, who took us to a nunnery where we all stayed. William suggested to Aelwyn that the three Kraemer boys should sing grace before supper. Father Aelwyn didn't know what he was in for, asking strangers to sing all over Rome. They sang 'Gloria' by Mrs. Boulter. He was satisfied.

1968 This Christmas we sang in Malta. Father Andrew arranged this singing holiday. We not only sang in the street, but also in Father Vallor's church at Midnight Mass on Christmas Eve. On Christmas day, we sang in the hotel dining room. Many British couples had moved to Malta for their retirement, and when the two Robinson girls, Ali and Milla, sang 'Once in Royal David's City', they were moved to tears with homesickness. It was through William that we knew all these

Catholic priests, and it was they who arranged our singing in Rome and Malta.

1970. St. Wolfgang, near Salzburg, was our next Christmas journey. We made lots of money in the streets of Salzburg. When the children weren't singing, they went tobogganing and skiing.

1972 The Robinsons, Kraemers and Sophia, took off to Tenerife to sing in churches, squares, and a children's hospital. Most of us climbed to the top of the volcano (Tiede), which was above the clouds in the sunshine.

1970s William and I went to Sierra Leone for a holiday. We were introduced to the President from? , who invited us to dinner. It was a large party set out of doors under enormous avocado trees. Very grand.
On another of our holidays, we went to Israel with the Mancses. We were driving around the Sea of Galilee (I was driving), when we got stuck in thick mud. It was just near the Golan Heights. Joan and William struggled through the mud to get help, while Harry and I stayed behind Harry was disabled with a wooden leg, and it would have been impossible for him to walk in what was at least 1 foot of mud. Water appeared on the floor of the car. We waited and were rather frightened. Eventually we saw a truck in the distance. It was the British Army. Inside were Joan and William. We were pulled out and the car was unharmed.

Once we had a holiday in Barbados. During the night, a huge black man walked into our bedroom. He kicked over some coca- cola bottles which woke me. I screamed hoping to wake William, who slowly got up and told him to get out. When the man produced an enormous knife, William said 'it's not very sharp', and the man left out the back door.

1980s William and I went to Goa (India) to see the eclipse of the sun, which we had planned months earlier. On the day of the eclipse we got up very early, and together with hundreds of other people, set off in a taxi to the correct viewing place. As we were there eight hours too early, we asked the taxi man to take us to the nearest hotel, as William needed the loo and a drink. When it began to get dark, we went outside with many other people. After nearly a year of anticipation, the moment had arrived. However, unbeknown to us, we were by then out of the path of the total eclipse. The sun was just coming up to totality when the shadow moved back. We had missed it. It was not funny.

Mid 80s I went with Amar to her brothers house which was in the jungle (Tiger Haven) in India. One day we went for a walk, and as I was

unable to go far, my friends left me on a *machan*, which is a high platform. To get up you have to climb a ladder. I sat there in the jungle watching amazing birds and listening to jungle noises. It began to get dark and I realised that a tiger or leopard could easily climb up the ladder. I was nervous and helpless, thinking that my friends may have had an accident or were attacked by a tiger, and that I would never have been found. However, my friends turned up, unaware of my fears.

Amars brother, Billy Arjan Singh, is a well-known conservationist devoting himself mainly to tigers and leopards.

Late 80s

I had a job taking meals to Aids sufferers. At one time my helper was a very charming priest who was also a road-sweeper. Months later I saw him on television sweeping a road. It turned out that this man was a spy. There were troubles going on somewhere in the world, I forget where. He was a very brave man. I never saw him again.