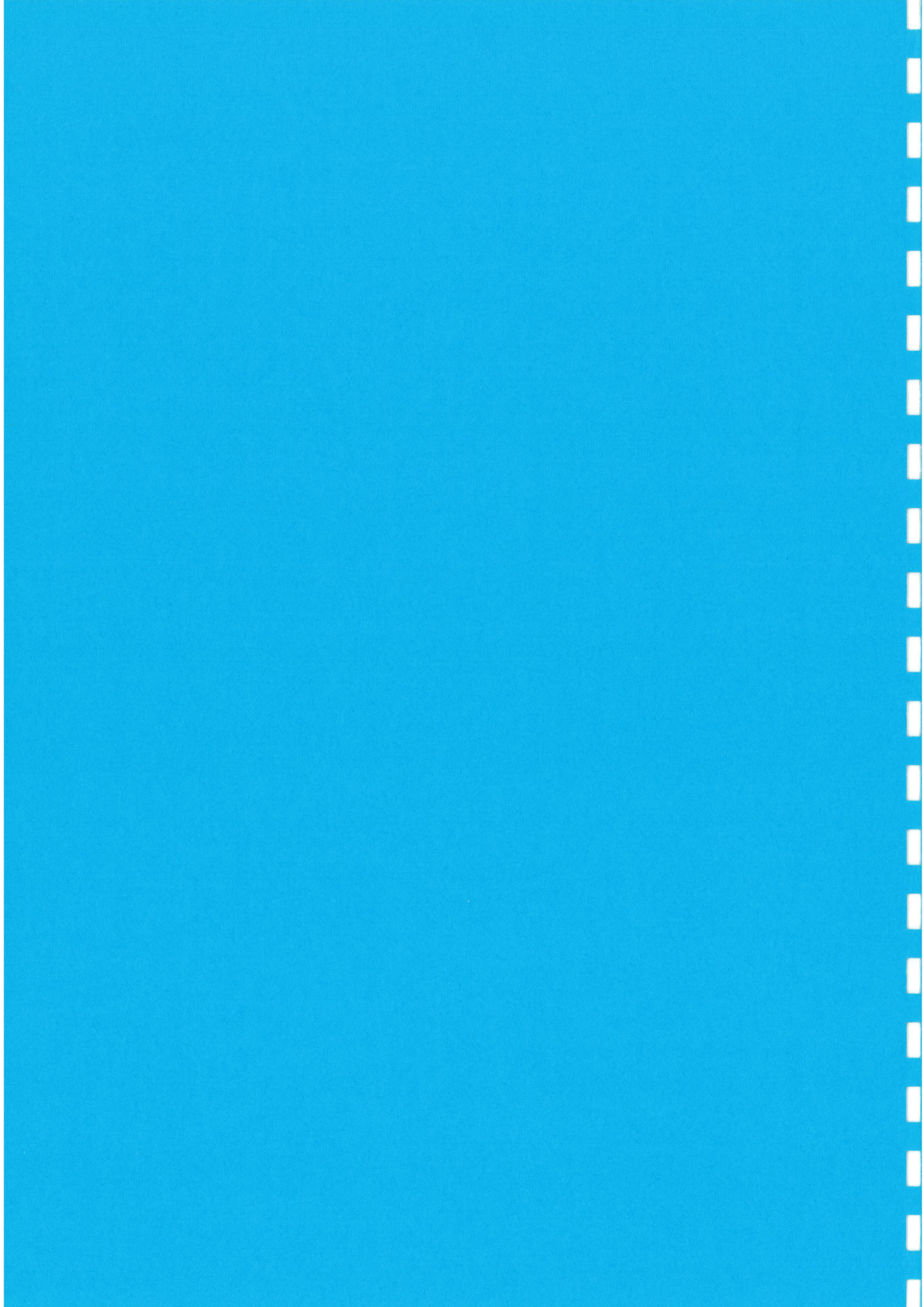


Honour
Thy Father
and
Thy Mother

L. WINTER 1916

The History of
The Honour Family
Part 2. 1916 - 1945



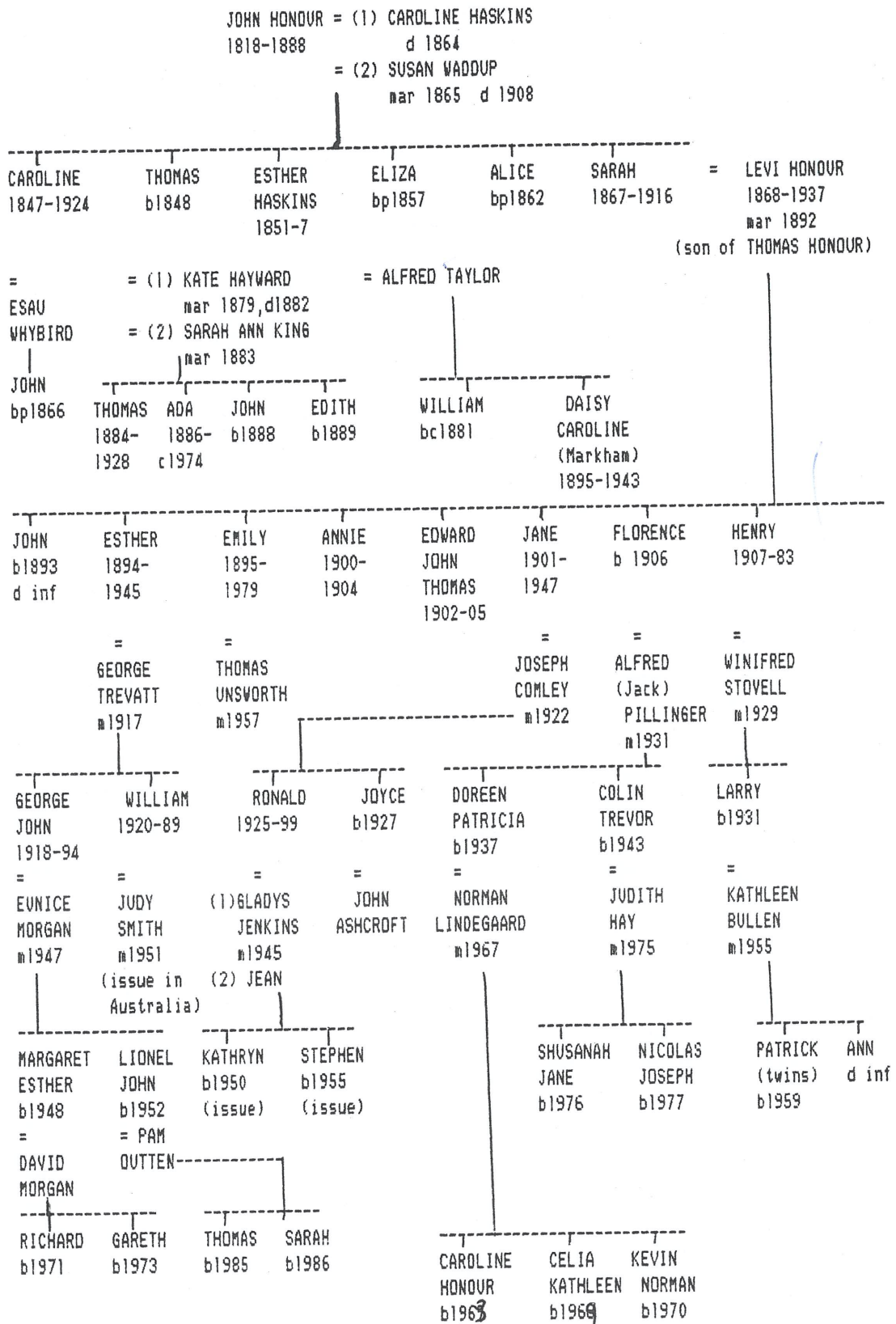
HONOUR THY FATHER AND THY MOTHER

Part 2

Westward Ho!

D.P. Lindegaard B.A.

THE FAMILY OF JOHN & CAROLINE/SUSAN HONOUR



Chapter 12

LEVI & Co: Mostly Bristol

1916

"Fed....with a continual renovation of hope
To end with a constant succession of disappointment"

Samuel Johnson.

Sarah died on 11 September 1916 and was buried at Ripley. On our visit in 1997, Flo sat in the little shelter in the churchyard - the church itself was locked, and though I knew no monument had ever been erected, I mooched around the weathered and illegible stones. Later, we found the cottages where the family had lived, but they all looked alike and Flo could not say for certain which one was theirs. They had been new then, "purpose built" in red brick, and Levi and Sarah had been pleased with the move. Once, during their time there, Flo's little brother had pushed her fully clothed into the bath. She could not go to school for she had no other clothes to wear. The school where Harry had to take a note explaining his sister's absence must have been nearby, but there is only a modern school now, which meant nothing to Flo. In fact, everything was strange, and even on a Sunday, the traffic was furious and the country road where a neighbour had played a silly trick on "our Harry" in the dark, could no longer be imagined:

"There were footsteps behind him. When he stopped, they stopped. Then he would go on a little way, and so did they. When he stopped again, they stopped too. Harry got to the Police Station, and he gave one yell, and cried out 'Thieves, Robbery, Murder' at the top of his voice. From the darkness somebody said 'It's all right, 'Arry, it's all right. It's only Ted.' So all was well, but he was very shook up. And our Dad wasn't half cross."

The old signpost which had pointed the way to Clandon when Sarah took her fatal journey was long gone, but the modern sign was there, and it was this road we took when leaving Ripley.

When Sarah died the family split several ways owing to the alteration in their circumstances. Emily remained in Ripley, having "various little jobs, in the first place earning about 5 shillings a week at Mr Goodman's School, helping in the sick bay and in the laundry." She then went to the Talbot Hotel where her employer was Mrs Fleming. Her wages were "not much cash, but the tips were very good in those days." She was young and wilful, and her father had already advised her not to try to "run in double harness" because he believed she would never be docile enough to be a wife in the accepted standards of the day. Prior to the war she had been Suffragist, but the cause had been suspended for the duration, though her views on the equality and (even occasionally, the superiority) of women remained unaltered. Though she was "no bigger than a penn'orth of coppers" she went to the munitions factory at Hayes, Middlesex, to serve the War effort. Her father Levi was now in Bristol,

on that "Government work" already alluded to: the details have always been very hazy, but it was supposed to be obtaining fodder for the army. In Bristol he met a woman called Eliza Yeoman, a twice widowed midwife of about his own age, which would affect them all, but Flo and Harry most. Esther was in service. A year older than Emily, she was being courted by a widower, George Trevatt, who had two young sons, George and Ted. Jane (Jennie, pronounced "Jinnie") aged 16, was also in service. For the little ones, there was a great deal of travelling.

Flo said:

"When our Mum died we got sent to Aunt Nellie and Uncle Joe at Eversley. We had to say 'Good Morning Uncle Joe, Good Morning Aunt Nellie', and then we had to sit down with ourselves washed and dressed and with our hair done. Then we had prayers and then breakfast, a great bowl of porridge. The same year though, Aunt Nellie died and Uncle Joe couldn't put up with us, and then we went to Aunt Charlotte and Uncle Fred at Yateley."

Now here's a thing. Whilst there is no doubt that Flo and Harry did make this visit, it must have been before their mother died. For "Aunt Nellie" - Ellen Carter of Eversley Common, was buried aged 52 on 17 November 1915. "Uncle Joe" Carter died soon after and was buried aged 62 on 4 August 1916, again prior to Sarah's death. It must have been that the children were sent to the Carters in 1915, when their mother was already very ill. The christenings of numerous Carter children have already been listed and I have made mention particularly of Louie Carter. Louie wrote to me on 25 November 1974.

107 Marsh Benham
Near Newbury, Berks
RG16 8LY.

Dear Mrs Lindegaard

Thank you for your letter. I haven't any documents belonging to the Honour family but wonder if the enclosed photos and cuttings will be of any use to you. I last saw Uncle Levi at Aunt Fanny's funeral in the early 1930's. I remember your Mum and Uncle Harry stayed with us at Ferndale Villa, Eversley for a while in the First World War and that previous to that I spent a week's holiday with Aunt Sarah and them at Ripley, Surrey. I know Esther (Granny Honour) is buried in Eversley churchyard, also her daughter Emily who I believe was 28 years old. My mother (Ellen Honour) and Dad are buried in the cemetery there, also Aunt Charlotte, Uncle Fred and their daughter Esther. My sister Lizzie who looked after us when Florrie and Harry stayed with us went to Australia with Maria nearly 50 years ago. Maria and I are the only two left out of a family of seven. Yes, Alice lived with Aunt Jenny and Uncle Tom for over 40 years and afterwards had a thatched cottage next to us at Marsh Benham. My brother Harry also went to Australia where they settled down near Perth. You must have found your research very interesting.

Yours sincerely

Louie Palmer.

Louie (Louisa) was born in 1905, a year before Flo. Emma, one of the older Carters had been married to Jesse Chandler at Eversley Church in November 1911, with Alice her sister and Joseph her father as witnesses. Lizzie (Eliza) was born in 1890, so was old enough, about 25, to have looked after them, for perhaps they had gone to Eversley again after the deaths of Sarah, Nellie and Joe. The cuttings and photos which I shall refer to later were indeed very helpful.

Anyway, let Flo continue:

".....then we went to Aunt Charlotte and Uncle Fred at Yateley." Charlotte and Fred Harris were the parents of Esther Harris, who was still living at the same farm when I went to see her in 1954 and where Doreen Dodd now lives. When we visited in 1997, it had been so prettified and altered, nothing was familiar to me. I could not even say for certain which room I had slept in. Yateley forty years ago must have been just as it was during my mother's time. Esther boiled me an egg in a pan on the open fire, which tasted of smoke, and this is the only food I can remember eating. There was little comfort, but there were drawers stuffed with papers, which even then I longed to get my hands on, but never managed to. Esther would riffle through them with her back to me, and my only haul was two photographs, one which she said was "your grandfather", and I assumed Thomas, but now I am not so sure, and another, a simple snap of her mother, Charlotte Harris. My bed was piled with straw mattresses, so high that a small ladder had been thoughtfully provided to enable me to get into it. The room was stacked up with ancient Picture Posts. I was in time warp. The one I chose to read before putting out the oil lamp crazily asked "Will Hitler invade Poland?"

Esther had never married but spoke of "a partner" who had recently died. Artificial Insemination must have been fairly new then, and she was very pleased with the "artificial calf" she showed me. She was, I think, in her late sixties, though could have been younger, a tiny figure with a tight white bun. She delivered eggs round the village on her bicycle, but mindful of her place, always to the back doors. Uncle Harry and Auntie Winnie came over on the Sunday afternoon of my stay, and I photographed them with Esther.

I was only seventeen, and didn't know the right questions to ask. I could have walked to Eversley from Yateley then, and might even have found people who remembered Thomas Honour and even Levi.

Florence: "At Aunt Charlotte's there was a great side of smoked bacon up the chimney. The bacon was practically all fat, and we used to try to feed the dog under the table with it. Well the dog didn't want it, walked away and left it on the mat. We had to have a hiding for that. Well, I don't know whether we had a hiding, we got put to bed at any rate."

For the children, even life at Yateley seems to have been preferable to life at home with "our Em" in charge. I assume both were fussy eaters - my mother still is - and when they wouldn't eat the dish she had prepared, she would place it on the top shelf of the dresser and however

much they whined and whimpered, would not give them anything else until the next meal time when the offending dish was brought down for another try.

"After that," Florence continued, we went to Aunt Esther's, we used to have pomade put on our hair every night to keep nits and lice away. We had cousins there, Essie and Tommy Dodd. Though Aunt Nellie was most like our Dad, Aunt Esther was my favourite. She was nice to me, but very strict; she meant what she said. We had to do our own washing. Aunt Esther said 'Essie has to wash her own knickers out, so must you.' We hadn't had to do that before. Esther was always happy though, always smiling."

The mind boggles at the washing. Though Tom Dodd was seven, Essie was only five! There was another daughter in the Dodd family, Charlotte, a baby, born in 1915, and apparently so inconsequential, that Flo had forgotten her. Recently (in 1998), I was in contact with Peter Hepworth, born 1954, the son of Charlotte, who died 1987. Esther and William Dodd died as recently as 1956, just two years after my visit to Esther Harris.

"We were back at Aunt Charlotte's, fat meat and all, when our Dad sent for us. We were to go to Bristol. It was very thrilling, a long train journey in charge of the guard. We were ever so excited."

The separation from his family had preyed on Levi's mind. When he wrote to the elder members of his scattered brood inviting them to come "home", Esther declined. She loved him dearly but intended to marry George. Levi was disappointed and said cruelly "If you make your bed you'll have to lie in it." Emily, who he felt was running around picking up all sorts of wild ideas, to his surprise accepted the invitation. Jane, who was little more than a child, was pleased to come. Nobody asked the two little ones. They just arrived. Emily said later "They bore the brunt of what was in store."

Flo continues: "Our first place in Bristol was 33 Morley Street, Barton Hill. It was opposite the Globe Picture Hall. They used to sit on their doorsteps there peeling potatoes and spreading the gossip of the day. Our Harry and I thought it was very common. Em and Jenny had jobs and then Harry and I went to school. As a memento of that time there is a certificate thanking Flo for "knitting socks for our brave soldiers and sailors". Harry Honour also wrote his name on it in 'joined up' writing.

"Harry had never got over our Mum's death and I had to look after him a lot, like a little mother, though I was only a year and a bit older than he was. Our Dad was going with Mrs Yeoman of course. She used to make him seedy cake; our Harry and I couldn't abear it. Not the caraway seeds. Our Dad used to think it was lovely. No thank you, we used to say. 'Er' we used to call her. I shall never forget the first time she came down to see us; she had a little round straw hat with a navy blue band, what midwives used to wear in those days, and her one eye. Of course, she couldn't help that, she had a knitting needle put in her eye when she was young. It came as a bit of a shock all the same, and we used to look at it with a sort of awful fascination and then look away

quick to pretend we weren't staring. We couldn't see what our Dad saw in her.

"One day there was a letter come from her to our Dad and when he came home he thought one of us had opened it. We denied it of course and he accused our Em. They had a blazing row which ended in her leaving home."

Emily reported the details: "My father said I would never earn enough to keep myself in shoe leather. I retorted 'I shan't ask you for a penny' and I never did, 'but you may be glad to walk barefoot to find me!'"

Emily would never go "home" to live again but thereafter would always be summoned in time of trouble.

She got a job at the Royal Chest Hospital, City Road, London where she earned £1 a month as a trainee nurse, plus an allowance for transport, uniform and insurance. She said "and we thought we were well off." She had always been outspoken and on one occasion when she was presented with half a sausage for her breakfast, she turned the plate, quizzically viewing it on all sides before finally saying, "Poor little thing. Will you put it back until it grows a bit?" She was duly reprimanded. "Well really!" she said. Her father had often stated it was a good thing she was not in the Army, for she would have been shot for dumb insolence. Whilst at the Royal Chest she had a brief love affair with a young Orangeman who had been gassed at the Front. His name was never uttered. Maybe she didn't remember it, and I do not know whether he lived or died. The work was arduous, the hours long. She caught 'flu badly in 1918; a world which had moving pictures, the internal combustion engine, the flying machine, and the tools of mass destruction had no antibiotics and millions, even more than in the War, died in the pandemic. Emily was fortunate to recover, but her health was impaired and she was told she was no longer strong enough for hospital nursing. It was a bitter blow and she wept angry frustrated tears. Mindful however of her parting shot to her father, she set about finding alternative work, and went to the Cavendish Hotel where the notorious Rosa Lewis ruled in iron handed splendour, a woman who it was whispered about had been the mistress of King Edward VII. The hotel was full of nobs; Rosa specialised in the discreet provision of clean tarts for the sons of the nobility and gentry, home from the front. Emily, as a tween floor seampstress saw none of this. She found that Rosa had a sharp tongue, but was very kind.

Meanwhile, in Bristol there had been more upheaval. Mrs Bond from whom they had rented the rooms in Morley Street told them she had notice to quit, though this may have been a ruse to get rid of her lodgers, "a gag state" as they say in Kingswood. (A man called Cecil Frederick Bond is listed in street directories as living at 33 Morley Street, at least up to 1923. Presumably he was the husband of Mrs Bond.) Levi told them he had a surprise for them. He was going to marry Eliza Yeoman and henceforth they would be living at her house at 128 Soundwell Road, Kingswood. This rash decision could have been brought about by the prospect of homelessness, and with the war drawing to a close, the army quartering would also be coming to an end. Levi would have to go back to the land, never again to be his own man, but as a labourer.

"They got married after that," Flo said. But the wedding which she thought had been in a register office was in fact at Holy Trinity, Kingswood. "We didn't go to it, at any rate."

The date was 12 October 1918, and the certificate reads:

Levi Honour, 50 years, widower, hay cutter, Soundwell Road Kingswood,
father Thomas Honour, (deceased) Farmer

Eliza Yeoman, 50 years, widow, nurse, 128 Soundwell Road Kingswood,
father John Barton, (deceased) Farmer.

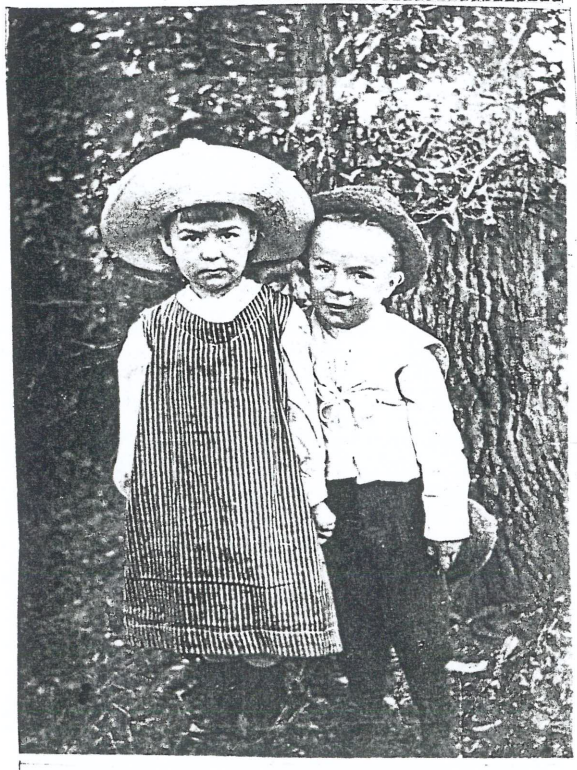
The witnesses were relations of the bride, Richard Barton, (who made his mark) and Charlotte Barton. This duty done, they make no other appearance in our story.

The Armistice of November 1918 was the end of the Great War and the beginning of a minor war. The children moved to Soundwell Road.

"Of course," said Flo, "There was umpteen people up there, now let me think, there was Olive, she was about sixteen, Dick who was about ten. Cecil, he was older than Olive. They were all Yeomans, and she also had Jack and Bert Ellans from her first marriage, but they didn't live there, and a couple of babies. One belonged to a Miss E....., supposed to be rich people; she had the baby by a solicitor; things like that were kept quiet in those days; she used to pay to have him looked after on the quiet. Then there was Claudie, the son of Kate S.... She was really let down; she had her home, well the furnishing of it, bought and all. He's married now, and got a child of his own, and was on the buses the last time I seen him. Donald Ware. He was Mary Ware's boy. His father was Mr Powell, a farmer in Portishead. Mary paid about 15 shillings a week. That was only the in-patients in the house. There were four or five babies who used to come in daily. Their mothers had to go out to work. There was Kitty K....'s, Iris P.....'s, Kenneth S..... who was Ethel D....'s.

This then for Sarah's two orphans was an introduction to life in the raw, and if Flo had entertained any illusions at all, they were scotched almost at once. Despite an interrupted school career, and one in which she had been to more schools than she could recall, she settled at Two Mile Hill, which was, and is, a large grey Victorian Board School in Kennard Road. After the village schools it must have seemed enormous. Her attention was drawn to "The Scholarship": those who passed it could go to the Grammar School without payment of fees, though books and uniform had to be found. It was a way of escaping the poverty of the ghetto for those who were clever enough. Florence passed the examination. In a mixture of pride and excitement she took the papers home from school. Her stepmother read the letter and said immediately they couldn't afford such things, particularly for girls, and without more ado cast the papers into the fire in the grate. As she watched the flames lick round her prize, this stoic little girl felt hot tears sting her eyes but she determined not to cry. She noted her father looking shiftily at the floor, moving his feet uneasily, knowing his failure was visited on his children. He had no money at all. (I believe that the

FLO & HARRY - with LEVI peeping through the gap.
 Flo had flowers in her hat and her "best frock"
 was made from a butcher's apron.



Flo's certificate for "Knitting Socks for Soldiers", 1916.

Honour Roll 33

HARRY A Signal Wish from the *Honour*
School Children of the Empire
 who sent Christmas Gifts to
Our Brave Soldiers & Sailors

Patron
H.M. the King

OVER-SEAS CLUB
 General Buildings,
 Aldwych, London, W.C.



FLO AND HARRY HONOUR AT RIPLEY SCHOOL, 1912

(FLO 4th FROM LEFT, 2nd ROW FROM BACK.

HARRY 1st " " SAME ROW)

THE TEACHER WAS MRS BLACKSNORTH.

course of my mother's life was altered in that moment of cruelty. Had she gone to the Grammar School then probably mine and my brother's existence on this planet is doubtful. I remarked once to my mother that I had never seen her cry. She said "I did my crying a long long time ago.") That night she sobbed herself to sleep into a flock pillow, her brother Harry saying, "Don't cry any more, Flo. Please don't cry." She was still only twelve years old.

At this time, uncle Mark Honour, Levi's brother, had evidently returned from Charlton on Otmoor, where Levi had stayed with him all those years ago. In 1919, he was in the Infirmary at Winchfield, where he died aged 69 in October 1919. He was buried at Eversley. Whether Levi attended the funeral is not known.

I have recently been contacted by a descendant of Mark Honour. She told me he had been an inmate of the workhouse. (*see appendix*)

In London, Emily found that life between floors at the Cavendish was fairly dull, and she decided to seek employment that would bring her out into the world again. She applied for a post at a house called Gunyah at Chiswick, the establishment of a Mr & Mrs Menzies Sharpe, Australians, who Emily would boast were relations of Sir Robert Menzies, later Australian Prime Minister, though they pronounced their name in the Scots' way "Ming-is". They had three older children and a young baby. Still frail looking from the 'flu, and weighing scarcely seven stones and five feet nothing, she assured Mrs Menzies Sharpe she was much stronger than she looked and was more than capable. She must have impressed, for she was engaged subject to references to start the following week. It would be intriguing to know if one of the referees was the mighty Rosa Lewis. She received the following confirmation:

'Gunyah', 12 Spencer Road
Grove Park, Chiswick
London W.

Dear Nurse

I received the replies to my two letters today and was very pleased to have such satisfactory answers. I will therefore look forward to seeing you on Monday afternoon & hope you will be happy & comfortable with us. I shall endeavour to do my best to make you so.

Yours faithfully

V. Menzies Sharpe.

At about the same time, Esther married George Trevatt, and went to live at Langley, near Slough. She soon had two sons, John and William. George, it would seem, resented the closeness between Ettie and her sister, and on one occasion actually banned Emmie from the house. Emmie said to him, "Esther tells me that I am not allowed to visit her here any more. Well, let me tell you this, nothing in Heaven or Earth will ever stop me seeing my sister, and I shall also visit her, here or elsewhere, so you can like it or lump it." Emmie said "I never had any trouble with George after that."

Life at Soundwell Road continued. Flo said:

"Cecil used to keep pigeons and we had to keep quiet when he was seeing to them. Out in the back garden they were. She..... (Flo and Harry had never been instructed what they should call their stepmother. Certainly "mother" seemed out of the question and they had no idea what to substitute. Even when talking about her in later times the difficulty remained. Sometimes "Mrs Yeoman", sometimes "Mrs Honour", but more often than not "she".) "She was a sly drinker, yet she could be as nice as ninepence when she was telling them all the tale. A lot of them thought the world of her. They used to come and knock her up when the babies were on the way, and she used to be blind drunk, but she'd pull herself together and go out on the job. I think she had a split personality; bringing babies into the World; taking people a basket of stuff and that, yet the times we saw her blind drunk. She'd unbuckle herself out of her stays and heave herself into bed. Harry and I used to be in the same room, keeping quiet and cowering. One night she got out of bed and groped underneath for the po. Her hat was also under there...and you can imagine the result. She was that drunk she mistook her best hat for the po and wee'd into it! Harry and I were frightened to death, not only of her when she found out what she had done, but frightened to death we'd fall out of bed laughing. Other times she could be all right, you could be combing her hair, and she loved to have her hair combed. She had lovely hair, mind, and in would come our Dad and she'd start. He seemed to put the devil in her. I don't know why, but there'd be a row straight away. Perhaps it was because he used to go chaff cutting and it used to get down on his chest and perhaps he couldn't eat his tea. Anyway, she used to start on him, and he used to say wearily, 'I wish I'd never come home.'"

During this time a man came round to Two Mile Hill School, looking for apprentices for the tailoring trade. "He took to me," my mother said, "and said he would teach me. I really wanted to do that, but the wages at G.B. Britton's boot factory were 6d a week more. Sixpence a week. You couldn't believe it, could you? So I started there. You could say she dominated our Dad. He seemed to hold with her at any rate, to keep the peace, frightened to go against her, I suppose. Any way, I started at G.B. Britton's. Our Jen was already there. I was only thirteen when I started work, but I was quick and I learned it well. There was a another girl who couldn't do it, and she used to sit at the bench and cry, so I used to do hers as well."

Not long afterwards, Jennie had an accident, riding a bicycle along with a friend, Ethel Davis, she braked suddenly, flew over the handlebars and injured herself, superficially it seemed at first. But these injuries caused tetanus - lockjaw - and she was only kept alive because of a gap in her front teeth through which she was fed by tube. Emily who had skulked in London all this time and had not seen her father since the Morley Street quarrel, was sent for. Levi met her at the station. He told her not to comment on anything she might see or hear at Soundwell Road, for his sake. And to please, please, not to let Esther know. He had told Esther of course that if she made her bed she would have to lie in it. He was considering this ill-judged remark now, in the light of his own unhappiness, and more than that, Esther of them all was the one

most inclined to worry, particularly as she was far away, and unable to do anything to help the situation in which he had placed himself. Emily wrote to her considerate employers telling them of her safe arrival. The reply from Gunyah, undated bar, "Thursday 9 p.m." is no longer to "Dear Nurse" but to:

My dear little Nannie,

We thank you very much for your wire and letter - latter just came tonight. We are very sorry indeed to hear your news and ofcourse you must stay until you see how things are going. You have had such a lot of worry up here over the lack of news that I have no intention of asking you to come back for a second dose. The bairns have prayed each night to 'bring Nannie back safely & make her sister better' that I feel she must get better. It would be quite unnecessary to tell you how much we are missing you. Tom has given up enquiring. She feels 'long threatening comes at last' I suppose. She looked up at me with great surprise yesterday morning when she awoke & asked for Nan-nie but suddenly discovered her 'mish' tin so was consoled. She has been a good clean girlie bar once and does her best to help by scattering the dust I have just swept before I get it on the dustpan or by trying to wash her towel in the bath when the nightly ceremony is over. She flung her socks in tonight - they were dirty so I suppose I ought to feel rebuked. She is very lovely and a delightfully wicked silly. Colin and Meryl good as usual. I carry on in a kind of a way. No 'char' so far has arrived on the scene, but I still keep the flag flying or the stove going & long for your return but not for Annie's strange to say. 6.15 sees me out of bed & giving Tommie her mish'. No steps or brasses have had a turn.

The bairns send their love & kisses & with best wishes from Mr Sharpe & self & every hope that your sister will pull though all right.

Yours sincerely,

V. M. Sharpe.

The 'mish' tin contained sweets! Nannie's salary had by now been raised from £48 per year to £52.

In Bristol, Jane hovered near death and then slowly recovered, though in cheating death she had weakened her heart irrevocably and would never again be strong. Emily returned at last to her charges in Chiswick. Her presence had been much missed, and not only by the Menzies Sharpes. A former soldier, who had gone through the Battle of the Somme, had become a postman whose round took him past the Chiswick house. Something about the little Nannie took his eye. He was twelve years her senior, erect and immaculate with waxed moustaches and already the beginnings of an important stomach. His name was Thomas Unsworth. For the rest of his life he called her "Nan". He proposed marriage to her, but although she liked him, she was not in love with him. She was additionally mindful of her father's warning and also of the fact that he had an invalid sister, who, he had promised his parents would share his life, whoever he married. It was something Emily did not like the sound of, and having

met Floss, the sister, who was "very difficult" turned him down. But they remained friends. He would wait for her for more than thirty years.

A little later, Emily after "a silly quarrel. The biggest mistake I ever made, never another place like it" left Gunyah. Which is all she would say on the subject, apart from "it was all a very long time ago." (Her memory was often selective. She told only that which she wanted to tell, pretending that she had forgotten certain things. I knew and she knew that I knew this. She was a mistress at stone walling and beyond a certain point there was impasse.)

After Gunyah, she was nurse companion at Alperton to a Miss Nesta Roper, an epileptic. No Maxim de Winter turned up and the job came to an end after nine months when the Ropers moved to Exeter. She obtained this reference:

12 Warnley Avenue
Thornton Hill
Exeter

Sept 12th 1920.

Nurse Honour lived with me for nine months as nurse companion to my daughter. I always found her willing to do anything in her power for her patient. She is very kind and attentive - domesticated & able to do needlework. Anyone employing her will I am sure find her satisfactory.

(signed) C.A. Roper.

I shall always be willing to supply further particulars.

"Further particulars" were no doubt supplied to other prospective employers, jobs which Emily dismissed as "various mothers' helps" during the next five years.

On 26 December 1922, Jennie was married. The marriage entry at Holy Trinity Kingswood reads:

Joseph Comley, bachelor, collier, 21, Speedwell Rd, St George father
Joseph Comley, collier

Jane Honour, spinster, boot machinist, 128 Soundwell Rd, Kingswood,
father Levi Honour, hay trusser.

(The register was witnessed by Levi, and by John Ellans, the bride's step brother.)

Flo recalled: "our Jen got married on Boxing Day. They often got married on those sort of days 'cause they couldn't afford to have the time off work otherwise. I think Joe Comley was a bit younger than her, he'd put on his age when he wanted to join the Navy. He was nice looking and of course she was lovely. They were like a couple of lovebirds when they first got married. Did I go to the wedding? Yes, I did - I wore a blue lustre costume, the first thing I'd had new since I went there living; all the rest was second hand. I was supposed to be a bridesmaid in that. Horrible? Not half! Her choice." (i.e. Eliza's). She'd bought the material and had it made up. We didn't have to have our own choice. Jack

Ellans was my stepbrother; from her first marriage; she'd been married twice before she married our Dad. There was him and Bert Ellans. Jack was the eldest. Bert was about 25 then. He died about 1978, and he was getting on for eighty, so I suppose that must have been his age. I think they were both married by then. I can't remember them living at Soundwell Road anyhow. Our Jen went living with Joe's father at Speedwell when they first got married, to be close to the pit. They also had an old Aunt, Maria, living with them. She was a bit funny but apparently she had been very good to Joe when he was little, bringing him tit-bits to the playground and that when he was at school. (I have a small leather bound Bible which belonged, I believe, to Maria, and also some hand made lace worked by another of Joe's aunts, Lizzie Cleaver, which Joe gave me years later.)

So Flo and Harry were left at home. "They used to have terrible rows. Like say they would have a chicken for dinner, and our Dad would say - nothing meant - "What would you like, my dear, a leg or a wing?" And she would start.

"Oh, ah, you 'ave the leg and I'll 'ave the bloody wing." Then they used to go at it and Cecil would like as not pick up a knife and go for our Dad - 'course he would have to stick up for her, being his mother, which was only natural. Our Harry and I never used to say anything. Try to look as if we weren't there, but we were all of a tremble. Talk about keeping a low profile as they say nowadays."

As far as I know the only time Flo spent away from Bristol after Levi's remarriage was a few days holiday she spent with her sister Ettie at Langley. She was about 16. Ettie, as we have noted inherited two stepsons, George and Ted Trevatt.* Flo said "I didn't mind Ted, but I couldn't a-bear George, always calling me his little girl friend and trying to kiss me."

At the time of his marriage to Jennie, Joe's wages at Speedwell Colliery were £1.10.10d (about £1.54), for five days and £1.17.4d for six days. The coalminers also received a ticket each week for 3 hundredweight of coal which they would sometimes sell for 2/6d. In the early days of their marriage there was a strike in the mines of Bristol. There was no strike pay in those days but the Co-op, wanting to attract members gave each striking miner a five shilling voucher for a week's groceries. Five shillings was not much, and said Joe, he felt he had to do something. He had long played in a band, so he got together another two bandsmen, Johnny Cousins and Reg Morell and put forward a suggestion. With borrowed instruments from the band, the three should have a go at busking on a street corner. So with two of them playing and the other on collecting box duty, they stood on the top of Cleeve Hill. Downend, for the duration of the strike, entertaining the passers by and making a few bob into the bargain. The family always admired Joe for this, saying it took a lot of guts. He told me he used to hand over all his money to Jennie and she would give him back two shillings for cigarettes. He was always a go-getter with plenty of cheek and later he started a tea round, going by bike around the houses, getting orders for quarters of tea. Brooke Bond supplied the tea and the commission supplemented his pit wages. He recalled working at Speedwell Pit, the only illumination

being a paraffin wax light with a naked flame. They had to "buy the wax at the pithead. Pay for it of course. If you bent down quick, the darn thing, it did go out. We used to wear 'em on our heads. We used to get a bowler hat and cut the brim off that and sew a piece over the front and stick the light in there." Carbide lamps replaced the wax after a while. Joe worked at the pit until it closed in 1936.

At Soundwell Road, life carried on just as bizarre as before. Flo said "Our Dad kept a calf in the back garden. The woman next door was called Davis. She used to get blind drunk and then she used to start singing "When the M..M...Moon shines on old Honour's Cow Shed" to the tune of Charlie Chaplin, if you can call it a tune, at the top of her lungs and they did all get out the back and have a good old row. She - Mrs Davis, had Claudie and Cyril. Cyril works up the chemist" (this was in 1984) "and he don't know me now. Well, he do know me - but he do just say 'Good morning.'"

When Harry was seventeen he left to join the Army. "Our Dad didn't want him to go, but he was fed up being there, and went anyway." So now there was one.....

"It got worse after that. As I told you, Donald Ware was Mary's boy, and he used to live there and our Dad thought the World of him, like a son. Anyhow, she, Mrs Honour, had bought him a pair of shoes and they were too tight. Donald was about five, and he'd just started school and she made him wear these shoes and keep them on at home to break them in, and he used to cry 'cause they hurt him. She said they weren't too tight. Donald started crying to me about them, and I stuck up for him saying he ought to be allowed to take them off. Well, she wouldn't let him and she started on me then. Well, Don was crying, I was crying and our Dad walked in and he had to hear all about it. And he walked over to Donald and said "The buggers got to come off" and he ripped the shoes off, and flung them into the fire. There was an almighty row after that with both of them shouting and swearing at each other. It was the end as far as I was concerned. I couldn't stand it any more. I left home, though our Dad didn't want me to go and begged me to stay for his sake, but I couldn't. I didn't go there much after that. I wanted to see Donald, to me, he was always "my little boy", but I didn't want for him to get upset as he would have cried for me to stay. He did become our Dad's stepson eventually, for of course, after Mrs Honour died, he married Mary Ware, or Powell, as she was by that time. Don was itching to join the Army, and once again our Dad didn't want him to go, for our Harry was already gone, but Mary was all for it, and reckoned it would do him good, pull him together. Anyway, he did go, and he got killed in the early days of the War, 1939, but that was a long way off then. He was only about nineteen.

Flo left about 1925. It was the beginning of the third stage of her life.

Chapter 13



GOING COURTING and a matter of Elephants

"O! days remember'd well! remember'd all!
The bitter-sweet, the honey and the gall."

George Crabbe.

1925

"Nature's great masterpiece, an elephant.
The only harmless great thing."

John Donne.

Flo's refuge was Berkeley Street, Eastville, where Joe and Jennie lived. By now they had a son, Ronnie Comley. Flo arrived with her few belongings, but not the detested blue lustre costume, which she had discarded at the earliest opportunity, for "Even the poor wouldn't want that." The "Roaring Twenties" passed her by. She was never a flapper, nor did she learn the Charleston, and certainly not the Black Bottom, (which sounded rude, and she was prim by nature), these seemingly being for posh people and all she knew was the grind of being poor and the constant struggle to keep yourself "respectable". If Morley Street had been common and Soundwell Road rough, she was not herself coarsened by her experiences. Berkeley Street was a new start and she was glad that the only thing known about her there was that she was Jennie's sister. It was not even then, all honey. "It was awkward. I was, you know, the odd one out. Joe used to be a little bit jealous of me, like if our Jen got me something nice for my tea." There were other problems: "It was a Council House; it hadn't been up all that long, but they found bugs in it. Joe stripped all the boards down, the picture rails and that. He didn't half work hard, him and Harold Long."

She continued to work at G.B. Britton's boot factory in Soundwell Road, avoiding number 128. On one occasion when walking to the factory she heard someone whistling out at her and eventually located the sound as coming from a hole in the ground where a gang of gas company navvies were digging. The whistler was now looking very hard at the ground and all she could see of him was the top of his flat cap. After some days of this, she received a message passed on by a workmate, who turned out to be a sister of the whistler.

"Our Jack wants to go out with you," the girl said.

"He was too shy to ask me himself, and I didn't know what he was like as I hadn't really seen him, but I went any way. He turned out to be quite good looking, about 5 feet 10 tall, with fair hair, grey eyes, a thin face, and a wiry build. His name was Alfred Pillinger but everybody called him Jack, except one of his sisters who called him Ben. That first night out - we didn't call it a date then - was pretty gruesome. We were both so nervous, we couldn't think of anything to say to one another. We walked for miles and miles in silence. There was nowhere much you could go in those days, we didn't have any money for a start and of course you couldn't go in anywhere, not bring anybody to the

house like nowadays, and I was never keen on pictures, used to go asleep in there. Anyway, we walked for miles and miles, and no hanky panky, poncing about, or anything like that. We thought it must be very late, having walked so far, but when we got home, back to our Jen's - of course he wouldn't have dared come in - it was only nine o'clock. Joe made a lot of fun about that, saying he thought I was going out, but perhaps I hadn't been. I went red as fire. They all started laughing. They were quite surprised when I said I had made arrangements to see him again."

This was the start of a five year courtship. "I used to get fed up at times as he was always working - often he never used to turn up but he would send his sister with a message and I used to have to go somewhere with her instead. There were a lot of them in that family, they made a lot of noise. The girls were what we called 'dressy' and they were forever going out in one another's clothes and causing a furore. Your Auntie Polly (one of Jack's sisters) said I had nice legs, not straight up and down like hers. Jack's mother said that he was a good steady chap; always had a pound in his pocket. She also gave me some good advice which was to 'owe a little bit, save a little bit and spend a little bit.'" (Though Laura Hester Pillinger died before I was born, I too have followed this sensible maxim.)

At this time, Emily was working for Mr George Hebden as a mother's help, to assist his wife with their four children. She was to remain in the post for three and half years, leaving at the beginning of 1930. Though she was on friendly enough terms with the Hebdens, and was particularly fond of their little boy, Basil, never again would she be "my dear little Nannie." She had learned that it was unwise to strike up too intimate an acquaintance with employers. The formidable "Miss Honour" who was now in her mid thirties had emerged.

A reference and two letters survive from the Hebden period.

(Undated). *To whom it may concern.*

Miss E. Honour came to us in the capacity of Help to my wife with four young children. She was with us for over three and a half years. All her duties she performed in a most capable manner with unfailing honesty, economy and kindness. For the last year she ran the house keeping with great success during a very serious illness to my wife. I really cannot speak too highly of her. She left us because we left London.

G.L. Hedbden.

*Constitutional Club
Richmond Hill
Bournemouth.*

Basil remained with her while they settled in, as is shown by the following letter.

1 Kings Park Road
Bournemouth
12th Jan/30

Dear Miss Honour

Sorry I've not had time to write you a letter but I have been busy, something to think of every moment.

Well, we, Miss Walker, Mr Elsie & I are working quite hard & we are gradually getting the place a bit ship-shape. After the first van arrived on Thursday everything appeared to be more or less hopeless, it even kept me awake. Slept here last night for the first time and slept well. The weather here too terrible for words.

Mrs H. & Jean are arriving tomorrow & are going to stay at the Browns & Geoff at Crabton Close Rd. I do hope but am very doubtful, if this will work out satisfactorily!!

How is my little darling Basil, I wonder what he thinks about it all. Has he been a good boy. I'm sure he has. I didn't know until Tuesday night that Mrs Walker could come to us for a week at least, perhaps three.

Do please, Miss Honour accept my thanks which is heart felt for your great kindness and thoughtfulness for me during the past years, kindness I can never forget.

I should like to have a line from you as to Basil's movements & also your sister's address, although I expect Mrs H. knows it.

I am chancing you getting this before you leave.

All you wish yourself & may you be happy in the future is the sincere wish of

George Hebden.

I kept P.C. in my pocket for a day.

One little hug & kiss for Basil. Also let me know what I owe you. G.H.

Emily remained in touch with the Hebdens for some years afterwards. Evidently she had written to George Hebden expressing sympathy on the death of his brother. The reply from the same address in Bournemouth is dated 4th January 1933.

Dear Miss Honour,

Please forgive me for not having written to thank you for your very kind letter. What a consolation it is in one's sorrow to hear from true friends!!

Had my brother been spared longer, he would have only suffered & we could only hope for the end, but it doesn't seem to lessen the blow when it does come. My mother and sisters join me in thanking you for your kind sympathy.

May I take this opportunity of wishing you all good wishes for 1933 & thank you for the cards you so kindly sent to the children.

Mrs Hebden & Jean are going up to Chiswick tomorrow for a week. I think Mrs H. is none too well, gets most frightfully depressed and morbid at the same time. Little Basil is growing up. I want to bring him up to Acton in the Spring to see his Granny so I shall be sure to let you know. He is rather being tossed about these days from one help to another, which is all bad for him.

I often think of the time four years ago when you fetched my brother from Acton & between you saved my life.

All my best wishes once again.
Yours very sincerely

George Hebden.

The domestic drama when Emily had assisted in the saving of George Hebden's life was was one of those things she "couldn't remember." She was still at this time living in Chiswick, now as housekeeper to a Mrs U.M. Robertson, a post she would hold for the next six and a half years.

On Easter Monday, 1929, Harry Honour married a pretty young woman called Winifred Stovell at St Martin's Church, Epsom, Surrey. Two years later it would be Florence's turn. She was to marry Jack Pillinger and they would become my mother and father. Flo said

"We got married at St Thomas's, Eastville on August 1st 1931. Ettie came with John and Will (Ettie's two sons, now aged 10 and 11.) Em didn't come. I don't know why. Jen couldn't come - she was bad. Your father's mother came, though she was also bad. Joe Comley gave me away. I can't remember why our Dad didn't come. Because it would cause a row, I suppose. Sid Williams was best man. He came from Kingswood and worked at Douglas's. (This was the famous engineering/motor cycle firm). Cavell (Jack's sister) was bridesmaid. Our Joyce (Jen's daughter, at the time about four) was supposed to be, but she got under the table and wouldn't come out. We had anticipated that - that's why I asked your Auntie Cavell as well. I know we got up in the morning and scrubbed the house from top to bottom." (Why?!) "We had a pick and shovel wedding - some chaps your father knew in the gas company were working nearby and they made an arch with their picks and shovels when we left the church. I don't think we had much in the way of wedding presents: little things I suppose. There was a set of plates, all broken now. After the ceremony we went back to Berkeley Street for a glass of wine and a piece of cake and had our photo taken in the back garden. Then we went away on our honeymoon, a week in Torquay at Mrs Tucker's boarding house."

The honeymoon was less than romantic. "It was so hot we got burnt black by the sun. We were so blistered and sore we could hardly move or lie down."

In November 1932, Eliza Honour lay dying. Levi was nearing the end of what he described as his fourteen years of hell. Mrs Honour sent for Flo

at the last wishing to make peace, and Flo went to see her. Eliza, aged 65, was buried at Holy Trinity, Kingswood. Back at Soundwell Road, the family assembled in time honoured fashion for the ritual "reading of the will". Only it was not really a will, just her wishes on a tatty piece of paper. From the start the atmosphere was raw with tension. It could be seen that Bert Ellans had something on his mind. He behaved in a manner usual amongst them, as Flo said, "he kicked up a fuss." He stood up and said that he thought that all the outsiders should leave the room.

"Well of course there weren't any outsiders but us lot. It was red rag to a bull to our Em. She rose up to her full height of five feet nothing and said 'Come along Jennie, Ettie, Flo, Harry, this is no place for us' and we walked out in her wake, not knowing what else to do at the time. She was absolutely furious. Anyway, the laugh was on them, as all Mrs H. had left was a bag full of pawn tickets. Anything they wanted they had to go down to the pawn shop and fetch out. I expect you remember Dick Yeoman coming up to our house, he kept calling me Florrie and wanted to talk about the good old times. Don't make me laugh....." The wretched will, it would appear, was never proved.

It seems to me as though the two families were chalk and cheese, and I grew up with the chalk. Latterly I have felt it would have been revealing to have heard even a little of the Yeoman/Ellans side of the story. In any event, I was recently (1999) surprised to be presented with a small cache of photographs belonging to Harry Honour and found by his son Larry Honour in his loft. They include Olive Yeoman, her brother Dick, with a young woman, and a bridal pair, names unknown, but presumed to be also Yeomans. If they had been so monstrous, why did Harry keep their likenesses?

It must have been during this time that Levi's sister Fanny wrote her many letters to him (none of which survive) alleging cruelty by her brother and sister. The ménage à trois at Wickham must often have been uneasy. With all his own troubles there was little Levi could do except write sympathetic replies. On 28 April 1933, Fanny died aged 63. Levi went to the funeral. An obituary appeared in the local paper:

The Late Miss A.F. Honour.

Funeral at Welford.

It is with regret we record the death of Miss Amelia Frances (Fanny) Honour, fourth daughter of the late Mr Thomas Honour of Bridge House, Fencott, Oxon., who passed peacefully away on Friday April 28th at Rectory Farm, Wickham, the residence of her brother and sister, with whom she had lived since they came to Wickham upwards of thirty years ago. Miss Honour had been in failing health for several months.

The interment took place on Tuesday May 2nd, at Welford Church, the Rector, Mr C.E. Hardy M.A, officiating. Several friends and parishioners were present in the church and at the graveside. The coffin was of panelled oak with brass fittings and bore the inscription 'Amelia Frances Honour, died April 28th, 1933 aged 63 years.'

There follows a long list of mourners. James and Jane Honour, brother and sister; Levi, with Emily Wooff, his niece, Ellen Honour's daughter; William Thomas (Tom) with Esther Dodd, brother and sister; William Honour, son of James, with Esther Harris, Charlotte's daughter; Walter Honour, her cousin (Mark's son, of Denchworth), with Alice Carter; William Dodd, (Esther's husband) and Louisa Carter; Jane Rainbow, James's daughter, Esther Dodd, and "Mrs Honour", presumably Walter's wife, described "cousins" and an unidentified "Miss Joan Honour".

Very many floral tributes were received, including a wreath from "Mother" who can be none other than stepmother Elizabeth! The Rev & Mrs Hardy also sent flowers, which suggests to me that Fanny was on good terms with them, though Flo could not remember any church going when she stayed with them.

In October 1998, we visited Welford and its church, and we wondered how anyone attends service there nowadays as it is impossible to pull up at the roadside. After hovering ineffectually for a while, greatly daring, we slipped open the catch of the wide lychgate and drove down the gravel path, stealthy as thieves in the night. The black rain snaked down and there was not a soul about. The church stands forlorn in a dip below a large expanse of more or less empty churchyard, as though expecting a population explosion that has never happened. The church door was locked. We could find no trace of any Honour gravestones in the dismal yard, though I expected to find them as I had Fanny's obituary and additionally according to Louie Palmer, Aunt Jennie, Uncle Tom and stepmother Elizabeth were also buried there.

At Wickham itself, the place of worship is the little chapel of St Swithun's, which took some finding, for it is tucked away half way up a steep hill, and reached through a small gap in the high hedges. Now we knew why Fanny's funeral cortège had gone to Welford, for St Swithun's has no graveyard at all. The chapel is a fascinating little place, one of the oldest in Berkshire, made of flint, incorporating Roman tiles and Saxon workmanship. It was open and I groped around in the murky darkness until I fetched clever Norman who found the light switch, revealing the font, with its enormous ornate cover, and an ancient chasuble in a glass case, thought to date from 1552. But the most cherishable objects of all are the ELEPHANTS at the end of the hammer beams on the ceiling of the North Aisle! The papier maché life sized heads seen at the Paris Exhibition of 1845 so enraptured a Victorian benefactor that he bought eight and donated them to his local church, and there they are to this day. I could not help thinking that Bill Bryson would have relished this glorious example of "Englishness"! Just as surely as Levi could not have missed the "Ace of Hearts" at Beckley, so Flo, if she had ever gone to church in this place, could not have failed to notice the elephants, but she had never seen them. I don't know though. A sense of wonder is not usually part of her repertoire.

She said, "I don't remember ever going to church at Wickham; not as I can recall anyway. Not like when we were at Uncle Joe's."

Before we left, I picked up a large piece of bone shaped fallen flint as a memento. I now use it as a paper weight. Our search for Rectory Farm

we can put you
up for the night
if we know for
cert then I can
ready for you set
much love from
Dad X X X X

128 Sandwell St.
Kingswood
Bristol

May 2nd 1934.

My Dear Emmie
Just a few lines in answer to your letter of 1st of Jan & Card I got it quite alright. & It come in very handy as I wa got a bit short to, Course my Boarders dont over load me with Cash & I have

^{me 1/2}
& Cleaned up a bit for me she is alright. not doing much work this week Harry had a bit of pluck to turn up with his son after all alone but he got on very well. He was not much trouble a nice little Chap got I suppose he is used to taking charge Esther he sent me a Shilling which I expect he could I'll afford poor kid but it showed nature Effie seems to have got over her shacks now Millie has started work she says she also had a short week George only 3 day... & Baby on the sick list suffering

^{me 2}
done nothing since Easter. But may be able to do a bit after Whitsun yes we are all keeping pretty well John is putting in pretty well a full week this week so I may get a few Extra Bob this week Dick is as usual busy doing nothing Claude is working But no Extras Jennie is keeping pretty well she seems quite cheerful again now. Ilo has just been over

with boils But I hope he seen get over that. Yes I am still keeping up the Insurance when I want I shall hand it over to you but it keeps one poor it seems a pity to let it run out now But I dont Insure anymore & dont you mind as I have got the & that will be enough to put me on side I want you & Ilo to see to all my Affairs when I get out & Harry. You talk of coming down for Whitsun why not come Sunday then you would be here early Monday morning for the Procession it is well worth the going

was unsuccessful, despite the chapel, according to the guide, being "in the Rectory Grounds, and Wickham House being until 1939, the Rectory." Wickham was a disappointment: through it before you've got there, no village, or at least we didn't find it, and nothing that Flo found familiar. Torrential rain continued to lash down throughout our time there. Though the elephants more than made up for the rest.

We might not have believed in Rectory Farm, Wickham, at all, were it not for surviving photographs of Aunt Jennie, Uncle Tom, Aunt Fanny and Alice Carter, taken there. And for a postcard of the place, postmarked 1928, showing "Wickham Village" including what appears to be Rectory farmhouse on the right. It was sent by Aunt Jennie to her sister Charlotte, at Moulsham Green, Yateley, after a visit they had made there:

Dear Charlotte, Just a card to let you know we got back safe just before 10. Nearly as soon as Esther and Walter. I expect it had been a Heavy Hail Storm when we got to the Birch and Fir. I got out of the Car and picked up a Handful. Your affect. J.H.

The car came as a surprise. Times had changed since Flo and Harry had arrived there by horse and cart. The card was Harry's, and must have come into his possession via Esther Harris, Charlotte's daughter.

Three letters written by Levi survive for 1933/4. I have left his grammar and spelling untouched.

*128 Soundwell Road
Kingswood Bristol
Dec 19th 1933.*

My dearest Emmie,

Just a few lines to you hoping it will find you quite alright and Tom. Thanks very much for the note you sent it will come in handy. It is to kind of you but as long as you keep in good Health and fit I am quite satisfied. Poor old Ettie enjoyed coming with you that day. According to her letter to me it is not all jam with her. But however she must stick it these troubles don't last for Ever do they.

We have had some very sharp weather here but a bit better now. I am sending Harry a little shirt for his son. I hope it wont be to big if it is he must put it bye for another day when he gets a big boy.

Now there is a lot of people dying just round & very suddenly. I am quite well myself & Jennie & Flo and all our household at present. Aunt Jennie sent me an Hare last week so we had a good feed Sunday and Monday it was lovely. Well old Sport I don't fare badly between it all. Claude say that he would like a Pair of Gloves if you can manage it. He is leaving school at Xmas & is trying to get in the Post Office as Errand Boy. Now I will close with fondest

*Love from your ever Loving
xxxxxxxxxxxxx Dad xx*

Harry Honour's boy was called Clarence John Henry. Clarence was thought to be an awful name by the family. Emily called him John in those days

Charlotte, at Moulsham Green, Yateley, after a visit they had made there:

Dear Charlotte, Just a card to let you know we got back safe just before 10. Nearly as soon as Esther and Walter. I expect it had been a Heavy

but later he would become Larry, an invention of ours when he came to live with us as an evacuee in the coming War. Larry he has been ever since. "Aunt Jennie" was of course Levi's sister Jane of Wickham. Claudie Smith a former "in-patient" was now elevated to lodger. Tom Unsworth was still on the scene. He and Emmie took holidays together, during which Tom played in bowls tournaments all over the South Coast. "The note" was a timely Christmas Box.

The second letter is dated March 6th 1934.

My dearest Emmie,

Just a few lines to answer yours I was pleased to hear from you that Tom was got alright again but those photos are a knock out I suppose it was to shocked at the sight of us to take us in well you must try again next time you come down it may be better weather. I have had Don home this last three weeks suffering with pains in his Head & don't want to go to school the Dr say he is swinging the lead a bit so I am taking him myself Wednesday morn. I went down to Jennie Saturday she seems fairly well again now & Jack Ellins wife is got alright again what had the cancer & was not expected to live. I hear from Flo that Esther is worrying herself about Will talking about joining the Navy. But you just tell her from me to Let Him go by all means & not put to much Hope in them for Help look after herself more I have been sorry Ever since I stopped Harry from going He has never done no Good Thanks for your P quite useful but don't distress yourself I am managing fair now will close with fondest love to you Both your Ever Loving Dad.

Levi did not know and thankfully would never know that Esther was right to worry about her son Will joining the Navy. Tragedy of Greek proportions would come of it.

I have a picture of a very youthful Harry in Army uniform, so he must have joined up despite his father's wishes. Maybe that first tour of duty was short as Levi had evidently discouraged him from making it a career. Once again Emmie had enclosed "a note" - "P" for Pound. Her letters were rarely empty of a gift and her father was always broke. Perhaps he thought with some irony of the time he had warned her that she would not earn enough to keep herself. He wrote again on

May 2nd 1934

My dear Emmie,

Just a few lines in Answer to your letter of Monday & Card. I got it quite alright and it Came in very Handy as I was got a bit short & of course my Boarders don't over load me with Cash & I have done nothing since Easter But may be able to do a bit after Whitsun yes we are all keeping pretty Well John is putting in pretty well a full week this week so I may get a few Extra Bob this week Dick is as usual busy doing nothing Claude is working but no Extras. Jennie is keeping pretty well she seems quite cheerful again now. Flo has just been over & cleaned up a bit for me she is alright not doing much work this week Harry had a bit of pluck to turn up with his son after all alone but he got on very well. He was not much trouble a nice little chap I suppose he is used to taking charge. He sent me a shilling which I expect he

could ill afford poor Kid but it showed nature. Ettie seems to have got over her shock now that Willie has started work. She says she also had a short week George only three days & Baby on the sick list suffering with boils But I hope he soon get over that. Yes I am still keeping up with the Insurance when I can't I shall hand it over to you but it keeps one poor it seems a pity to let it run out now. But I don't Insure any more & don't you mind as I have got two and that will be enough to put me One side. I want you & Flo to see to all my Affairs when I peg out & Harry. You talk of coming down for Whitsun why not come Sunday then you would be here Early Monday morning for the Procession it is well worth the seeing. We can put you up for the night let me know for cert then I can get ready for you.

Much love from Dad.

As usual, Levi was 'short' - and Emmie had sent something to tide him over. The letter is full of the "short time" which made the thirties hungry. "Dick" was Dick Yeoman, his stepson. "John" is not known, probably one of the child patients who became lodgers when they grew up. Harry was as broke as his father, but had sent a shilling, how like him that was: he would become the kindest and most loving of uncles to me. "The Baby" mentioned in conjunction with Ettie's troubles is a complete mystery. The Whitsuntide procession is still a noted event in Kingswood when the churches and chapels parade their membership together with banners and marching bands.

I was indeed fortunate that Pem, (like the Emperor Claudius), made contingency plans and gave me her manuscript employment references and correspondence about five years before she died. When my mother and cousin Eunice "cleared out" after her death, they assured me there, "was nothing of interest." At the very least they must have thrown out her birth and marriage certificates. Which begs the question what else was destroyed? The same thing happened when Tommy and Doreen Dodd cleared out Esther Harris's things. "Nothing of interest." Bah. Humbug.

Chapter 14: KINGSWOOD: I arrive.

1937

"Then heigh-ho! the holly!
This life is most jolly."

Shakespeare: As you like it.

Jennie's health often caused the family anxiety. She was frequently ill, not only with heart trouble but with ulcerated legs. She was pale, patient, with a mane of black hair that framed her face in a straight curtain. Her life was always a struggle but she was never crushed. She always returned to have another go. Joe Comley was still young and ambitious, full of energy and talk. It is not difficult to see what had attracted Jennie to him, yet he could be ruthless and stern, and his father in law, Levi, would often say to him, "Loosen that rein, Joe", when he was dealing with his children, particularly his son Ronnie, who

he more or less forced to learn to play the cornet, to follow in his own footsteps. Music which should be a joy was to the child a great and loathsome tyranny. Joe Comley had to be boss. When Flo and Jack visited for card sessions of whist, a regular Saturday night occurrence, Flo played with Joe as her partner. Her sharp mind which had been denied education was a more equal match for Joe's than that of his wife. Jack, my father, would partner Jennie, being more easy going and not giving a fig if she made a mistake and forgot which card had been laid and so lost them the trick. They had recently moved to Burchell's Green Road, Two Mile Hill, having taken out a mortgage on a new house at a price which now would seem a pittance but in those days represented a huge gamble. Jack who had the same opportunity did not take that chance - and regretted it bitterly. Joe took it.

On one of these evenings they had plenty to talk about. Their father had announced his intention to marry again. They had known his intended bride for many years. Mary Ware, Donald's mother, eventually married Mr Powell, the Portishead farmer, and they had a daughter, Iris. Her life as Mrs Powell was sadly short lived, and now that she was widowed, Levi had asked her to become his wife. She was many years his junior, younger than some of his daughters, but he had always loved Donald as if he had been his own son, and now would say of the baby Iris, like the sailor in the Mayor of Casterbridge, "And the little one too."

Flo said, "I had nothing against Mary. I believe she made our Dad happy. He was always contented enough anyway, as long as he had enough for his pint and his tobacco. He loved all those kids, and those kids loved him. He'd have loved yours," (she was speaking in 1973), "only they would have got a sticky sweet out of his pocket, always covered in tobacco they were. 'Course we used to think they were all right. They wouldn't have liked that."

My mother told me that people used to tap their noses knowingly to her and say "Ah, you know the way", meaning birth control, but she didn't, something which surprises me not at all, and it was not by design that I arrived nearly six years after Jack and Flo were married. I was born on the 13th June 1937 at the General Hospital, Bristol, and given the names "Doreen Patricia". Whatever possessed my mother, I will never know. She said she changed her mind on the way to the registrar's, for, infinitely preferable, she had had a mind to call me Sarah, after her mother. Can you imagine a baby Doreen? It is an ugly sounding name: almost all names ending in "een" are. It is an old tart's name; "a behind the counter when business is slack" name. Flo said it sounded "modern". It was. It reached its never (hopefully) to be repeated zenith about then, thus dating me for life. I might just as well have had it tattooed on my head, "born in the 1930's."

Of my mother's "time" I have not been told, whether I was a difficult birth or not: such matters were subject to a cloak and dagger mystique. All I know about our stay in the hospital is that the food was awful - Flo had been eating home grown new potatoes and going back to the black gritty mess that was served up "made me heave", as she so delicately put it.

We came home to 33 Victoria Park, Kingswood, which Jack and Flo rented from the Misses Gerrish. It was the last in a rank of small red brick terraced houses in a dead end corner of a dead end street. The small front garden had an iron gate, which would be taken away for munitions during the second World War, and never replaced. Downstairs was divided into "front room", (for best, and seldom used), "kitchen", (that is to say the "living room" where we spent most of our time), and "back kitchen", where cooking and washing, with boiler and mangle, was done. The only heating came from the coal fire in the living room. The fire place had to be black leaded daily. There were two ovens incorporated, where we would bake potatoes in their jackets, I, and later, my brother, sitting one each side of the fire on two "boxes" which were attached in some way to a fender, though there was always a fire guard round too. I must say no baked potatoes now taste as good as those did; neither does toast. We made it with toasting forks against the fire. It was probably the burnt bits of coal and wood that got in that made it so appetising.

My mother always got up at first light on Monday mornings to do the washing. Whites in the boiler, coloureds by hand, and all subject to ferocious mangling. After this she would hang out the washing outside on the line: in winter it was hung indoors, festooned across the room. The final job was to scrub the deal table in the kitchen until it was white.

Outside the house, turning left from the back door, were two adjoining outbuildings. Firstly the lavatory. This was considered quite posh, for it boasted a flush toilet, a refinement my mother had insisted upon before she agreed to take the house. Secondly was the work shop or wash house, depending who was talking. We favoured the former name, (as the second was "a bit common".) The Kingswood miners who first inhabited these terraces washed off the black dirt of the pit there in the wash houses, and by coincidence our three zinc baths hung up in our wash house/workshop on three iron nails, in descending order of size, fit for the three bears. There was also a detached coal house. Of course, there was no bathroom, and bathing was done in the back kitchen with water heated in a boiler, and doled out into the bath. This was a tedious and heavy operation and it was no wonder that the majority of people in our circumstances had a "bath night". Ours was always Friday, and it took up the whole of the evening. All this was in the future as far as I was concerned, for as a baby, my bath was taken in the tiniest of the baths before the open fire in the big kitchen.

Upstairs in the house there were three bedrooms, one large and two small. The house, including the outside offices, where Flo lived for more than 60 years, until the end of 1998, remained almost unchanged from the day they moved in with the following exceptions. Electricity gradually replaced the downstairs gas lights, but it was not until after the War that there was any lighting at all upstairs. In the 1950's my father "put a 'ammer into" the old fire grate, no doubt worth a small fortune today, and replaced it with pale blue tiles. The original was more picturesque but "very hard work." The open fireplace gave way to a gas fire after the Clean Air Act of the 1970's banned coal fires, and about the same time, a bathroom was fitted in the smallest bedroom.

Outside was a maze of alleys and our play ground was a scrub waste called "the Patch" where we lit fires and made dens. In the late 1960's, jerry built flats with no eye to aesthetic appeal were put up there, and the ground concreted over for garages. The concrete is now holed, and the entire area is dirty and squalid, a magnet for dogs' mess, supermarket trolleys, and rubbish of all kinds.

When the great and good boast of their humble origins they are rarely as humble as they make out. Ours was. Professor Colin Pillinger, Fellow of the Royal Society, (and suggested astronaut!), yet to be born in this narrative, started out thus. We did however, have a modest library, the Bible, of course, "Enquire within upon Everything", the "Universal Home Doctor", a set of Edgar Wallace, and "Tales of Mystery and Imagination." (Reading matter at the lower end of the scale had not changed much in two centuries when it is said that most houses boasted only two books, the Bible and the Newgate Calendar.) We also had an excellent dictionary, from which Flo tested my brother and myself on words, which perhaps largely accounts for our later verbosity.

What you don't know, you don't know you don't miss: we never thought of ourselves as deprived.

To a couple who had imagined themselves forever childless, I was a joy and a delight. From the start I was Daddy's girl: the apple of his eye. Levi was pleased with me too and would come tramping up the back garden path to our house to see me, bits of hay sticking out of his pockets. He would hold me in his work worn hands, hands like shovels, his face wreathed in affection and smiles, the days of his torment gone.

I was christened at Holy Trinity Church, Kingswood. My Godparents were Alice and Fred Butland and Elsie Wooff. Alice was a former workmate of Flo's, and the foursome had often taken holidays together. They were childless, particularly sadly, as they had lost infant twins. Elsie lived opposite in 31 Victoria Park, with her husband Reg, in rooms with her parents, Mr & Mrs Mannings. They too had no children. Often, my mother would put me outside in my pram "to catch the sun" and would come out later and find me missing, gone walkabout with Elsie! If a baby has conscious thought then I surely believed I was the hub of the entire world.

Whilst I was holding court in Kingswood, Emily, in London, gave in her notice to Mrs Robertson and was on her way again:

Phone 1181 Chis

36 St Mary's Grove
Chiswick, W.4.

August 3rd/37

To whom it may concern -

Miss E. Honour has been with me in the capacity of working housekeeper for six and a half years. She has proved herself to be a most loyal hard worker and it is with much regret that I part with her. She has become a dear friend through years of trouble and sickness.

(Mrs) U.M. Robertson.

Emily went to the household of Bessie Shaw. Within a few months she would be summoned to Bristol.

On 8th October 1937, with summer turning the corner into autumn, Levi left his house at Soundwell Road as usual at six to go to his work on a farm at Marshfield. It was no different than any other morning. He had surely never imagined that after his early ambitious years, the striving to get on, and the eventual dashing of his hopes that he would come to accept life as an old farm labourer. Did he ever hark back to Mafeking Night, and Mr Honour, his erstwhile self, at Hampstead Norris, or was this past a foreign country? Did he see a pattern in all things, a time to be born and a time to die? His hour was very nearly upon him. As he waited for his bus, an agonising pain caused him to crumple and fall, and he was dead before he hit the pavement. It was heart failure, they said. "To drop dead at the bus stop. It was a wonderful death, really, but a terrible shock. Worse for the rest of us. Of course, he was no age, not by today's reckoning." They found a text in his pocket, a little floral card of the sort that used to be given out to children at Sunday School. He must have kept it there many years finding comfort in the words that now formed his epitaph, "Come unto me all ye that labour and are heavy laden and I will give you rest."

He was buried four days later at Holy Trinity. As Emily would say, "We all loved our Dad and he us and there was none of us who would hear one word against him." As a proof of this love, Harry, one of those three who were to "see to all my affairs when I peg out", burnt his papers on the eve of the War, lest anyone coming later should go through them without benefit of understanding and take his father for a fool.

A little later, Jane wrote from Burchell's Green Road, Kingswood.

My dearest Emmie and Tom

Many thanks for the tit bit of yesterday and also your letter. Well enough said about my writing that last letter, if you could only have seen the attitude I was in trying to write it you would have said it was sheer lazyness not illness. I was coopyd up in the arm chair with my legs up on the stool and I couldn't seem to get comfortable whatever, then first one came in for something and then the other and I was sure to be in their way for what they wanted to get and really speaking Emmie it is only the bitter cold change in the weather that has put me back again for honestly when we were having that nice warm spell the swelling was properly vanishing, but my back is better again since Monday, and of course I am eating my food well and keeping it down so at the present I do not want you to worry over me to the extent of coming to nurse me, just carry on sending the chicken bones and hope for the warm weather to come again soon for me. It think it will be a good idea to suggest to Ettie to have me sent to a warmer climate to keep me living a little longer, instead of planning to spend so much money on Memorial Stones, for do you think it at all necessary to be so extravagant on such things after Mummy has lain in her grave for 21 years without it and I am sure I shall never have a ship coming in to be ever able to pay my share of the cost as she says. Let me have the letter back in your next as I haven't answered it. I never remember Mummy as in the grave. I always picture her in front of the fire in a

chair. Neither do I think of our Dad like that. I see him always as he walked out of here after giving him his rose, and I talk to his photo as if he were real for it is so like the way he always came in laughing. I just imagine there was a beautiful aroma going around when you were doing all those various cakes. You ought to have had Joe round to sample them all hot but I reckon you were glad to take the last lot out of the oven. And now to draw to a close once again hoping you will not think me iller than I am. Lots of love from your loving sister & brother

Jennie & Joe xxxxxx
Ron & Joyce xxxx.

A poor old hay trusser, wearing a rose - it perhaps says everything about Levi.

The old man's death was reported as a news item in the Bristol Evening Post of Friday, 8 October 1937.

Kingswood Man's Fatal Illness in Street

A 69 year old Kingswood man, Mr Levie (sic) Honour of 128 Soundwell Road, collapsed in Downend Road, Kingswood, this morning. The St John Ambulance was called but he was dead before they could get him to Cossham Hospital.

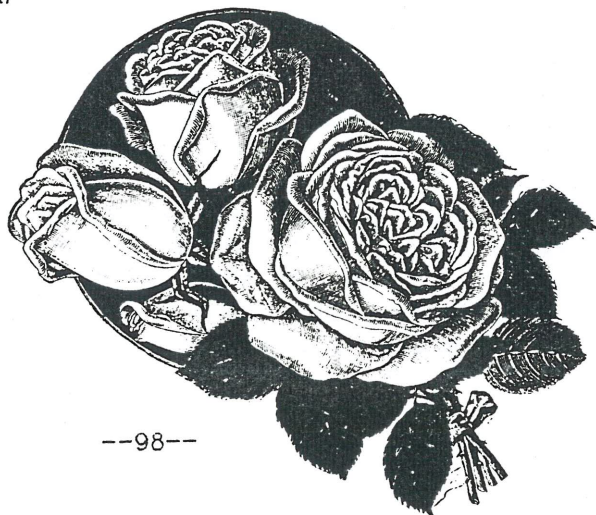
At the same time there was the very mother and father of a two pronged International crisis going on. Mussolini had sent "volunteers" to fight for Franco in the Spanish Civil War and Japan was in action against China. Purely defensive according to the Japanese. The Prime Minister had rejected a request by the worried Labour Party to recall Parliament.

On the 11 October, a stark death notice appeared in the paper:

Honour, Levi. Died October 8th. Funeral tomorrow, (Tuesday). 2.30. (private). R.I.P.

Hardly the kind of notice one would have expected. Flo said it had been inserted by Mary, his widow, who "was abrupt by nature".

Mussolini was still raising Cain with thousands of Italian troops on their way to Libya. On the same front page, the Vicar of Bishopston opined that "the next ten years will be vital to the World's history." It was no time for optimism.



Chapter 15: WAR

1939

There passed a weary time. Each throat
Was parch'd and glazed each eye.
A weary time! a weary time!
How glazed each weary eye!.

Samuel Taylor Coleridge. The Rime of the Ancient Mariner.

Jennie was never to get her trip to warmer climes, nor was the monumental headstone for Sarah's grave which so concerned Ettie ever bought. Levi's grave too, in Kingswood churchyard is marked by an unnamed pot and no more. His death was entered into the Family Bible which his mother-in-law Susan had begun on her marriage to John Honour in 1865. The Bible itself is one of only three objects, the others being the "fairing" and the plate already mentioned, which have survived. It was saved by Flo from Soundwell Road, came to Victoria Park, and is now in Brislington with me. I have to say there were once other pieces of "the heritage": a long black lace dress, several fans, a beaded mat, and Uncle Tom Unsworth's Victorian postcard album. Flo, with absolutely no sense of history, gave these things to us to play with. As Mary, Queen of Scots I often escaped from Fotheringay, (the workshop), and was executed wearing the dress, until with the fans it disintegrated. The bead mat and postcard album were kept for wet days. With nail scissors, my brother and I painstakingly unpicked each and every tiny coloured glass bead, and cut up every postcard. Picture postcards have a very considerable market value nowadays: the stamps alone would be worth a small fortune. I shudder. I suspect the Bible survived only because it was a Bible, and therefore sacrosanct, otherwise we would have "played" with that too.

Ettie's son, Will Trevatt finally got his way and joined the Royal Navy as a boy sailor. Ettie, not comforted with Flo's fatalism of "whatever will be, will be", worried constantly. Will loved the Navy however, and Ettie put on an outward show of content, though her mind was far from still.

For my mother and myself life settled into a daily routine. She had ceased to work at G.B. Britton's when I arrived, and now she rose early each day and did all her housework. Then we went to "Auntie Jennie's" in Burchell's Green Road, to do anything which needed doing there.

My mother "couldn't abide dit-dat-do babies" and addressed me as though I was a slightly simple minded adult. One day in September 1939, we were making our visit as usual. We were about to descend Two Mile Hill, where opposite, on the corner of Kennard Road, the blacksmith still shod horses in a way of life which would soon pass away forever, and Flo told me that we were at war with Germany. The cause of this war was a man called Hitler, and that I must be a good girl and always do as I was told. Flo must have communicated her alarm and anxiety to me, for this is my first memory. I was two years and three months old.

Immediately all the men had to register for military service: there would be conscription for the able bodied between 18 and 41. George Trevatt was ailing and too old. Tom Unsworth was also too old. Joe Comley, almost at the upper age limit obtained deferment. Jack Pillinger was 37, but he had a lame foot, broken in childhood and improperly set. Harry Honour was 32, and a former soldier. He was soon in France. Will Trevatt was already in the Navy. John Trevatt, aged 19, a year older than his brother was called up for the Army. The two Trevatt boys were strapping chaps; John would grow to six feet four inches tall and broad in proportion. Will was hardly any smaller, but like Cain and Abel they were the antithesis of each other. John quiet, thoughtful, home loving and dependable, Emmie's favourite because he was the first of her nephews and nieces. Will, a devil up to back, wild, thoughtless, susceptible to whim, very attractive to girls - and Flo's boy. These two then, off to the War as many young men before them.

Jack, my father, joined Air Raid Precautions - the ARP, and had to go fire watching every night. I hated his tin helmet. I hated the "sick-pink" smell of the gas masks, I hated all that was going on around me. I would cry uncontrollably every time he left the house and would not settle until he came home.

Our daily visits to Burchell's Green Road continued uninterrupted. Despite my closeness to Emmie in later years, it was Jennie, brave and cheerful, that I knew best as a child. I thought her beautiful. Her legs were ulcerated with holes large enough to put your hands into. One of my treats was to see her "egg" and she'd always let me. I would whisper to her "Auntie Jennie, can I look at your egg?" Her "egg" was a swelling on her inner thigh just above her knee which went up and down. Conversely it always seemed she was "better in herself" when her egg was up.

The next piece of drama concerned me. Auntie Jennie kept chickens ("coopies") in the back garden, and I had a favourite hen called Buffy. Buffy and her sisters existed on a boring diet of potato peelings which were boiled up in a black pan on the open fire. On one occasion I was dealing out cigarette cards on the floor before the fire, a set of jockeys, who I, precocious child, could recognise from their racing colours. I made a sudden flighty lunge, slipped and in steadying myself managed to sit in the pot of boiling peelings! I was badly scalded. I do not recall the scalding, but I remember the flurry of adults who merged and fluttered above my head in a kaleidoscope of panic. Somebody must have picked me up, screaming. Ronnie Comley was sent to run for Dr Duerden at Bell Hill. Dr Duerden who had long treated Jennie in her illness, was one of the old school of family doctors who would never ever be paid what people owed him. I remember clearly lying across my mother's lap with my bare bottom poking upwards for the doctor's inspection. I think she had to rub paraffin oil into my affected part, something "they don't believe in" nowadays. It was feared I would be maimed, but I wasn't. I spent six weeks lying on my stomach and at the end of it, I had to learn to walk again.

It is probable that in the drama, world and domestic, no-one was aware that Charlotte Harris, Levi's sister, of Moulsham Green, Yateley had died on 18 March 1940. She was buried at Eversley.

In 1940, Harry Honour was evacuated from Dunkirk. He told me of the kindness of a French woman who offered him shelter in her home in those days of terror and confusion. Shortly afterwards, Emily was bombed out of her London post.

"The Grange"
Nightingale Road
Hampton
Middlesex.
Nov 6th 1940.

To whom it may concern. Miss E. Honour has been in my service for 3 years as Housekeeper. I have found her most reliable in every way & very kind & considerate. I have lost my home through enemy action & I much regret I am unable to retain her services.

I shall be pleased to give a personal reference if desired.

Bessie F. Shaw.

Ever hopeful, Tom Unsworth proposed again, but his sister Floss was now infirm as well as dotty. * Despite bombs falling round her and the World in chaos, the problem of Floss remained unsurmountable. And indeed, Emily still jealously guarded her independence. Once again she refused him. Though disappointed, Tom was in no way fazed, and came up with a plan to help in a practical way. With a lifetime of public service in the Post Office behind him, he suggested that she too should try the GPO. She laughed aloud, not seeing herself carrying a sack of mail, but he said, no, not at all, that was not what he had in mind. With the clerks all off to the war, they were crying out for counter staff. In vain she protested she had never in her life done office work. He "put in a word" for her, and she started, in a temporary capacity, at £1.12s.0d per week, in the Post Office at Acton. She would still be temporary when she retired in 1958! She rented a room in Chaucer Road, Acton, the first time she had had a home of her own.

On the night of December 2nd, 1940, the whole of the centre of Bristol was destroyed by bombs. From Kingswood it was possible to see the city burn, the black clouds pushed back by the red of a bloody sky. I was bundled off to the communal air raid shelter on Alsop Road, wrapped in a brown curly astrakhan coat. To give some measure of the desperation, I am told I "entertained" the cowering civilians. I suppose any diversion was better than none.

A little later Jane wrote:

My dearest Emmie and Tom,

Just a line to say glad to have your letter card of last Saturday and the post card of Thurs morn and glad to know you are all O.K. in spite of your harassing week & another lot last night. You certainly have plenty to get on with. Try and let us have an occasional post card. I know it is an effort when you have been on all day and best part of the night, but I do hope it wont last long. I should not be surprised for them to switch over to Bristol for a change though we did have a visit a fortnight ago but not like youre having. It is terrible to read about in the paper today especially those two

* This of course was nonsense! The truth is revealed in "Secrets and Lies"

shelters being found flooded after the rescuers worked so hard to get the debris away. Now I want this posted tonight so that you know we are thinking of you so I will say Good Night and God Bless and protect you in all danger.

Love from us all

Your loving sister & brother
Jennie and Joe.

John Trevatt was with the Eighth Army in North Africa. His photograph appeared in the News of the World under the caption "A Tobruk Gunner".

Gunner John Trevatt of Slough, Bucks now serving at Tobruk, belongs to a battery which was in France, and has been in Tobruk since last April without leave or relief."

John, smiling at the camera in the act of loading a light machine gun.

In 1942, I started school at Two Mile Hill, where my mother had been before me. I remember being fascinated by the wood parquet as we crossed the floor of the school hall, and staring down at my two feet, resplendent in new black patent leather shoes. My first teacher was Miss Verrier who had been recalled from retirement and seemed to me to be about ninety years old, but surely cannot have been quite so ancient. We were acquainted with the classroom, the outside lavs and the school shelter. The war had become a way of life. In the next class was the blonde Miss Pearce, who had hairy moles, and across the way, dippy Miss Tippett, who once forced me to drink sour milk, and put me off milk forever. The school was first class. We learned reading and writing from the first day, and nobody worried about taxing our poor little heads too much.

I was still filled with apprehension when my father went out on his fire watching into the blackness of the night. Blackout had of course been observed since 1939. I would lie in bed restlessly waiting until I heard the hobnails of his boots sparking the pavement as he turned into our street. I knew from his distinctive dot and carry walk that nobody else's Dad approached but mine, and so I could breathe easy for another night. Quite simply, I adored him. I remember going outside one night, gazing up at the sky and saying "Ooh look at all those Moons!" "That's not Moons," he said, and laughed. "That's searchlights", and my face burned in shame for making such a silly mistake.

Being a child, I occasionally got an orange from the greengrocers, Ettle's, in Regent Street. One day when we went there to see if we could get this orange, my mother said to Gwennie Ettle, "Where's your husband now, Gwen?" Gwennie answered, "Salisbury Plain", to which my mother relied, unthinking, "Oh, not too bad then". Gwennie retorted, "A lot worse than for some people whose husbands are not away at all!" My mother went scarlet with embarrassment. We did not patronise Ettle's shop after that.

From time to time we were treated to the eerie wail of the siren. Now we rarely went to the communal shelter and our own at the bottom of the garden leaked water. More often than not we went next door but one, to number 35 Victoria Park, and got under the table in the Drinkwaters' front room. "The Drinkwaters" were Polly and her daughter Vera Garland, and Vera's children, Barry, Anne, and the baby, Douglas. As no menfolk were present under the furniture, (most of life consisted of women and children at the time), I assume they were out somewhere on war business. (Mr Drinkwater - Harry - was above retirement age, but still "tapped" boots for a living, holding the nails in his mouth as he hammered the soles and heels. His son in law, Cecil Garland, in a reserved occupation of some sort, survived the war, but ironically died young, in a motor cycle accident in the early years of the Peace.) But there for the moment we were, women and children under the furniture, Polly and Vera dragging nervously on their fags, but not my mother, who never got the hang of it. Explosions, aircraft noise and the ack-ack guns would rend the air and my elders would nod sagely and say, "Poor devils, they're getting it over there." I never thought anything about the unknown "they" and though I worried for my father, it never occurred to me that the bombs might just as likely fall on me.

Throughout the air raids, Ettie remained in Langley, her only relief being a visit to Bristol in the late Spring of 1943 to assist Flo who was heavily pregnant with my brother. If Flo's previous experience of the miracle of birth had been mundane (old potatoes in hospital), this time it was farcical. When the birth seemed imminent, Nurse Jones of Hanham had been summoned and arrived on her bicycle. She was not in the best of moods having been at a party and not liking being interrupted one bit. When it turned out to be a false alarm, her rage knew no bounds. In her hurry to depart she knocked over the glass at the bedside wherein grinned Flo's false teeth. Glass and teeth broke, and Flo had to go through the entire ordeal in her gums, which loss of dignity concerned her more than the actual birth itself. (She had been toothless since 1925, when it was generally agreed that teeth were so much trouble that you were better off without them. "Let's whip 'em out" was the dentists' universal cry.) When the fun really began, on 9th May 1943, much to my chagrin, I was sent "out of the way" to Kingswood Park, accompanied by my cousin Joyce, who was then sixteen, and called me "Doreen Pin-pin." My brother arrived in my absence. When we returned he was lying in his cot, in the front room. (Women spent a fortnight "lying-in" in those days, and my mother's bed had been brought downstairs.) He was all mottled and purple, and seething with impatience. He had a blond crew-cut and bright blue eyes. I suggested his first name, Colin, after a boy in my class called Colin Golding, for whom I nurtured a childish fancy. To my surprise it was accepted, though I never divulged the reason for my choice. Trevor was after Ettie, who had given sterling help, the nearest they could get to Trevatt, though Trevatt itself would have made more sense. Ettie was fascinating: the cleanest person I had ever met up to that point. Not for her the once weekly bath. She took off all her clothes and bathed every day, though in the absence of facilities, up and down in a bowl had to suffice. (I would think Ettie was the only one of us who did not stink. Times have changed, thankfully. But no wonder the Aussie joke gained currency, probably right there and then from the time of the Australian soldiers,

who we often saw, with their glamorous hats, pushed up on one side, "Where's the best place to find a Pom's wallet?" Answer, "Under the soap!">

Visits to Burchell's Green Road continued after a brief interval. I had never at this time seen a banana and from the description I was given, found it hard to imagine such a thing. One day, Auntie Jennie made mock banana out of parsnips. After sampling this concoction, I was quite sure I would never want to try the real thing. Being of an ingenious turn, my aunt's culinary delicacies ran to Nothing Stew ("if we could only find a potato and few onions, we should have a stew fit for guests", said the tramp, as he stirred a few rusty nails in a can of water over the fire"), - well almost nothing, but with dumplings. Carrot Pie, a Lord Woolton recipe, I believe, and snoek, a kind of fish so disgusting it was not on ration. Spam was not too bad, and "reconstituted dried egg", quarantine yellow in colour, I actually liked. What I really wanted to taste was a custard cream biscuit, described to me by my father with mouth watering ecstasy.

Ettie had by now gone back to Langley. George was not well and rapidly became worse. The illness was diagnosed as cancer. George needed her total attention and she nursed him devotedly, but when at last she sank into an exhausted sleep she would either be awakened by the screaming wail of the siren foretelling an imminent raid, or be troubled by nightmare dreams in which her two beloved sons were lost to her forever. She grew afraid to close her eyes.

Sometime towards the end of that year of 1943, a brisk knock came at the door of the house where Emily rented a room. She opened the door and her stomach turned to water. Will Trevatt stood there in full Naval uniform. She pulled him inside, knowing that something was seriously amiss. The boy's face with its cheeky irresistible grin had gone. The man who stood in front of her had the grey look of a time hardened veteran.

"I can't," he said, "pass on orders that will send boys to their deaths. I've had enough of it. I'm a deserter."

Em reminded him he was a volunteer and no pressed man. She talked of the broken backed ship he had helped to bring into port, and he listened courteously but remained adamant.

He said, "They'll pick me up, Auntie, but I shall do it again. And again if necessary. Just as long as I have to."

They spoke more. Of how he had applied for a transfer to the submarines. His application had lately been granted. "Too late", he stated flatly. "I've seen too much."

She dosed him down somehow and he fell asleep at once, while she watched the boy's face return with the mask of sleep. She herself lay awake, staring into the dark, pondering what was to be done. She knew she was harbouring a wanted man, a fugitive, but he was her nephew, her family. The family would always come before everything; for her it was always us and them.

It was almost as if he wanted to be taken, for he refused to hide and walked openly about the streets of London in uniform in full view when there was not another sailor on leave to be seen. Once they were in Leicester Square during the height of an air raid. Eventually he was picked up as she knew he must be, and divested of rank and good conduct stripes.

"Please Auntie, I beg of you," he implored, "Don't let my mother know....."

He was sent on a ship to the Far East.

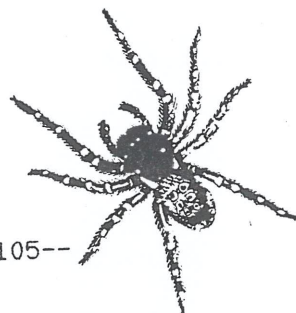
Emily, strong, guaranteed to hold her peace, not to panic, a bolt hole for those in trouble. To her, the words were a sad echo of her father's when he had lived down trodden in Soundwell Road. "Don't let Esther know..."

None of us would ever see Will again.

In 1944, George Trevatt died. Esther and Emily both came to Bristol that Christmas. They divided themselves between Jennie and Flo. It was the first time the sisters had been all together at Christmas since before 1916 when their mother Sarah died. Only Harry was absent, in the Army on active service, but he was represented by his son Larry, who had by now been evacuated from Epsom to us. As well as Larry, we had two young women, sisters, called Agnes and Ellen Colby, from South Shields billeted on us. They were in Bristol working on munitions. They lived with us for over five years, and remain friends with my mother still. In hindsight, it is difficult to know where everybody fitted in. I remember they brought friends to stay too, the odd serviceman, somebody's cousin, and his girl friend, with a child, who passed through, who must have slept where they stood. I can only think they had gone home on leave when Ettie and Emmie came to stay.

Larry Honour, five years my senior became like an elder brother, but in the beginning he was something of a pain. Presumably homesick, his first announcement was that he would "mope" for the duration, and he got into the back of the food cupboard under the stairs, and sat there in the dark. As cajoling failed to get him to come out, Flo left him to it, but after this happened several times, her patience snapped, and she slipped the door catch on the outside. All was silent for a while, until he realised he was locked in. All of a sudden there came a tremendous screaming from inside, something had bitten him, he cried. Perhaps it had, though more likely it was the bogey man who lurks waiting for children in all dark places. Larry was never any trouble after that, and indeed was often held up to me as an example of good behaviour.

*This is incorrect -
it was 1942*



Chapter 16: ETTIE

1945

Like one that on a lonesome road
Doth walk in fear and dread
And having once turned round walks on
And turns no more his head
Because he knows a frightful fiend
Doth close behind him tread.

Samuel Taylor Coleridge, The Rime of the Ancient Mariner.

On Christmas Eve, Larry announced that he would stay awake all night, and in the end, neither of us slept. I can still smell that Christmas. The orange, the apple, the few nuts, a home made sweet or two, undoubtedly of Jennie's manufacture, packed into the stockings, lineal descendants of those at Hampstead Norris, by giggling grown ups, who we watched in slit eyed pretension of sleep. There were also a couple of pennies, even joke presents of bits of coal wrapped in coloured paper. The presents were certainly not much, but they seemed exciting to us, a garment made by the soon to be Pem, a couple of books, like Beano and Dandy "annuals" which my mother had put by in Ship and White's stationers for a few pence a week: things that could only very doubtfully be classed as gifts at all: navy blue interlock school knickers and indestructible socks. Food had been hoarded from the rations to give us as much a spread as possible, and we had "a fowl", hopefully not my friend Buffy, from Jennie's back garden. There was even a thick white frost that covered the garden, with silvery spiders' webs, twinkling on the climbing rose tree. It was as white a Christmas and as merry a Christmas as we could want.

But for Ettie it was only a respite. When she returned home to the empty house which had so recently been filled with George's suffering, the nightmares returned. And long lonely days of melancholy. As she had known she would, she received that which she dreaded. A telegram.

We regret to inform you that your son William Trevatt is missing in action, believe killed.

Such was Ettie's agony that it was suggested she should sell up her house in Langley and move to be near two of her sisters. A house in Britannia Road, Kingswood was duly acquired and decorated by Joe Comley. Wallpaper could not be obtained, and Joe distempered the walls primrose yellow, giving way to artistic leanings by splodging different coloured paint over the distemper to resemble a pattern. This action belonged to the same school of absurd bravery which led women to paint black lines down the backs of their bare legs to simulate stockings.

Ettie moved in, but almost at once she felt she had made a dreadful mistake. Her heavy old fashioned furniture - she believed, looked out of place in its new surroundings and it was this which in her troubled and clouded mind set off an agonising worry. George gone. Will gone, and John...coming back to a new place where he knew nobody. The carefree Will, as she still thought of him, (knowing nothing of his desertion)

would have made friends anywhere. John was different. She was afraid for him and feared his reaction. It did not occur to her that like the soldier in the song

*Carry me back to dear old Blighty
Put me on the train for London Town
Drop me anywhere
Birmingham, Leeds or Manchester
I don't care.....*

home for John would have been anywhere his mother happened to be. Other things upset her. Mr Bateman, the Kingswood dentist, had a son, Michael, a boy with what is now called learning difficulties, but then was "not quite the thing." The boy was harmless and perhaps even content in his own little way. He walked the streets wherever his limited mind led him. If Ettie saw him, her eyes would fill with tears, and she would say, "Here's a penny, little boy. Run away and play." Returning to her silent house, the misfitting furniture would mock her, symbolic of her imagined folly. The house and its contents became unbearable. So was the waiting.

Then suddenly, the bleak years seemed to be over at last. John was coming home! John who had gone away a boy had survived to come back a man. Her sisters combined to convince her that everything would be all right. John would be happy just to be at home, never mind if that home was different to the one he remembered. Ettie saw that her fears were probably groundless, the result of years of torment and unhappiness. She began to prepare rapturously for the home coming of her elder son. It was 1945 and the war in Europe was rapidly drawing to a close with the victorious Allies carrying all before them on their push towards Berlin. All it meant to Ettie was that the long agony would soon be over.

Then the worst possible thing happened. John did not arrive on the appointed day. Several more days passed and still he did not come.

On the Saturday afternoon of that suspenseful week, my mother, my brother Colin, then nearly two, and myself, now eight years old, went down to Ettie's house in Britannia Road. I was never happy "visiting" and was fidgety and bored. Colin found something to do. With some coloured wax crayons he began to chalk on the newly decorated walls. Flo took the crayons off him, and he began to wail. I remember Ettie's voice, weary, defeated, totally uncaring. "Let him do it, Flo. It doesn't matter," and Colin carried on against my mother's wishes.

"I'm not going to leave you in this state", my mother said, but Ettie answered, "Go home, Flo. I'll be all right. You can't do anything by staying and you've got Jack to see to. He'll be coming in for his tea."

Flo reluctantly made the decision to go. A choice made for the most mundane of reasons. If she had done otherwise everything would have been different. Flo's mind has often stopped the clock at that point. Instead of going, she over rides her sister and stays. But that was not the way it was. She strapped the now fractious Colin into his pushchair and then kissed her sister goodbye. With me trotting alongside, relieved we were

on our way, we set off for home. We turned and waved at the corner of the road.

The following day was Mothering Sunday. Jennie, ever thoughtful, picked a bunch of flowers from her garden. She always had a lovely garden, and she didn't want her sister to feel forgotten in the absence of her own sons. Daffodils, narcissi, the hopeful harbingers of spring. Her son Ronnie Comley was to take them to his aunt.

The young man knocked at the front door at Britannia Road and getting no reply went round to the back. Still no answer and he observed that though it was the middle of the morning the curtains were still drawn. He banged harder, and called out "Auntie Ettie, it's me, Ronnie, let me in." The next door neighbour who was in his garden heard the commotion and looked over the fence. The youngster explained. The man came round and in turn banged on the door. Deciding things were not as they should be, he made a forced entry and went into the house, the boy following at his heels, still calling. Telling the lad to wait, the man ran upstairs. He found the door of the bathroom wedged and pushed against it. It opened at last and the rush of carbon monoxide almost overwhelmed him. He ran and opened the window but it was too late. Esther lay dead upon the floor.

On the kitchen table lay a neat pile of envelopes addressed to members of the family. The letters asked forgiveness. Ettie had lost everyone, George, Will and now John. She was certain he was dead and would not wait for the War Office telegram confirming what she already knew. It was 11th March 1945; on the 16th, she was buried at Holy Trinity, Kingswood. No inquest is reported in the local press and it is said that the good Doctor Duerden hushed things up.

The funeral card reads:

In loving memory

of

Esther Trevatt

who passed away 11th March 1945

aged 50 years.

In the face of their sister's overwhelming certainty, John's death was taken for granted by the rest of the family. In their shock nobody even considered that he might be still alive.

About a week later, he turned up at the empty house. His troopship had been delayed and there had been no chance of communication. He stayed with us, his face blank with grief, going through the motions of getting up, eating, going to bed. He did not give way to tears, but he found himself unable to speak. His bitter grief remained locked up inside him. He had journeyed through the mouth of Hell, and returned to the slough of Despond.

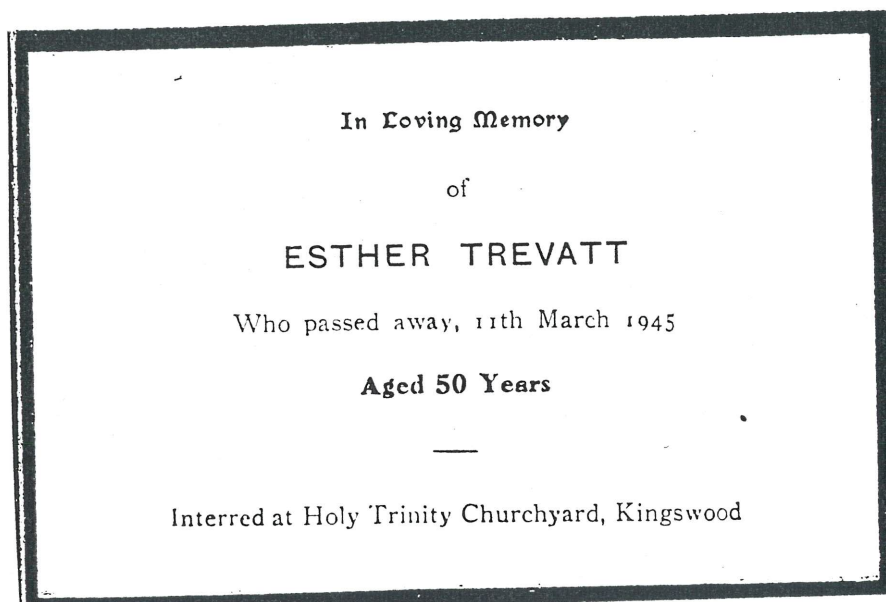
This unbearable tragedy was not yet over.

Two years went by and out of the blue Emily received a letter with an Australian postmark. It was from Will Trevatt, alive, and calling himself Taylor. Her first thought was that they had believed him dead and perhaps it would have been better if he had remained so. She realised that John would have to be told. When the time came, she looked at the eldest of her nephews, remembering the earnest little boy she loved as her own son and her heart almost broke. He had always been big and dependable with none of Will's flighty charm. She recalled the parable of the prodigal Son, "for this my son was dead and is alive again; he was lost and is found."

"Sit down", she said. John obeyed instantly.

She found she could not find the words. "I don't know how to say this. It's going to come as a terrible shock. Will's alive. I've had a letter from him. From Australia."

John's hands were taut and whitened now, the skin stretched, almost breaking. His brain formed bitter words but none came from his mouth. There was a long and fearful silence, then with controlled anger, far more awesome than rage, he stood up and left the room.



EPILOGUE

The race remains immortal, the star of their house is constant through many years and the grandfathers' grandfathers are numbered in the roll.

Virgil.

JOHN TREVATT was posted to mid Wales where he met EUNICE MAY MORGAN. Eunice was very young, only eighteen, but she saved his life. They were married on 2 April 1947. John remained in the army for the time being, serving in occupation forces, and on one memorable festive season played Father Christmas for some orphaned German children. After he was demobbed, he and Eunice lived in Newport, South Wales, where he worked as a school caretaker.

Their children are MARGARET ESTHER, born 1948, and LIONEL JOHN, born 1952.

Margaret married DAVID MORGAN in 1969 at Newport, and they have two sons, RICHARD, born 1971 and GARETH, born 1973.

Lionel married PAM OUTTEN in 1984 at Widnes, and their two children are THOMAS JOHN, born 1985 and SARAH JANE, born 1986. Pam died recently, tragically young.

John died at his home near Newport, on 17 February 1994. He was never reconciled with his brother. Flo remains in weekly contact with Eunice who she regards as very close family.

WILL TREVATT settled down in Australia and married JUDY SMITH in 1951. He took advantage of the general amnesty for deserters in Coronation Year, 1953, and with the threat of arrest removed, reverted to his real name of Trevatt.

Will and Judy's children are SUSANNAH, born 1951, CHERYL, born 1953, GARY, born 1955, and ROBYN, born 1956.

Sue had three children. Her second husband is PHIL BARKER.

Cheryl married MAL CROSS, and has a son and a daughter, TAMMY and TREVOR.

Robbie married a New Zealander, ROGER COULSON, and they have two daughters, CASEY AND LISA.

I have heard nothing of them since 1981, when, after Judy's death, Will wrote to Flo: (endearingly, for presumably, she had apologised for something),

No, you couldn't do anything wrong in my eyes as you've always been my favourite.....

(Remember, Will had been "her boy" as John had been Emily's!) I have already said he had cheek. The letter continues:

I recently applied for a service pension. Don't know how I'll go.

("On your bike" I expect they said!)

Be funny if I finished up in the UK. Don't think I'd last long there in the cold though. Am quite happy living on my own doing what I like etc. It certainly has a lot going for it, though of course I was also very happily married.

Will never came home and died at Eaton, Western Australia in 1989.

In 1947, JENNIE COMLEY wrote to her sister

My dearest Emmie

Well, I must try to answer your letter today, for Joe has his other week's holiday starting today and I know I shall not get down to letter writing then. You must excuse scribble though as I am on the bed having my afternoon's rest. First I must say that Dr Duerden is trying me out with some different pills and the pain is not so frequent now or so acute when I do get it. He says it may take a long time but he thinks it worth while to give them a fair trial, so here's hoping. I am glad you agreed about Joyce having her chance, for I think she has given me a good rest and whatever happens now I shall not be leaving any young children behind. That was one thing I always dreaded in years gone by to leave them at the mercy of the World and as I feel now, I think as long as I go on steady, I shall last quite a while. Well as I daresay you know, John & Eunice have been to Flo's and have got all their goods away from here last week so that leaves us free of that and just as soon as there is a bungalow to suit us we shall be taking it. I am not jumping out of the frying pan into the fire though but a smaller place will make it easier for me. About those Xmas presents now. We have a blouse pattern that one I made up in the yellow material you remember it fits me & I feel comfortable in it, also Joyce has a slip and knickers pattern but as she wants to get the right measurements we will send them along later, the bit of material looked real good. If the weather is still good we shall be going to W.S.M. (Weston super Mare) tomorrow Monday so if you get this letter in time you can think of us by the sea while you do some more sweating in the office. There's one thing the Bus Strike won't be worrying us (they had a motorbike and sidecar) though we shan't be making it a holiday all the week as Joe wants to finish painting the house down outside. Now I must have a wash before tea so I'll close hoping you are looking forward to your holiday. It won't be long now.

*With love from us all,
your loving sister and brother
Jennie, Joe & Joyce.*

From this happy letter, Jennie's health seemed to be improving, and it was a shock when she died suddenly from a heart attack on September 17th, 1947. She was only 46. She was buried beside her sister Ettie at

Holy Trinity. Her funeral card included Levi's text, *Come unto me all ye that are heavy laden and I will give you rest.*

RONNIE COMLEY married GLADYS JENKINS but was widowed within a year, and he remarried JEAN, and they had a happy marriage for fifty years.

Their children are KATHRYN, born 1950 and STEPHEN, born 1955. Both now have children of their own. Kath's children are SCOTT, STUART and SARAH. Stephen is married to ANNE and they have DAMIAN, DANIEL, ANGELIQUE and TABITHA.

Ronnie died suddenly on 12 February 1999 at Worle, near Weston super Mare.

JOYCE COMLEY got "her chance" at Kingswood Library before going to catering college. Sadly she contracted tubercolitis and was in and out of hospital for most of her twenties. It's an ill wind which blows nobody any good though, and at a convalescent home, she met an old soldier, a Scot, JOHN ASHCROFT. They were happily married until his death several years ago. He once said of a particularly pernickety old man for whom they worked in tandem as cook and handyman, that he was "the sort who could find a bone in a banana." I cherish this remark and occasionally use it. Joyce and John made their home in Cambridge where Joyce still lives. She regards Flo almost as her surrogate mother.

JOE COMLEY remarried and moved away and I heard nothing of him until 1978 by which time my interest in family history included my paternal forebears and because of them, Kingswood's coalmining history. I wrote to the local paper asking about the whereabouts of mining artifacts and amongst the response was a letter which began:

Dear Mrs Lindegaard

Re your letter, Mining by Candlelight. I well remember the candle holders. My father worked in Speedwell Mine. We used to have one in our kitchen (which we called the wash house). It was only oil lamps in the house. Unfortunately none of these things were kept..... it continued in much detail before concluding.....I don't know if any of this is any good to you. I hope so.

Yours faithfully

J. Comley.

When I read the signature I could not believe my eyes. Of course, he could hardly have connected Patricia (the name by which my public know me!) Lindegaard, local historian, from Brislington, with little Doreen Pillinger of Kingswood, who had been his daily visitor thirty years before! When we met, he not only provided interesting mining information but contributed his portion to this present book and gave me a number of family snaps. On March 28, 1997, Joe had been in a nursing home for a few days, when he went down to the day room where he was allowed to smoke, lit up a cigarette ...and died. He was 96. Flo said it was for the best. Someone of his domineering temperament could not have stood

being in hospital, and the likelihood is that he would have been expelled.

HARRY HONOUR returned unscathed from the war to his wife WINNIE and son Larry. I wish I had asked him more about his experiences as a soldier. I know he must have taken the long march up through Italy, because my mother still has an Italian postcard of his, unfortunately with no message, and a couple of souvenir Papal medallions. He was a very loving uncle who wrote to me frequently and always sent me Christmas gifts, birthday presents and "Easter Eggs" until his death when I was well into my forties and did the same for my children! To him, I owe many of the Honour photographs in my collection, though the misguided bonfire he made of his father's effects prior to his being posted abroad in 1939 still hurts.

He died on 3rd September 1983, and Winnie died in August 1994.

LARRY HONOUR survived his sojourn at Victoria Park, and I missed him greatly when he departed. After his National Service - fortunately he was not involved in war - he married his childhood sweetheart, KATHLEEN BULLEN in 1955. I remember their wedding day well: I didn't go. I went to "the dogs" with my father instead. We snuck off in my mother's absence, (my father had made a solemn promise to my mother that he would never go dog racing again!) and I am pleased to say we "held our own."

Larry and Kath too have been fortunate in their choice of partner. Norman and myself, and Flo were happy that we could attend their Ruby Wedding celebrations in 1995, held on a canal boat! Kath is an indefatigable letter writer as well as a kind and thoughtful niece to Flo, and once again we keep in regular contact.

PATRICK HONOUR, the son of Larry and Kath was born in 1959, the survivor of twins. He is the last of LEVI HONOUR's descendants to bear the Honour name. Unfortunately he is divorced without children.

Of Levi's brothers and sisters, JAMES HASKINS HONOUR died at Tidmington 21 December 1938: Louie Carter very kindly gave me his funeral card. THOMAS HONOUR of Wickham died sometime in the 1950's, leaving his sister JANE, Flo's "Aunt Jennie", alone. She died in 1957, leaving £661.2.6d, but intestate, and solicitors discovered the family as follows:

1. The children of Henry Honour, deceased:
 - (1) William Henry Honour
 - (2) Joseph Honour
2. The children of Charlotte Honour, deceased:
 - (1) Mrs Esther Harris (it should have been "Miss")
3. The children of James Honour, deceased:
 - (1) Mrs Jane Rainbow
 - (2) Thomas Honour
 - (3) William Honour
 - (4) The seven children of Mrs Emily Horne, deceased

4. The children of Ellen Honour, deceased:

- (1) Mrs Nellie Woof
- (2) Miss Alice Carter
- (3) Mrs Louisa Palmer
- (4) Mrs Mitchell)
- (5) Miss M Carter) in Australia
- (6) Mr H.J. Carter)

5. The children of Levi Honour, deceased:

- (1) Harry Honour
- (2) Mrs Pillinger in Canada **
- (3) Miss E. Honour, in Acton

6. The children of Esther Honour, deceased:

- (1) Mrs Esther Dodd

** Mrs Pillinger - Flo, was not of course in Canada, and in fact had never left Bristol after her arrival with Levi in 1916. We eventually got our share, which amounted to £36.15.7d. Flo bought our first TV set with the money. I still recall the thrill. It was probably the only thing we ever had that was not bought on hire purchase!

EMILY HONOUR (Pem) became my mentor and close friend. I first got to know her well in 1947, when I was ten. She and I went on holiday to Torquay, in the guest house run by the same Mrs Tucker who had accommodated Flo and Jack so many years before. I remember we went on excursions to Bude, Boscastle and King Arthur's Castle at Tintagel, and she ate cockles (yuk!) off a small glass plate on the windy beach. Later she would take myself and my brother to stay at Builth Wells with Eunice, John and Margaret Esther. In my teenage years I spent many happy holidays with her at the Top Flat, 240 Horn Lane, Acton, and even lived with her for a while when I was eighteen. As housemates we were hardly soulmates: she once broke up an innocent romance of mine by rushing downstairs and into the street in dressing gown and hairnet "and seeing the bloke off!" Followed by "Upstairs, you! This isn't Bristol, you know!" Though she had evidently suspected the white slave traffic, our date had been perfectly correct: he had even given me a corsage of flowers to wear, but encountering my mad aunt, he, not surprisingly, took to his heels and I never saw him again.

As far as I know I was the only member of the family who met her own beau of this time, a civil servant at the Ministry of Works, a chunky little man called Robert Dunn. Her friends, the girls at the office, Sylvia Salmon & Frances Winch, where she was known as "Honi", called him "Mr Five by Five". She was undoubtedly in love. One day when I was in London, we went on top of one of his "buildings" where beside a flag pole, I photographed them singly and with each other. She wrote on the back of his picture, which I found after her death, "12 May 1953. This man has given me many happy hours."

I said to her once: "Whatever became of Robert Dunn?"

She replied, "Probably dead by now. He was much older than me."

And that was that.

On 2nd December 1957, she at last married the faithful TOM UNSWORTH, and they enjoyed an idyllic few years together at Shawford, near Winchester, at 4 Bridge Terrace, looking out on to the Itchen Meadows, where we often walked, either to the Malms in one direction or St Cross in the other, though Tom would never let me demand the famous "Wayfarer's dole"! At other times, I would go out with him before breakfast for mushrooms or for the hot watercress which grew in abundance in the fast flowing stream. All the family were frequent visitors, and everybody will have their own memories of these times.

Tom died on 19 August 1968 aged 86. His headstone bears the inscription "Abide with me."

The late 20th Century was fast encroaching, and under the heading "Itchen Navigation", Pem wrote eloquently to the local paper about the water which was

being siphoned off to feed the fast flowing Twyford drain and also the bed of the canal has been dug and searched for hidden treasure, such as bottles and the like, the rest of the rubbish being thrown up on the bank - a most unsightly mess.

For years, we, that is my late husband and I, have often said that as you turn down the bank it is like entering the 23rd Psalm, especially when one gets lower down to the cottages facing The Malms - where I live. My husband loved every inch of Shawford and Twyford, and I know just how much it would grieve him to see it now.

It is perhaps as well that both were gone and never knew of the rape of Twyford Down.

In the meantime, another generation of visitors had come on the scene, called "the Treasures".

Number One was my eldest, CAROLINE HONOUR LINDEGAARD, born 1968, whose birth helped to relieve the sadness of Tom's death. Then CELIA LINDEGAARD, Treasure Number Two, in 1969 and KEVIN LINDEGAARD, Treasure Number Three in 1970. Treasures Four and Five were the Morgan boys, Richard and Gareth.

A weekly correspondence ensued between Pem and these children. In 1978, Caroline was allowed to stay on her own with Pem. She had very long hair of which she was very vain. Pem put it in one plait of which she complained on and on. Pem got fed up with the subject of hair, seized hold of the scissors, and without undoing the plait, cut it off. It was a traumatic experience which Caroline has never forgotten, but manages a watery smile about it now. Pem got away with this behaviour simply because she was Pem, and incredibly Celia was not put off. It was her turn to spend a holiday at Shawford the following year. She wrote on 31 May 1979 to Flo and Jack.

Dear Nana and Pappy

"This is the little job I have to do today because Pem cann't write because I keep yapping. I have blown my kite out well. I had a banana and three jaffa cakes, a mars, 2 pieces of jam roll, a packet of crisps, 1 piece of tartan shortcake biscuits, some soup. I had a pork chop and chips for dinner and three quarters of a tin of peaches because Pem couldn't eat all hers after that I had a nap and so did Honey and Pem. You would be surprised but it was from 2 o'clock to quarter to three. The electric came and quite agreed they owed Pem 1,000 units and more. The vicar came this morning and I went with Pem to the service. We are inclosing the taxi money don't spend it all at once. I took Honey's nappy's in and now she is sleeping in the chair. Now Honey dose'nt bite me any more. I am having a nice time at Pem's house. Pem liked the drawing I did and also thought my Embroidery was very good. I have been doing all the odd jobs that I had to do.

Love from Celia, Pem and Honey. XXXXX

Honey was Pem's elderly, crochety, much beloved, black and marmalade cat. Pem drew four little cats at the top of the page.

This appalling catalogue of gluttony only goes to show how people change over time. No item of junk food would ever pass Celia's lips now. And she is a vegetarian.

Kevin was promised his turn the following year, but this was not to be. Not long after Celia went home, Pem fell sick with an itching complaint that appeared to have come from a garden parasite which had got under her skin. She was extremely ill, and Flo and Jack and John and Eunice were soon on the scene to nurse her. The former couple who had now retired spent weeks on end there.

On September 29, 1979, Pem wrote to me

My dearest Doreen

This is especially for you. Years ago when you were at the Overseas League, you told me you were all discussing your forebears. Some had pukka sahibs and the like and you said "Well my Dad's a navy but he is the best Dad in the World." Words which have occurred to me over the last few weeks. You've a Dad in a thousand and your Mum too, but Dad, well I can't describe what I owe to him, so tell your children to always remember that and they need never be ashamed of him, navy or not. My love to you and look after both of them.

Love from Pem.

A month or so later, when she was marginally improved, Pem sent Flo and Jack home for a rest, and you didn't argue with Pem, well or ill. With our children we went to see her one Sunday and she was not very well at all, but she retained her salty manner. Kevin, who she called "myself when young", because he looked like her child-self, was a bit frightened

at seeing her ill. To none of us had she ever seemed like an old person though she was 84. "Don't be such a silly little fart," she said to him.

When the time came to leave, I hesitated. I said I would stay, but she over-ruled me. I had enough to see to, she said. That was the only time she did not come to the door to wave us off. That night she fell out of bed and was discovered unconscious on the floor by her home help the next morning. She was rushed to the Royal Hampshire Hospital in Winchester. Larry and Kath were with her when she died 8 December 1979. The cause of death was given as Ischaemic heart disease.

The house at Shawford was left as follows:

- a. Florence Pillinger, sister - one quarter share
- b. Henry Honour, brother - one quarter share
- c. John Trevatt)
 - Ronald Comley)
 - Joyce Ashcroft) nieces & nephews - one half share
 - Clarence John Honour) equally divided
 - Doreen Lindegaard)
 - Colin Pillinger)
 - William Trevatt)

The little red brick house with the green gate went for a measly £19,000. I wished I had had the money to have bought it as a holiday home. It was just before the property boom and I shudder think what it would have fetched during that crazy time, or indeed now, being in the London commuter belt.

My brother COLIN PILLINGER followed me to Kingswood Grammar School, and whilst I (stupidly) left and went out into the world and became a rolling stone, he stayed on into the sixth form and did A-Levels before going to Swansea University, leaving with a BSc and PhD. He then spent seven years at Bristol University as one of the select group of scientists allowed to study "Moon rocks", the lunar samples which were collected by the Apollo missions. After moving to Cambridge University and then to the Open University, he was installed at Bristol University with a Doctorate of Science in 1985. He was elected a Fellow of the Royal Society on 11 March 1993. The citation reads:

Professor Colin Trevor Pillinger, Professor of Planetary Science at the Open University, Milton Keynes, distinguished for his major contributions to the geochemistry and cosmochemistry of meteorites, the Moon, Mars and the Earth. He has developed very sensitive techniques to determine isotope concentrations of minute amounts of carbon and nitrogen and use them to demonstrate the presence in primitive meteorites of interstellar dust grains which predate the solar system.

He is the team leader of "Beagle 2" due to land on Mars as part of the European Space Agency's Mars Express Mission in 2003. The Daily Telegraph recently put forward his name as a possible candidate for the first British member of a shuttle mission. He would certainly go too!

- a. Florence Pillinger, sister - one quarter share
- b. Henry Honour, brother - one quarter share
- c. John Trevatt)
 - Ronald Comley)

Colin married JUDITH HAY, who is now also a PhD, and they have two children SHUSANAH JANE, born 1976 and NICOLAS JOSEPH, born 1977.

JACK PILLINGER, my beloved, cranky, optimistic, father, who was always waiting for his ship to come home, died at Frenchay Hospital of liver cancer on Boxing Day, 1985. He was buried on New Year's Eve, in the churchyard at Kingswood in the grave where his sisters in law Ettie and Jennie already lay. He had once said "There are two of my best friends in there." On the night of his funeral, my mother went to Hertfordshire, to Colin's and I got drunk.

FLORENCE PILLINGER (Flo) still remains, the last Honour of her generation, now 93 and frail, finding life rather tedious and difficult; lonely without her partner and her children bewildering. After a burglary at 33 Victoria Park in late 1998, when the perpetrator followed her into the house, on the pretext (of all things, of looking for an escaped pet hamster), she was so unnerved she felt she could no longer live alone and moved in with us at Brislington.

And as for me. Well, you will know I married NORMAN LINDEGAARD, an Irishman of Danish descent. As with Sarah Honour, so with me. We met, very tidily, on January 1, 1967, and it was like walking into a tree. On the following morning I told my mother I had met the man I would marry! By the end of 1970, we had three children! Through fair weather and foul we have stuck it out for more than thirty years.

I will leave it to our children to write our stories, and their own, for they would fill a another book the size of this one.

So that's it: from Gabriel & Ann, John & Margaret, John & Ann, Thomas & Magdalen, Robert & Margaret, John & Mary, Aaron & Susanna, Job & Sarah, John & Susan, Thomas & Esther, Levi & Sarah, Flo & Jack, Norman & Doreen (though for reasons too complicated to explain, collectively known to our offspring as "George & Jim"), Good bye.

March 1999.



colts, rising 3 years old; and a capital mule. The Implements comprise 3 good wagons, 4 dung carts, market cart, mule cart and harness, 10 sets of harness, 4 iron ploughs, double plough (by Fowler), 3 sets of iron harrows, a reaping machine (by Hornsby), mowing machine (by Samuelson), cultivator (by Coleman), horse rake, hay machine, Cambridge presser, root pulper, turnip cutter, hurdles, troughs, racks, &c.

Catalogues may be had ten days prior to the auction at the Journal and Chronicle Offices, Oxford; Spread Eagle, Thame; Red Lion, Banbury; or of the auctioneers, Bicester.

Murcott, near Islip, Oxon.

Upwards of 50 Tons of capital MEADOW HAY (to go off), and 6 Acres of BARLEY & BEAN STRAW (to be spent), the property of Mr. Thos. Honour, who is leaving Murcott;

TO BE SOLD BY AUCTION,
By Mess. JONAS PAXTON & G. CASTLE,
At the Nut Tree Inn, Murcott, on Monday, Dec. 14, 1874,
at Four for Five o'clock.

Catalogues may be had at the place of sale; inns in the district; or of the auctioneers, Bicester.

Credit will be allowed on the customary terms.

Also a COCK of OLD HAY, about eight tons, the property of Mr. Henry Steel, and standing in Mr. Newell's field, Murcott, will be Sold at the same time and place.

Aynho Station, on the Great Western Railway.

CHRISTMAS SALE.

THE 78th Monthly Sale of FAT STOCK will be held at the above Station on Tuesday next, Dec. 15, 1874.

ENTRIES.—UPWARDS OF

260 FAT SHEEP.

70 Prime FAT SHORT-HORN, HEREFORD, and SCOTCH OXEN, HEIFERS, and COWS.

2 FAT BULLS.

HEIFER and CALF.

40 PIGS, comprising some fine FAT HOGS and

Afterword:

I am fully aware that much of the latter part of this history is based on hearsay: almost wholly on conversations with my mother and aunt. The subject of Esther Trevatt is a painful one, and I have yet to see her death certificate.

Though this is the most distressing part of the present story, equally harrowing episodes must have occurred off stage: I refer of course to the war service of Tom Unsworth, Harry Honour and John Trevatt. These matters were never broached. Tom Unsworth, I feel, would have been the most forthcoming, but he died before I got under way. With Harry Honour and John Trevatt, I never knew the right questions to ask, nor found the right time.

.....
When this family history was almost complete, I was contacted out of the blue by Tricia Bennett, a descendant of Mark Honour, Levi's eldest brother.

You will remember from the narrative that Mark had apparently married without his father's consent. The version told to me was that Mark's bride had been "the beautiful daughter of one of his father's itinerant labourers". Tricia was told that during the service at that moment when the congregation is asked whether there is any just impediment, "or else forever hold your peace", Thomas rose and objected that he didn't consider his son's intended suitable! He was overruled. No wonder Mark left Eversley, and returned to Charlton on Otmoor! I had surmised that Levi had been staying at Mark's when he met his future wife, his cousin Sarah. Mark's bride was called Jane Bennett: it is sheer coincidence that this is also Tricia's name. The location of the wedding has not yet been found. *

= HARRY RUDDICK 1910; A9LAB

Mark & Jane's daughter Lily, was "the daughter of a well known Oxfordshire farmer who used to take dairy goods to Bicester in a tandem donkey cart, with donkeys one behind the other, not side by side."

"Lily could remember moving (from Charlton) to Church Farm, Mattingley with all their belongings on a horse and cart. She went into service in various houses in London when she was no longer required to look after her father on his second marriage. She went on to marry and have six children in Hampshire. She was a very dear mother and grandmother and was a very resourceful lady throughout her life"

sch 5
HARTLEY W.
STILLIN
HW in
1939

Mark's second wife was rumoured to "consume flagons of gin and drank away any money he might have had." (What is it with these second wives? The exceptions being our Margaret and our doughty Susan.)

FLORENCE
GESSEY
BICESTER
Sep 1901
QR

Mark's end was tragic. He caught an infection from a sheep which caused gangrene in his foot. He died aged 69, in Winchfield Infirmary, which had been the old Workhouse. He was buried at Eversley in November 1919.

* 4th Qtr 1878 HARTLEY WINTNEY

Prior to his removal to Hampshire, Thomas Honour's effects were sold at auction in 1874. Tricia found the poster advertising the sale in a frame at the Nut Tree pub, and it is reproduced on page 120.

APPENDIX 1

TWINS.

I have found a number of instances of twins:

John & Jebyn, baptised 1565, the sons of William Honour of Stansbridge (These children had a brother called Gabriel, born 1566, who may have been the father of the next named):

Gabriel Honour of Wendlebury and Gabriel Honour of Hockcliffe, born c1590, who were possibly twins.

Thomas & Mary Stephens, baptised 1660, the grandchildren of Gabriel & Ann Honour of Wendlebury.

George & Elizabeth Honour, the children of Thomas & Esther Honour, born October 1854.

Alice & Henry Joseph Carter, the grandchildren of Thomas & Esther Honour, born 1896.

Patrick & Ann Honour, the children of Larry & Kathleen Honour, born 1959, great great grandchildren of Thomas & Esther.

Though these events may seem too far apart to draw any conclusion, it is worth mentioning that I have researched the Pillinger line equally exhaustively and have found no instances of twins at all.

APPENDIX 2

I am indebted to Tricia Bennett for drawing my attention to the following article in The Sunday Times of 16 March 1997 by Steve Connor, Science Correspondent:

"ASIAN GENIE IN THE OXFORD GENE BANK"

"In the heart of middle England there is an Asian nomad waiting to break loose. A pioneering study of the genes of Oxfordshire villagers has traced their ancestry back almost 400,000 years to the early origins of man in Asia.

"The discovery that the villagers have genetic traits inherited from ancient Asians challenges the conventional wisdom that Homo sapiens -

modern man - emerged from Africa no more than 100,000 years ago to displace all other early humans and populate the world.

"Instead the finding by geneticists from Oxford University's Institute of Molecular Medicine suggests human ancestors were living in Asia long before the claimed "exodus" of Homo sapiens from Africa. Rather than being wiped out by the African migrants, they interbred, leaving a genetic fingerprint that researchers have discovered in Oxfordshire.

"The villagers who live around the Otmoor area - a relatively remote region of Oxfordshire with a history dating back to the Domesday book - have also been found to share genes with other groups of present day Asians, confirming that Africa may not be the sole birthplace of modern man.....the Oxfordshire researchers analysed the genetic material in the nucleus of human blood cells from nine groups of people round the World, including African pygmies, American Indians, New Guinea Tribesmen and the Oxfordshire villagers. This enabled them to study almost 1m years of man's evolution..... By decoding a part of a gene responsible for producing a blood protein, the geneticists were able to determine how related each member of a group was to those from the others and when in history they might have shared a common ancestor. The results show that today's Oxfordshire villagers have genetic mutations that arose between 200,000 and 400,000 years ago in Asia when Homo erectus, a relative of Homo sapiens was living. The conclusion is that Homo erectus in Asia interbred with modern man's early ancestor and so contributed to the genes of modern Homo sapiens including those in Otmoor.

"The revelation has astounded residents of Charlton on Otmoor one of the picturesque "seven towns of Otmoor"... (who have)...genetic links with the present day inhabitants of the windswept plains of Outer Mongolia and with their distant ancestor, Homo erectus.....

"The Otmoor villages grew from settlements in Anglo Saxon times that were dotted around the moor, 4,000 acres of low lying flatland which gets waterlogged and marshy in winter. In summer it dries out, allowing animals to be grazed under long-standing pasture rights. Many locals still recall with pride the riots of the 1830's when an attempt was made to remove the rights.

"Anthropologists began studying the area more than 30 years ago because they believed the marshy land would have kept its residents relatively isolated and so were less likely to have "mixed" genes with outsiders.

"Bruce Honour, 59, a local councillor whose family history in Otmoor can be traced back centuries, said: "It's wonderful. When you cast your mind back, there were no means of travelling easily and it kept us a tight-knit community."

"(Unlike the method used to analyse the DNA of Cheddar Man, this research) looked at DNA outside the cell, and cannot be used to study evolution beyond 200,000 years. Also details of whose blood samples from the Oxfordshire villages were used in the genetic analysis will not be published because of confidentially agreements.

"Dr John Clegg who led the research team said: 'It is part of a blind, anonymous trial so we could not find out the names if we wanted to. In any case, some people may be a bit sensitive to the idea of having foreign genes.'"

What a pity. What use is research if it cannot be published? Also, I copied these words during the week of the Stephen Lawrence Report, and as an example of hidden racism, Dr Clegg's final sentence cannot be bettered. Those who are "a bit sensitive to the idea of having foreign genes" should have had their names and their particulars blazened in the sky in 90 foot letters, day and night, for the next 900 years.

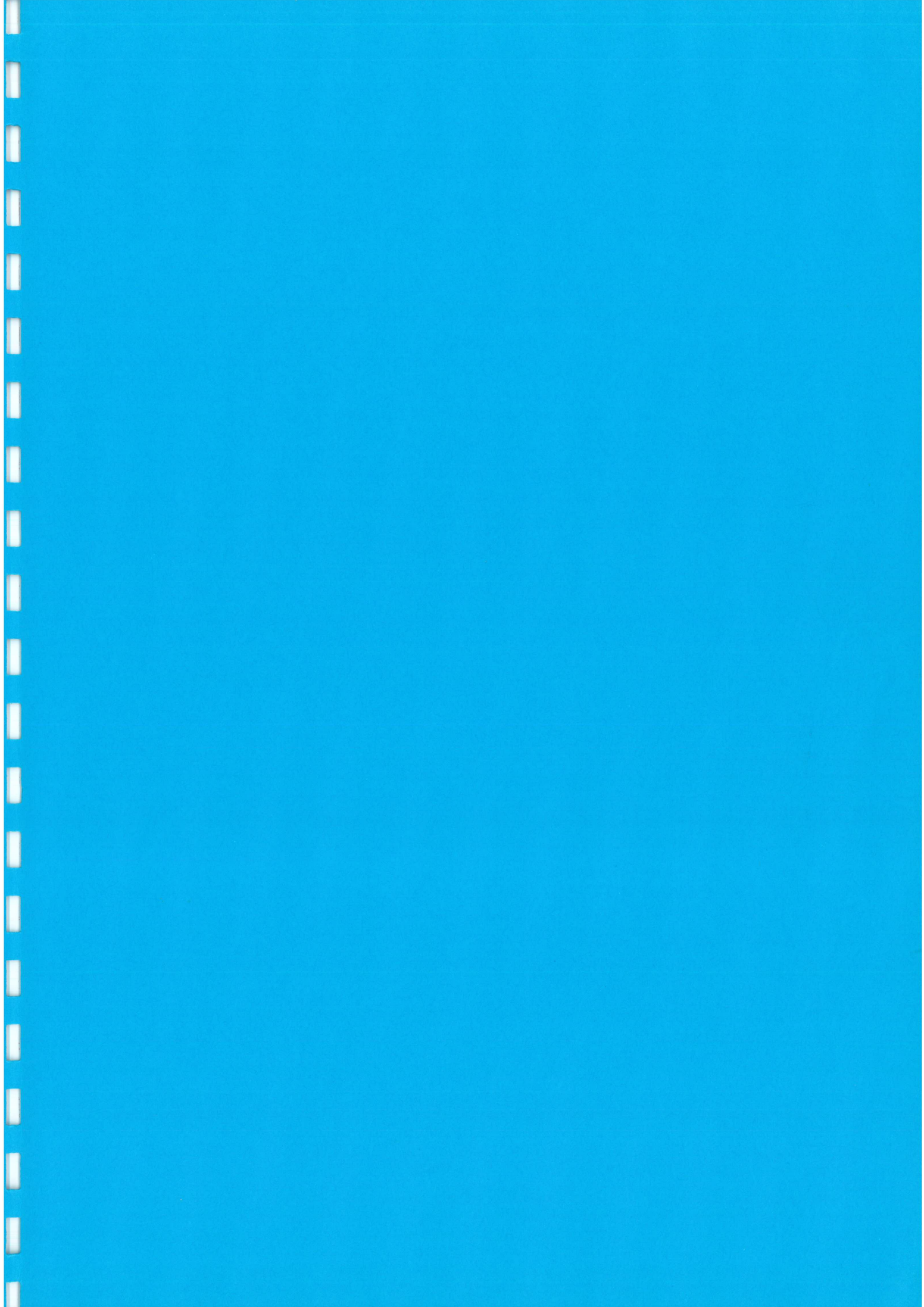
APPENDIX 3: The Last Word

The hours spent tracing our ancestors have not been entirely frivolous.

Both my brother and myself have scoliosis, a curvature of the spine, and the fact that we both have it, seems to rule out a random strike. Little research appears to have been done into the condition, but such as there is, suggests a complicated inheritance through a stray gene, which may be present in one of our parents or both, though they themselves presented no sign of it.

Our mother's family lived for hundreds of years in and around Otmoor. Our father's family, the Pillingers, came from Kingswood, near Bristol, in antiquity, an area which was equally remote and isolated. In both communities intermarriage was the norm. We have a shared ancestry with many people from Kingswood whom I have met through tracing family history, and I am sure the same applies to Otmoor.

As (so far) none of these distant kinfolk, or our near relations in either the Honour family or the Pillinger family have scoliosis, it would be of great interest to discover from whom we have inherited the complaint. And specifically, to discover how, without their being denied the chance to reproduce, we can detect it and hopefully take action to avoid passing it on to any of our potential descendants. We have five children between us, and none has scoliosis.





Twelve months after
marriage