

my life



Part 3

Ivan George Elder

P r i v a t e l y P u b l i s h e d

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Acknowledgements

The original objective behind the start of this life story was to give a picture of my life here in New Zealand to my Grandchildren who were born and lived in United States of America. Since my early years go back almost to pioneer days in New Zealand history and indeed early years in the growing modern world I felt it was worth painting a picture of what life was like then for their benefit. The project grew and the availability of a diary kept during most of my war years and of other overseas trips gave me a unique opportunity to relive those days and record them for my family and descendants. It has been a very nostalgic and intriguing journey to take and I have found it very interesting myself.

This venture was started after Millie's death but much was written after my unanticipated marriage to Elizabeth. I was grateful to her for allowing me to take over her sunporch/sewing-room for my computer and basic records. There was just enough room for my morning coffee cup on days when the sun called.

I am also very much indebted to my daughter Dawn for intensive editing work on the earlier chapters. In the later stages I acknowledge the painstaking work Ron has done in further editing and preparation towards publishing the work. In this process all of the other members of my family - David, Susan and Dawn - have been helpful in checking facts and layout.

After the War - 1946-1953

Setting up Home

I was advised that Millie's ship, the Otranto, would arrive at Lyttelton on 13th Jan 1946 and that I could get accommodation at Wigram Air Force Station. The Railway Transport Officer at Christchurch directed me to Wigram and said they would arrange transport for me in the morning to meet the ship which was to berth at 7am. However, at the Wigram transport station I was given clearly to understand that such privileges were not for me. Then the airman on duty had a sudden thought. There was a car with a boarding party going over to meet the boat and if I was in the Officers Mess at 4 am I could get a ride with them. I was there at 3.30 - this was an opportunity not to be missed !!! The kitchen had put out some bread and cheese so I helped myself as I did not know what the day would bring for meals. I was welcome in the car and when we got to Lyttelton, the Flight Sergeant said that if I stuck with them I could come out on the Pilot launch and get on board. A nod is as good as a wink, they say, and I joined them. The launch met the ship at the entrance to the harbour and I climbed up on deck with the party. So far so good - but how was I to find Millie ? Almost as I thought it she came out on deck and saw me!! She had been through examination of passports and medicals prior to landing and was only just free. After a very satisfactory welcome to each other, I asked her what she was doing next. 'Having breakfast,' she said. I strongly supported that plan as we had a long journey before we reached Gore. She was back in two minutes to say the steward had asked why she had not brought me down for breakfast. So I had breakfast also and a good one it was. Six other girls at the table wondered if all the husbands were coming on board but I had to disillusion them. There were several Kiwi soldiers also on the ship - I recall the names of Hugh Paterson, Lewis Mackay from Otama and Merve Arthur from Karori. None of these knew that Millie had been on the boat.

The ship duly berthed and we eventually filed off and were proceeding to the train when a photographer buttonholed us wanting to take our picture. Millie was reluctant,

thinking of her bulging tummy. He assured us it would basically be a head and shoulders shot so we agreed. He also bailed up another couple, Neville and Bette Selwood, who were going to Invercargill. That picture appeared in the the 'shiny pages' of the Weekly News magazine which had a nationwide circulation. That photo was to crop up repeatedly in later years. As with the men mentioned above, Bette and Millie had not met up on the boat. This was a pity as they would have got on well together. Once on the train we had a repetition of the journey to Gore that Wilfred and I had experienced three months before. Bands at every station, groaning tables of food - pikelets, scones and sponge cakes with loads of cream - on every platform and exciting reunions between returning servicemen and their families. Once again we met relatives at Oamaru and Dunedin. There was only Vic and Win to meet us at the Gore station and I think this was very tactful and understanding of my mother. Millie used to recall the half-hour trip out to the farm in the gathering dusk of the summer evening with the rabbits scuttling out of the way of the car.

At home the rest of the family were waiting with a welcoming supper. Finally, Millie was able to meet her in-laws. My father was a bit emotional and capped the evening with a hymn and a prayer of thanks. The hymn was from a Sankey book and not very familiar to Millie but his intention was clear. Millie felt the welcome was warm if a little strange. She was to encounter a lot more strange things in days to come. In deference to her 'condition' she was allowed to go off to bed reasonably early in the outside bedroom off the back terrace.

There followed another round of visits as Millie was introduced to the wider family. A week later we borrowed the car and went up to Queenstown to a studio motel in Wakatipu Flats, where Copthorne's Hotel now stands. This flat was pretty small with a bed which folded up into the wall for the day. It was during this week that we met up with the Lowery family camped on the edge of the lake at Frankton in their original stationary caravan. They were virtually squatters but were in the process of buying sections at a cost of fifty pounds each on which their 'cribs', lesser or greater, were to be built. We met up with other friends of mine also on holiday. We had our first catering flop. Millie had been impressed with a missionary couple, Mr and Mrs Tetraught, and invited them to Sunday lunch. The flat had only a small oven and a hotplate with little room for pans and cooking the meal became a disaster. When the oven was in use the hotplate lost power, and on top of that there was a big drop in voltage when everyone in the town started cooking. The meal took a long time to prepare. Nevertheless we had some halcyon days there and we enjoyed being together again and on our own.

We completed our visit by driving through Cromwell and Alexandra on the way home. I was eager to show her the wild beauty of our southern lakes district. This was a mistake. It was a hot day and none of the roads were sealed. They were dusty and corrugated and very winding, especially through the two gorges and between Alexandra and Roxburgh. Ventilation in the car was minimal. There was a north west wind which whipped across the dry ground down the Clutha Valley from Wanaka. And Millie was seven months pregnant. As we stopped in the old town for an ice cream, she said, "If you had brought me to live in Cromwell, I would have gone straight back to Mother and Daddy". Fortunately

the ice cream helped the situation.

We did not have a home. Of course we were welcome to stay at the farm as long as we liked but that was not very satisfactory for me when working. By this time Murray Malloch had decided to put me in Gore in charge of the new office. I think it was Ida Nichol who heard of Mrs Hyne offering to rent rooms in her house at 45 Ardwick St. We enquired and took them at one pound a week. Mrs Hyne was a rather eccentric old lady in some ways but was kind and good-hearted behind a shy and aloof exterior. She was a widow. Her husband had been the photographer owning the Crown Studios and they had a badly handicapped son who had fairly recently died. She used to visit the graves of her husband and son up in the Gore Cemetery every Sunday. Mrs Hyne reserved her front bedroom for herself and spent much of her time with her daughter in Christchurch. Esme, who had been in my form at High School, was going through a bad patch healthwise with a baby on the way. We had the use of the rest of the house which consisted of a second double bedroom, a single bedroom, a lounge and a kitchen-living room. When she was in residence she shared the facilities with us.

There were problems. There was no gas which Millie had been used to. Instead there was a black coal range which she did not understand. It had a damper system which controlled the amount of air-draft through the firebox. One damper opened the firebox direct to the chimney and was used when getting the fire going - if it was closed the heat was directed round the oven for baking or roasting. It took Millie some time to manage these well. Often I had to open up the dampers on the range to get a draft of air to the fire and perhaps rake out some ashes. The lignite coal we used was slow, did not heat as quickly as a shiny coal, and produced a lot of ashes. If these were not kept reasonably clear, the fire would be choked. On the other hand if you cleared out too much ash, you would lose live embers as well. Eventually the potatoes would boil. The sinkbench was in a corner of the kitchen-living room. The washing machine had to be wheeled out from a pantry and connected to the kitchen taps - there was nearly always some leakage onto the floor which required wiping up later. However, immediately next door she found a gem in the person of May Dodds. Mrs Dodds was much the same age as Millie's mother and kept popping in to give Millie no end of advice and help. She was often still there when I came home for lunch at noon but would scuttle out the door and through the gate back to her home. "Oh, Mr Elder's here" she would say and she would be gone.¹

The section on which the house stood was rather pleasant. The ground fell away from the road and behind the house. A sloping path led down from the back door to a row of hen houses and a substantial vegetable garden. There were apple trees and a plum tree as I recall. At the bottom of the path there was a strip of lawn with a long narrow bed of roses in the middle. We normally went round the end of this rose bed when going to the

¹ May Dodds had been a Hargest before her marriage. Brig. James Hargest was her brother, as was Henry Hargest and John Hargest of Mandeville. James Hargest was captured during the Second World War but escaped from POW Camp in Italy and successfully made his way to safety. He was later permitted to act as an observer in France after the invasion and sadly was killed by a German strafing fighter-bomber behind the lines in France. Her husband Douglas Dodds was an uncle of Ian Dodds, father of Judy and Margaret Dodds who were flatmates of Dawn's. They had no children. A sister was married to H W C Horrell whose grandson, Geoff, was to take the official photos of Elizabeth's and my wedding so very many years later. May was a woman of very strict routine. Monday would be washing day, Tuesday ironing day, Wednesday every kitchen cupboard would be cleansed out, Thursday would be something else, and so on. She was a wonderful neighbour and Douglas a very pleasant man.

lower vegetable patch but one day I took a short cut by jumping over it. As I landed I suddenly saw the clothes line approaching just at neck height. I ducked and missed it but my back went out. I went to the chiropractor, A R Mackay (Colin and Elizabeth's father) down lower Ardwick Street and the treatment seemed quite successful. However, I don't think the back was ever quite restored as from time to time ever since I have had spasms lasting a few days.

We went to church. I think Millie was more homesick in church than at any other time of the week. The whole atmosphere was different from the Baptist Church at Station Road. Even the music she had enjoyed all her life was missing and very different. At one stage later she had to put up with her husband as church organist on the old manual organ with foot pedals to provide the air. (The minister had to OK the hymns with him to see if he could handle the tunes - preferably three or four flats.) This homesickness occurred at other times too, often at night going to bed. Money was not very plentiful, public transport did not exist and Gore was a severe contrast to the amenities that Blackpool offered. However, the church led to one of the major friendships of our lives. Ian Gardiner said he could remember the hat and coat that Millie wore on her first Sunday in church. Millie said she looked across to a lady at the side wearing a nice hat and thinking she would like to get to know her. She did, and the friendship that developed was a major help to her particularly in those early days. I can well remember walking home with Phyllis Gardiner a year or two later after evening service, and stopping at the corner of Devon and Broughton Sts., and thanking her for her friendship and help to Millie. 'That's nothing,' she said, 'we just enjoy each other.'

Another good friend was Ida Nichol who lived not far up the hill. Ida was a daughter of Aunt Fanny, my mother's half sister, and was very close to my mother. Ida was married to Rob Nichol who had been wounded in the First World War. They had two daughters - Frances who married Hugh Lees of Papakura (who was her second cousin) and Joyce, who married Anderson Allan. They farmed near Maitland, Waikaka Valley. Sadly Cousin Rob, as we knew him, found the pain of his injuries and the worsening future they promised more than he could face up to and he took his own life about 1930 when the girls were quite small.² I am sure my mother was a great help to Ida at that time. Ida was a very good source of advice and help to us and later in baby sitting.

She was particularly helpful when David's time was due. In a way, she took the place of Millie's mother as the confinement drew near. At this stage Millie had not developed the rapport with my Mother which she later achieved. David came fairly suddenly. Labour pains began on a Saturday morning. Ida advised a hot cup of tea and soon we thought it wise for Millie to go to the maternity home at East Gore where a Mrs Bartrum was the matron. David arrived at about 1 30 pm. We had been attending the mid week meeting at church regularly and had been present on the Wednesday night. When it was made known on Sunday that David had been born, old Mr Herbert Berry was dumbfounded. "But she was at the meeting on Wednesday," he said in astonishment. And I suppose today he would

² Many, many years later I heard a comment by his chemist that Rob Nichol would have a great deal of suffering in late life. Perhaps a little explanation could be useful here. Ida's father was Robert Paterson [Aunt Fanny's husband] His brother was James Paterson of Waikaka. James had about twelve or fourteen children in two families as his first wife died, and these children were therefore cousins of Ida. One of these cousins was Hugh Lees mother. Another cousin was Amy Burns, John's mother.

be even more confounded at what expectant mothers do up to the time of birth.³

Millie was under the care of Dr Watters, a very careful doctor who looked after her well. She was taken by surprise that David was a boy. She was one of four girls, and her only married sister had two daughters so she had just assumed that she also would have a girl. However, he was no less welcome. Life changed after that. One of us had to baby sit and our outings changed tremendously. David had his own room which had been Mrs Hyne's handicapped son's room. There he had his 'Basinette' complete with lacy cover.

An early problem Millie had was shopping, particularly for food. She kept asking for the meat cuts by their English names until the butcher wisely took time to explain the way it was customary to prepare cuts in NZ. One day in the bakery she asked for a loaf of bread. The baker said surely you don't want a loaf. Yes, she did. So he showed her a loaf and pointed out that what she called a loaf was a half-loaf here - they used a double baking tin and split the loaf for sale in "halves". We shopped for groceries at Davidsons Grocery in Main St. Andy Davidson, Reid's father, was very helpful and I think was rather fond of this English girl. He helped to sort out the differences in grocery shopping. His shop was one of those delightful old-style stores with bins from which bulk supplies were measured out into brown paper bags as required by the customer. He was next door to Smiths Stationery owned by Dorothy and Ross Smith. These were the original shops, later demolished and rebuilt.

We began to develop and extend our friendship circle in the town. Allan and Edna Kerr had been married a year or more before us and lived in a small house next to the Gore Main school where the Brethren Hall now stands. Edna was a close friend of my sister Bessie and at the time she and Allan were attending St Andrews. They invited us down for an evening and the gesture of friendship was appreciated. Edna also invited Millie to go with her to the Salvation Army spring flower afternoon. Millie and Phyllis used to exchange afternoon visits and Millie was also meeting Matty and other friends of Phyllis. One afternoon Phyllis had brought Gordon and Robert to Ardwick Street for afternoon tea. Millie had bought in some fruit cake as she had not yet mastered the art of keeping the oven at a satisfactory heat for long enough to bake a cake, particularly a fruit cake. She offered the cake around. 'No thank you,' said Gordon very politely, adding 'We don't eat bought cake'. Perhaps a commendation of his mother's housekeeping.

We had been at Mrs Hyne's about a year with David just over a year old when I heard in the gossip after church that Cliff Dunn was entering the ministry. This had been announced at St Andrews that morning but his sister-in-law Nellie Johnston in the Baptist church was in the know. Their house had been bought from Andrew and Nellie by Cliff and Edith Dunn.⁴ I suddenly thought during dinner back at home that he would be selling

³ Herbert Berry was a very long time member with a full beard gradually whitening, a patriarch if ever there was one. He was a very loyal church member, seldom heard vocally but very supportive. He had been a builder and in the years following his retirement, did much work around the church buildings and the Manse.

⁴ Edith was a younger sister of Nellie Johnston. The three sisters, Nellie Johnston, Fanny Tayles, and Edith all had lovely voices and often sang solos, duets and trios in the Baptist Church. Nellie Johnston was an appealing soloist at Andrew's evangelistic meetings. Cliff and Edith had a family, but Edith died relatively young. She was older than me but I recall her as a lovely person. Cliff married again later. Cliff served among his parishes at Waikaka and eventually retired to East Gore. His sight deteriorated and he died fairly recently in his nineties. His wife Anne is in Resthaven Home in Gore and is very regularly in St Andrews each Sunday.

his house. I got up from the table in the middle of the meal to phone him and ask for first chance to buy his house. He agreed and I came back to the table and said, 'I think I have bought a house.; I didn't even have any idea of the price. I seem to recall feeling that if Cliff was giving up his income to go to Theological Hall, he would be needing all the money that the house was worth and it would not be kind to bargain him down. A few weeks later we moved to 155 Broughton St. We paid one thousand five hundred pounds, financed by a 100% Rehabilitation Loan at 3%.⁵ The property contained two and a half acres of land. It included a workshop/garden shed, a fowlhouse, and a cowbyre/loose box/ hayshed.⁶

I milked a cow in the cow-byre. We separated the cream from the milk and Millie made butter, the surplus going to the grocer in part-payment for food. Keeping the cow created some problems. The place had three fields and the yard with cow-byre, loosebox and hayshed and was ideal for keeping a cow. When a cow comes in season she urgently requires a mate of the male kind. So she would wander, sometimes over fences which were not very good to follow up any mooing noises she could hear. Sadly for her they were always from other cows - other people nearby milked a cow too. I would have to go and find her in the morning from as far away as the old baths site (now the deer park) overgrown with gorse and broom carrying a rope to loop over her horns. With this in place I could control her though we had to come through gates coming home, whereas she had leaped the fences to get out. Sometimes she would not come into the byre to be milked and there would ensue a lengthy cow-and-man chase. She would leap the fence and Ivan would have to leap the fence to cut her off. All was made right by a visit to Tom Pryde's bull down on Mandeville road near Croydon Lodge. One cow I bought from Wilfred had a new calf and I brought them in from the farm on foot. I went out by bicycle and returned along the back road to East Gore. The very young calf was by this time completely fagged out. Fortunately, Millie was anxious about my lateness and got Ian Gardiner to look for me in his first car, a Baby Austin Seven. We put the calf in the back of the car, and the cow and I made much better progress as the cow was eager to follow her calf. I had to milk the cow as Millie never learned - perhaps a cunning ploy. To think that when I was a boy I was put off farming by having to milk cows when my parents were away. (To be honest, I think my other abilities led me away from farming more than the dislike of milking cows.) One year Wilfred gave us two pet lambs for the boys to rear. The difficulty was getting them to the Works when they were fat but eventually I made arrangements and they made almost five pounds a head which was a top price.

5 The Government had set up a generous Rehabilitation Scheme for Returned Servicemen. It basically covered the full cost of a house with interest at 3% There was a similar scheme for would be farmers to set up in farms with necessary safeguards, such as adequate farming experience. It was with this assistance that Wilfred had been able to take over the Aitken property. Very good terms for ex service-men.

6 The house had a history. It was built in the early 1900's for a prominent business man, and was a well-built place. After the First World War, Andrew and Nellie Johnston bought it and lived there until he went into his evangelistic work. The Johnstons told a story of the 1920's when they first moved into the house. One night at dead of night Andrew, blinded in the First World War but with excellent hearing, heard steps going round the house, stumping along the verandah at the back and then returning round the house. What on earth was all this about? He discovered that it was the night-cart man emptying the toilet can - there was no flush toilet in those days. It was better in our day as water had been taken to the loo. Andrew had kept his hack in the loosebox. Although blind he had developed his other senses to a remarkable degree. For physical exercise he would ride his horse up to the top end of Broughton St and on to Croydon Road. Of course, the horse was sighted, and Andrew always knew where he was by the sheltered spots, the corner at the cemetery, and the shape of the road going out past the golf course. He also kept hens. One day when he was feeding the hens, his very young son George had caught a hen and was holding it. 'Put it down, George, it is missing its feed' George didn't obey. 'I said, put it down George', he said more severely. George dropped the hen and exclaimed, 'How did you know, Father!' Andrew had not heard the hen run away. He used that story in children's talks.

We made hay for winter from one or more of our three small fields. This involved getting some kind fellow to cut the hay and later to bale it. The street fence on the Broughton St frontage was a gorse hedge. It grew freely each year and I spent several half days trimming both sides with a slasher and then gathering up the trimmings for burning. That gave Millie an idea - a bonfire on Guy Fawkes night. Fireworks would be bought, friends would be invited, food would be provided and when dark finally fell the pile would be lit. These nights were very popular with the Gardiner kids, the Bob Hamilton kids, the Norman Hamilton kids, the McMillan boys down the road and the Elder kids. I think there were some other envious kids not far away. We kept hens. These were Black Australorps which laid brown eggs and later made good table birds. Millie enjoyed going out to feed the hens and gather the eggs. They were not strictly free-range, as they were enclosed in their shed with a small outside run. Making hay and storing it reminds me of a strange event. There were always cats around up on Upper Broughton St. We had two black and white tabbies, very similar to each other. One came into the house, the other would only venture in if no one was about and would flee like a 'scalded cat' if surprised. Neither spent a lot of time inside but the tamer one once gave birth to her kittens in the bottom of the big cupboard in the living room among the boots and shoes at floor level. There were four and I reduced them to two - two tom kittens. When I came home next Millie asked, "How many kittens did you leave." "Two." "There are four now." Again I reduced them to two but at next count there were three. We found that the other tabbie had also had a litter of kittens out in the hayshed and the tamer one was making up her numbers by pinching from the shed!

Wooden houses require constant maintenance and I recall a summer when my efforts went into painting the place. Being in the old style it had a high stud and so the outside walls were also high. I was up and down a ladder very many times that summer but the result was very satisfying. The garden was very attractively laid out with a nice shrubbery which included two lovely cherry trees. We had some lovely pictures of the boys in the cherry tree on a bright sunny day. There was a massive Macrocarpa hedge along the street frontage. This also took a lot of trimming once a year. It was about eight feet high but it provided real shelter from the nor'west winds which were all too common. We also had a nice vegetable patch which served us very well, though one morning we found the cow had got in and decimated the cabbages. I learned to be a gardener. I grew a full range of vegetables including a good area of potatoes as well as beetroot, carrots, parsnips, cabbages and cauliflower.

Money was not plentiful. I had arranged an allotment to be paid to my mother for the four years I was in uniform and this came to quite a sum. I had also saved some two hundred pounds from my cash pay. Murray Malloch had put through a bonus to his servicemen each year of twenty-five pounds, so there was a surprise one hundred pounds from that source. With these resources we managed gradually to acquire necessary pieces of furniture.

In 1948 Ron was born. David, just over two years old, was boarded out to his grandparents at Wilfred's farm while Millie was in the nursing home and I think they and Wilfred enjoyed having him there. Wilfred often came to dinner on Sunday after church. He was

fond of Millie - I think because of the relationship he had had with Marjorie. So we had two little boys and not the little girl Millie had expected two years before. That year we also felt increasing need for a car. Broughton Street was very steep and pushing a pram up it was very difficult while visiting Phyllis Gardiner meant going up an even steeper short pinch in Thomas Street. I approached my Uncle Robert Gardyne for a loan of 150 pounds and we found the rest to buy a 1948 Morris Eight. This was our pride and joy. We fitted a tow bar and she pulled a small trailer which we called 'Little Aggie'. She was ideal for our annual holidays in places like Riverton, Queenstown, and at Kaka Point⁷. She carried all the extra luggage including a basinette for the baby. One day we took Little Aggie out to Maitland to get pine-cones from under some very old trees on George Johnston's farm. Near Maitland I noticed Little Aggie was no longer tagging along behind. We found her back about mile jammed into the bank at the side of a bend in the road - safety chains on drawbars were not required at that time and somehow the ball joint had come loose. One time at a Sunday School picnic at Dolamore Park we put Ron down to sleep in the car away from the picnic. He did not go to sleep but found a jar of raspberry jam on the front shelf which had been brought for the scones at afternoon tea. How much he had managed to eat we will never know but he managed to plaster a great deal of it around the front seat of the car and down the front of his shirt. He was only about 20 months old but he did enjoy raspberry jam!

Thinking back I recall how nicely that car purred along on a good road. It did not have the power of later and bigger cars, but we thoroughly enjoyed it. There were not many good roads - or at least sealed roads - and dust was a great nuisance. Later when we started going to Queenstown regularly, we would find a few miles extra had been sealed since the previous year. The main road to Dunedin was still under reconstruction between Waipahi and Clinton when we took a weekend at Kaka Point. Millie was wearing a white coat with a loose-tie belt. The end of the belt had got stuck in the door and the foot or so hanging outside was solid clay, almost in a Karitane colour⁸. That was an unexpected break in a cottage owned by a very nice client, Mrs Macdonald of Diamond Peak near Gore. Days at the beach were always great for the kids and Kaka Point was very nice. Quite a number of Gore people had cottages there but we seldom went there over the years as we grew so fond of Queenstown and later of Frankton.

The car had a major fault. The two front doors were hinged at the rear and opened into the slipstream if the car was moving. On one occasion we were returning to Queenstown after an outing to Wanaka and were just slowing down as we entered the 30 mph limit near the Bottle House. Millie happened to be in the back with small Ron, probably hoping to persuade him to sleep - David was beside me in the front. Suddenly he turned to tell his Mum something. His hand was on the door handle and the pressure caused by his turning round unlatched the door and it flew open. His natural reaction was to try and stop the door opening but the wind pressure was too great and he was catapulted out on to the road. I doubt if I have ever stopped a car more quickly. He suffered gashes to his

⁷ Kaka Point was a very popular holiday spot for a number of years. Then as transport became easier and quicker with better cars and roads it lost its appeal to some extent to places in Central Otago. Since the turn of the century its mana has surged and property values have escalated in line with other places which are alongside or overlooking water. Kaka Point is sheltered from the south west and southerly winds, but tends to have onshore easterlies in fine weather. It is a nice area and has the advantage of being close to Dunedin, Balclutha and Gore.

⁸ For the sake of future generations perhaps I should explain that Karitane hospitals gave assistance to young mothers and babies where there was a problem. Karitane colour referred to the colour of the dirty nappies from these young babies!!

chin and gravel rashes on both elbows and knees. We took him first to the hospital but they did not handle emergencies and directed us to a doctor who carefully removed the small stones from the wounds and cleaned them up. On our way to the hospital and back to the doctor's small Ron was comforting him, saying, "The Doctor will fix it with splasters." David was mobile but for the first few days as the scabs hardened movement was rather painful. Only days later we walked up Queenstown Hill. He found going up not too bad but the knee bending coming down was very sore. He nevertheless persevered very stoically. For some reason Wilfred was with us on the climb and he commented on David's pluck and uncomplaining attitude.

At Broughton Street our garage opened directly on to the footpath which was just a gravel path. One day Millie asked the boys to see if there were any cars coming as she was backing out. 'No cars. No cars. No cars,' they chorused but just as she was coming out a vehicle whished by. 'I thought you said there was no cars.' 'It was a twuck, Mummie!!'⁹

We saw quite a lot of Wilfred in those times as he often came to us for Sunday lunch after church. He was a bachelor and when he took over part of Aitken's farm Mother and Father moved over to keep house for him. Vic and Win were married and had taken over the home farm. Father also did odd jobs helping out and kept the garden. There was no further suggestion of him going back to England to marry Marjorie and bring her out to New Zealand. With hindsight I think this might have been mainly Marjorie's decision. She would have seen the sadness of their mother over Millie's departure and I think decided that she could not add to her sense of loss. Marjorie was very soft-hearted even though at times she was impetuous and made decisions quite quickly and not always wisely. One Sunday when Wilfred was with us for lunch he was drying the dishes and called Millie's attention to Ron. We had had Tapioca pudding for dessert and Ron had had two helpings. He loved it. While the dishes were being done he had found the pudding dish and was avidly cleaning up the leftovers!

We did a bold thing in 1950. Early in the year we decided that Millie should go home with the boys to see her family. I broached the question of having time off to go with them but Murray Malloch was quite emphatic it was not on. I think he was a bit angry I should even think of it - he was waiting until he retired to make his own "Great Trip Home." That was fair enough, of course, but my situation was not comparable. So Millie took the boys home on her own by air - by DC3 from Taieri to Auckland, by Sunderland Flying Boat to Sydney and then by 48-seater Constellation to England. We always thought that it was a wonderful thing for their Grandad Haigh who really enjoyed the boys after having only girls in his family. Millie always said she never heard him complain about not having a son but he did enjoy our two boys. We did not have all the money required - about seven hundred pounds. So we had to borrow but we were able to pay it off quickly. The journey was very very tiring for Millie. David was nearly four and quite responsible and good at keeping Ron from wandering. But Ron at only 22 months was a different proposition. He could get under all the barriers, disappear in a flash, and always wanted to talk to any one he saw. He

9 This story is probably apocryphal and may refer to a Readers Digest joke. (Ed)

was still having a day sleep but the time changes meant he was having his afternoon sleep in the evening and after a couple of hours he would wake up for "the rest of his time-clock's day" just as Millie was needing her sleep. They flew during the day and slept in hotels at night. Millie was so relieved when she was met in London by her family who just loved having the boys to look after. The arrival was not just cut and dried. While flying from Rome to London the passengers were warned that landing in London was not straight forward due to fog. It was not till they were an hour or so from landing that they heard the fog had cleared. Her family just took over the boys and it was a load off Millie's shoulders. The visit was very well worth while. It linked her up again with her family and in a strange way underlined the fact that her home was now in New Zealand.. I was delighted that it could be done. For various reasons she never got home again until we both went in 1970.

Just after she and the boys left for England I arranged to go to Te Anau with Ian Gardiner for three or four days. We went in my little Morris 8 and camped in a small tent in the Ivon Wilson camping ground. Ian's boss Lawson Burrows had recently discovered the Te Anau-au Glowworm Caves. We of course made contact with him and he seized the opportunity. "I'm a hand short for the afternoon launch trip to the caves. You can come for free if you help crew for me". We were assigned to make the cup of tea on the way over and to assist in escorting the group under the entrance and up to the glowworm grotto where the experienced guides took over. We also had a good look for ourselves. A strange thing happened. The group were obviously a coach tour group to whom we were talking and answering questions about the lake and surrounds. Listening to their voices I came to the conclusion that they were a tour group from Christchurch. I think their accents reflected the English immigration to Canterbury. I was right and was very interested to note that I could recognise the accents. I did not think my instinct and background would have been such as to enable me to do so. With all the demographic changes in the fifty years or so since I do not think the effect would be so pronounced today.

The Homer tunnel to Milford had not long been completed but was not open to general traffic. We drove up to the Homer portal, parked the car and walked through the tunnel with only a torch for light. As we walked in out of the bright sunlight the torch was useless until our eyes gradually adapted to the dark and we had a small circle of vision. The surface was rough and frequently there were torrents of water cascading from the roof which we had to dodge. We had to do the return trip from the Milford end with much the same experience. It was most reassuring when we began to see the 'light at the end of the tunnel.' It gave new meaning to the expression.

We also explored around Te Anau, which was in a very early stage of development, as was also the case with Manapouri. I think the break palled a bit as we came back to Gore a day earlier than planned. Ian had a fright with tuberculous during the war years and spent about two years or so at the Waipiata Sanatorium. The gardening season was very hectic and he had to work long hours. The little holiday was planned to give him a break as Phyllis was very careful of his health and always spared him as much as possible. Ian and I both enjoyed the little adventure.

Early 1952 brought a very great sadness for Millie when her Dad died. We had been informed about his illness and then got a telegram to say that he had slipped into a coma. We arranged a phone call through to Brammer's office just across the back lane from their home for about 8 am their time one morning.¹⁰ Thus it was that Millie spoke to her family and though twelve thousand miles or so distant was the first outside the immediate family to know that he had died some three hours earlier. It was some consolation that she was able to speak to her Mum and sisters but it also highlighted again the sacrifice she had made in marrying me and coming to New Zealand so far away.

Just before her grandfather's death Susan was born. Again the birth was at the Gordon Maternity Home in East Gore and the event occurred very early one morning. Sister Bartrum was the only person on duty that night as three mothers-to-be came in. Fortunately three doctors were involved which increased the help available. Dr Watters was a very careful doctor. Sometimes he withheld medications to relieve morning sickness in early pregnancy as he did not want to endanger the baby. We were always thankful that all four of our children were born without problems. Millie said that Dr Watters stayed on quite a while to ensure things were OK as Sister was so busy. The boys and I visited the home at the weekend. Children were not permitted inside so Millie waved and talked to them through the window. In the garden there was a small fish pond. Ron was particularly curious to see the fish and overbalanced - result, a very wet boy went home¹¹. Millie was delighted to have a little girl and Susan was very much welcomed. She said that she kept saying to herself, "I've got a little girl."

The following year brought an experience of a different kind. Her sister Winnie decided to come out to New Zealand for twelve months to stay with us on a working holiday. Millie did not see the benefit to her, Millie, of such an arrangement as she would have an extra person to look after and would not have the same amount of time for them to spend together. So we eventually persuaded Winnie to just spend the time with Millie. Winnie came by ship arriving in Auckland. We thought she should have the opportunity of seeing something of New Zealand so we arranged for us to drive up to Auckland with the two boys, palming two-year-old Susan off on to Matty and Bob Hamilton. My cousin Ida Nichol was to have a ride up with us to see her daughter Francis at Papakura.

Only a week or so before our departure there was a disastrous fire in the Invercargill offices of D M Malloch and Co. The partners decided that I couldn't be spared away on the North Island trip in view of the extra work and reorganisation that would be required in the business. We decided that the trip should still go ahead. Ida and Millie would share the driving, Millie would meet Winnie in Auckland and I would fly up to meet her and Winnie in Hamilton. I had every confidence in Ida as a driver and companion for Millie. Millie was a capable but somewhat nervous driver and in fact they managed well. In Christchurch they called on Rev Frazer Barton, former minister at St Andrews in Gore whom Ida knew very well. Millie excused herself and took the car in towards town and got it greased and the oil changed. Ida must have told Frazer what she had wanted to have done. When she

¹⁰ In these days of such speedy international communication it is interesting to recall that such calls to England had to be pre-booked and were even then very susceptible to cancellation for static interference.

¹¹ To this day Ron maintains that he was pushed !

came back Frazer said, "What a pity, I would have booked you in and you could have had it done here." He was amazed to learn that she had simply driven into a service station and asked them if they could do it. The trip to Auckland involved crossing from Lyttelton to Wellington by ferry. Cars were slung aboard by crane on a kind of platform and driven into place by the ferry staff.

In Auckland Millie had an embarrassing incident. Ida was visiting her daughter Frances who was married to Hugh Lees, of Lees Bros., Ford agents in Papakura. Hugh tried to work on Millie to obtain an import of a car through the overseas fund scheme. Sufficient UK currency would be applied to pay for the export price of the car and the costs to bring it to NZ and put it on the road would be paid here. She told him she had no overseas funds. He said that would not matter as they could organise funds into her name in England and she could use them to get a car - she would repay the owner of the English funds here in NZ currency. She would have nothing to do with this proposal but felt embarrassed that he tried to use her for what was obviously a dodge.

In New Plymouth they found themselves in a busy street and were stuck behind a tram which blocked their view. In the midst of this traffic jam came a voice from the back seat, "Damn these trams" which put Ida and Millie nearly into hysterics. In a line of heavy traffic in Hamilton Millie was delighted to see the cars in front turning off leaving a clear road only to realise too late that the others had followed a diversion sign and the road was under repair and full of tar drums. She managed to dodge round these and came out OK. After picking up Winnie and heading south, they filled in a day or two visiting Waitomo, staying the night at Waitomo Hotel. When they emerged in the morning there were two men sitting in the sun near the entrance reading their papers. On seeing them approach the car one said, laconically, "You've got a puncture." Millie looked, aghast but it was true. I'm sure she had seen a wheel changed but probably not on that car. One of the men got up and asked, "Have you got a jack?" and he and his mate proceeded to change the tyre which Millie took to a garage for repair. 1953 was the year of the Queen's visit after her coronation. She was to stay at Waitomo Hotel so there was a frenzy of upgrading and maintenance going on. This was also true on the roads and may have been the reason for the traffic diversion in Hamilton. I think Millie was relieved to meet me at Hamilton Airport. Having dropped Ida off in Auckland she had been the only driver as Winnie had never got a licence. We set off south and spent a night at The Chateau Hotel in National Park near Mount Ruapehu. We crossed the road bridge over the Whangaehu River at Tangawai which was to be the scene of a disaster about three weeks later.¹² At the Chateau we were putting the boys to bed when the blind would not stay down. It flew up two or three times until our five-year-old Ron said "Call the manager!" We did get it to stop in the right position eventually without the manager's help.

Winnie's visit was a great tonic for Millie and it was good for Winnie as well. She blossomed healthwise having much less asthma and bronchitis and looked so much bet-

¹² The ice barrier to the crater lake high up on the mountain melted and released a lahar of water, mud and rocks into the fast-flowing river. The flood weakened piers on the railway bridge and the Wellington-Auckland Christmas Eve express crashed into the river with the loss of over one hundred and fifty lives. The Queen had just arrived in New Zealand and broadcast her Christmas Message from Auckland. It was very moving when she added a note of sympathy with the people of New Zealand over the dreadful catastrophe which had occurred.

ter when the time came for her to return to Blackpool a year later from our new home in Invercargill.

Accountancy

A few weeks after returning from England I had gone back to work in Invercargill where I had about a couple of months work before Christmas. The office was in full flow working on annual accounts for clients in the hope of getting as many finished as possible before the Christmas break so my input was very welcome. It was strange going back to a purely clerical job after the frequent outdoor aspects and freedom of Air Force life as it had become after the cessation of hostilities, with the slow-down of training, change of station and greater amounts of leave. On top of that there had been the idleness of a month's sea voyage and all the excitement of coming home and meeting up with family. The public 'welcomes home', the catching up on news of people, the trauma of the bereavements in which Wilfred and I were so directly involved and visits to relations were all rather unsettling.

Things had changed in the office. There were many more women on the staff. Dave Kennedy, who had worked with me in the same room in the early war years, had resigned and gone back to the Southland Building Society. He was very successful there and later rose to a responsible position. Alf McClean had been killed in the Air Force. His younger brother Jack McClean had joined the staff and I believe was recruited from a bank on the West Coast shortly before my return. He was a very bright boy, no doubt commending himself by being Alf's brother but fully worthy in his own right. He will feature much more in later years of this story.

I quickly realised that keeping the business going for four years with three men away overseas must have been a very heavy load for Murray Malloch. He had achieved this with the greater help of young women but the whole weight of interviewing the clients would have fallen on his own shoulders. He welcomed my return and that of a newcomer Arthur Lang, also returned from war service. Arthur had completed a BCom degree and was highly

intelligent. He was not to last long in the accountancy field in spite of the fact that he had graduated from the mechanical figure-work of accountancy to the more interesting field of handling interviews with clients. He left the firm and became involved in a contracting business in the Winton area. Ross McIlwrick was still in the office - he was profoundly deaf and had been classed unfit for war service. He was a very good worker and must have been invaluable to Murray in keeping the office systems going during that period. Much later Ross left the firm and set up in his own practice, eventually taking in a partner. Murray Malloch had also acquired the services of Jim Henderson who had come from Trustees Executors in Dunedin. Jim was older than Jack or me and would have been at least in his late thirties. He was a very pleasant and capable person. He had somehow collected round himself a few large commercial clients for whom he did quite an amount of work. ¹This created a lot of secretarial work. The office dealt with correspondence by means of dictaphones in each office from which letters were typed by the typing pool. Jim, however, was unique in having his own secretary who took his correspondence by shorthand. The rest of us found the dictaphone system quite satisfactory as it did not involve the typist's time twice.

During this time Murray took me with him to Gore several times on his weekly Friday visit. I conducted some of the interviews with clients which was all good experience. I would sometimes stay in Gore at the end of the day and get out to the farm for the weekend. Quite early, Murray outlined his plans to set up a permanent branch in Gore and proposed that I should front this office. One Gore day he took me to see some vacant premises in Main Street. The first floor was an open unoccupied space which he planned to subdivide into two offices, the smaller of which would be leased by a Solicitor called George Salmond and the other would be made into two interview rooms and a main working office with a public counter. He wanted to open this office at the beginning of February 1946. Millie was expected on the 13th of January and Murray agreed that I should have January off to meet her and arrange accommodation for us. Until the development of this office in Gore Millie and I had expected to settle in Invercargill which, as a larger city, would have been a little closer to Millie's city life in Blackpool. Even so, there would have been a vast difference between New Zealand and England and we would also have been much further from family support, especially when David arrived on the scene. We had no car in those days.

The Gore Office opened on 1 February 1946 with a staff of three - myself, Ted Maloney from the Invercargill office and Gladys Laird as typist. Murray continued to come up on Friday to interview clients for whom we had made appointments. Ted and I did the clerical work which involved starting from scratch with the analysis of basic data, through the drafting of the accounts and later to the final adjustments and completion of the tax returns. Gladys had the job of typing the accounts and correspondence as well as doing some of the basic analysis. We were quite a good team.

I had been frustrated in 1940 in having to abandon my Bachelor of Commerce degree for which I had just enrolled at Victoria University when the offer of the job came from Murray Malloch. I always had some regret that I had missed the opportunity of converting my Professional Accountancy qualification into a degree. Life had moved on at the time and

¹ One of these was the owner of Maaroa Station near Te Anau Bill Hazlett who also owned a property at Taramoa near Invercargill. Bill was a racing man and was involved in breeding at Taramoa as well as racing.

had now done so again. A BCom was no longer a possibility - extra-mural study had not been much developed at that time and with the demands of work and family life it was not practicable in any case. However, I thought that the Institute of Secretaries Certificate would be a valuable qualification and would offer some good practical knowledge. I enrolled in a correspondence course for the one-year programme. For three months or so all went well until the flood of information came in from clients after the 31st March balance date. Clients had become aware that I was in Gore fulltime and started to come in, first to see me with information and soon asking if they could finalise accounts with me on Murray's off days. This was good and in line with the ultimate purpose of establishing the branch but it limited the time I could spend during the day on the clerical work. To keep up, I started taking work home rather than going back to the office and leaving Millie at home on her own. The Institute of Secretaries went out the window, never to return.

Only a couple of years into this new setup Murray came up with a proposal to take three of us into partnership - Jim Henderson, Jack McClean and myself. I strongly suspect that Jim had been drawn to join the firm and move to Invercargill from Dunedin with a promise of partnership. Jack, of course, had come on staff during the war period and had proved himself a very good businessman. I had joined the firm in 1940 and I think had been earmarked for the Gore Office for some time in Murray Malloch's mind. Murray decided to sell half the practice and to retain the other half himself. He allocated the half share between the three of us unequally based on our potential earning power to the firm. Jim Henderson was sold the largest share, Jack a lesser share, and mine was the smallest. This was because of the relatively lesser value of the gross fees under my control. It worked out that the establishment of the Gore office counted against me when the partnership was set up, though perhaps I only realised this at a later stage². We three full time working partners were allocated salaries out of the profits before the balance was split according to our shares. The price of the ingoing was repaid to Murray over two or three years out of our shares of profits. I must say that the partnership worked out very well for me financially and therefore must have been OK for the others.

Work continued to grow in Gore and we needed extra staff. I think the first junior I employed was Stan Adams. His home was in Coutts Rd and he was straight from school. As I recall he had some ambitions, perhaps just ideas, of doing Accountancy but I don't think he went very far. He only stayed with us for a year or so then left to join the staff of Fleming and Co at the Creamoata mill. He stayed with that firm and eventually became manager. Although some twelve years or so younger than me, he died many years ago when only about sixty. My next junior was Russell Richmond, the son of Mrs Victor Dodds who was a fairly regular attender at the Baptist Church. She had divorced and married again very successfully. Russell was a very neat worker and was more seriously studying for Accountancy Professional. He was with me a couple of years or so before leaving Gore. He completed the accountancy qualification and eventually came back to start up with Barney Bone as

² Murray intended to take more time away from the office. His uncle at Waikouaiti had died leaving him his farm and run at Waikouaiti and he wanted the opportunity of spending more time there. He had originally been brought up in that area. Over the 1950's he would often spend the weekend at the farm and come down early in the week and return on Friday. In 1956 I was allocated a Vauxhall Velox car by GWD D Ltd and was invited to pick it up in Dunedin. I travelled up with Murray after work on Friday and collected the car in Stafford St. with the key in the air cleaner under the bonnet. It would have been left there at about 5 pm and I reached it about 7 pm. Would we do it today? There was then no interior lock for the engine hood. I think it was about August and the car had no heater for the three hour trip home to Invercargill.

Richmond and Bone. They later amalgamated with Tony Kearney to form Kearney O'Connor Richmond. Russell retired and went to Christchurch. The next to fill the job was Jim McLennan. He came from an East Gore family and was seriously studying for his qualification. He proved to be a very good staff member, completed his Accountancy and continued on with the firm. Later he and Ted Maloney took responsibility for one half of the alphabet each for the clerical work of preparation of accounts and completing the tax returns while I was mainly involved with the clients.

Some embarrassing moments occurred in the early days of the Gore office. Many of the clients were well known to me but there were others who were complete strangers. One was Pat from near Gore. He was a distinctive person, well built, broad shouldered with a rather florid complexion. I had seen him a couple of times during the first year. The second year he called in with his part-year information which consisted of three or four cheque butts and nothing else. I recognised him immediately and greeted him accordingly but could not remember his name. That will be OK, I thought to myself, I will find something in his information that will give me a clue. I checked through his cheque butts, asking occasionally about the nature of some of the payments but got no clue as to his name. Finally the second-last cheque in the last cheque book recorded an annuity payment to his mother and I got the clue I needed. I was quite prepared to let him go without the embarrassment of asking his name. At that time very few people brought in stock firm statements or bank statements. Banks wrote up passbooks by hand and we had authority to lift them as required. His bank was the Bank of New South Wales with which we did not have many clients - I could have identified him that way.³

Early in my time in Gore I was confronted with a very interesting accounting exercise. Dr J E Rogers was a very well-known GP in Gore. He had two daughters and a son. He had invested some of his money in a farm at Mokoreta which was intended to be for his son. However, the son was an alcoholic and not capable of working the farm so the doctor had employed a manager. I am now on quite friendly terms with this manager who purchased the farm when it was sold to wind up the doctor's estate. The estate also had some commercial investments. It was the winding up of the estate which gave me the interesting case. The solicitor was W B Johnston, nicknamed Hoppy because of the way he walked. He was a very careful solicitor but was completely lost concerning the preparation of distribution statements and tax returns for the winding up. The accounts had previously been handled by Stanley Rice, a Public Secretary in Wyndham who had also died. I went back to my text books to check on Realisation and Distribution Accounts and was delighted to be able complete a very good statement for the trustees and beneficiaries..

Clients sometimes missed paying tax by due date. One such client missed paying his

³ There is another story about this man. Much later he formed a Family Trust with his five children named in the Trust Deed. Later he and his wife had a sixth child. The Trust owned a commercial building in Gore and he used the surplus income to pay for some of the childrens' needs and naturally did so for the new baby. Years later the oldest girl got a job in the Public Trust Office and realised from what she learnt there and from seeing the Trust Deed, that number six child was not a beneficiary. She demanded an audit of the Trust books as the payments for Baby were, strictly speaking, illegal. The other children were in effect each paying one fifth of baby sister's support. Dad put a stop to that. He said to his older daughter that if she proceeded with her demand for an audit, he would redraft his will and she would pay dearly. We heard no more about an audit.

final tax, a fairly large sum of over 1000 pounds and was charged a 10% penalty. I wrote to him to come in and discuss it with me. I asked why he had missed paying by 7th March. "I don't know." "Were you very busy?" "I don't know." "Were you shearing or drafting lambs or something?" "I don't know." Then a thought struck him, "Was that when the baby was born?" So I asked when the baby was born. "I don't know." "Well, how old is the baby?" "I don't know." "Well is she three months old or about 12 weeks?" "I don't know." I was getting nowhere fast! So I rang his wife and found that the baby had been born just days before the tax was due. He had been looking after some five or six children including preschoolers with no domestic help while also employing two or three single men. This became a very good story to put up to the Inland Revenue and they remitted the penalty.

This same man was in quite a big way. In 1951 wool prices hit all time highs because of the Korean war and the demand for uniforms among other things. However, the 1951 Waterfront strike occurred and outward shipments were held up and the wool auctions were postponed. By the time his wool was sold the price had slumped. On the strength of the expected high prices he had bought a new car, a Plymouth, on a special deal operated through Belgium⁴. He had bought a new Caterpillar tractor for some thousands of pounds and carried out a major building project and had ended the year with an overdraft of over 30,000 pounds. He took some years to pull out of that hole.

This scarcity of cars leads me to another incident. Ralph Edgar had the Ford car and tractor agency at Balfour. He was an entrepreneur and had built up a very wide business, particularly on the tractor side. There were very few tractors on Southland farms prior to the war, and there was a very good market for first tractors and the replacement of pre war machines. He sold many machines into the areas of other franchise holders. There were waiting lists for cars. Because of the volume of business he employed a fulltime accountant in the office. Since the money was handled outside of his direct control he asked us to do an audit as well as to supervise the preparation of his annual accounts. One year around the 1948-1951 period, I checked his car sales and car stocks against the invoices from the Ford Motor Co and there was one not accounted for. I asked about it. There was a grin. "Well, it is like this. John A. thinks he is first on the list for the next new car and John B. thinks he is first on the list. So that car was stored in Dunedin at 31st March until the next vehicle arrives and both Johns will get their cars at the same time!!" It had to be shown as stock on hand with a big lift in the profit previously shown.

Obtaining staff became a problem. The lower birth rate during the war years while husbands were overseas meant there was a smaller number of teenagers coming onto the job market. Often an advertisement for staff would yield only one or two replies and the employer had little option. On one occasion I had a reply for an older more experienced clerical worker and got two replies. One was not suitable while the other was a fine-looking young Maori man in his late twenties. He spoke well, talked of places he had worked at in Palmerston North and Wanganui and I felt he might be quite good at the job. However, I had some doubts, so decided to check up his credentials by phoning the places he had

4 Immediately after the war cars were very scarce. A car could be obtained if the cost could be paid in overseas currency so that people who had overseas money, legacies etc were able to get a car. There was also this loophole through Belgium through which a substantial number of cars came in and were much in demand even though the price was fairly high.

worked at in the North Island. Neither of them knew him and had not had him in their employ. So I did not give him the job. He was taken on by NZ Express Co, a carrying business which also sold coal in bulk and by the bag. Some months later the company was robbed. It was made to look like an outside affair but the police found that he was responsible. It justified my action.

In 1958 the Government introduced Pay As You Earn tax on wages, commonly known as PAYE. This placed onto the employers the responsibility for deducting tax from all wages. It was reasonably straight forward for a business with a number of employees but a chore for farmers who were employing casual labour. D M Malloch and Co offered their farmer clients a Wages Payment service in which our Gore office was involved. Invercargill had an old-style accounting machine which had a suitable programme to do the accounting. The farmer would issue the employee with a voucher detailing the amount to be paid. The employee brought their voucher to us with an IR12 which established their tax code and we calculated the tax, paid the net wages to the employee and paid the total tax in one cheque to the Department at the end of the month. We opened a trust Wages Account into which clients paid the gross amount of wages due to their employees. Some clients, particularly those with permanent employees, would lodge a deposit and we would send out a reminder for a further deposit as it was used up. For casual wages, the client often gave us a bulk cheque which we would bank and then pay out the individual cheques to the workers. Clients who did their trading through a stock firm would give us a permanent authority to draw reimbursement as the wages were paid. The firm - and later my own business - was acting a good deal on trust and was often temporarily out of pocket. However the tax deductions which did not have to be paid until the 20th of the next month gave us some working finance to tide us over. On the first day of the scheme we had set up the bank account and got some of the necessary forms printed but I shall never forget the reality of the first employees coming in for their pay under this new system with which we were barely familiar. We soon got used to it but in those early days it was a serious interruption to the ordinary flow of work.

The system had to be worked and carefully recorded. An old accounting machine from the Invercargill office was reprogrammed to record the payments, the tax deductions and the ledger accounts for each client's cash input. A girl named Imelda Concannon who lived just out of Woodlands was released from the Invercargill office and came to work this system in Gore. It was not quite a full time job and she assisted in other work as she was able. I also employed a Wages Clerk who doubled as a receptionist - the first of these was Joe Davidson. Joe became an ardent canvasser for the office. He knew a lot of those coming in for wages and would frequently recommend a wage-earner to get help with his tax returns as well. We gained quite a few clients this way.⁵ The Wages Payment System became quite a large routine part of the business. The fees for operating it were calculated on the basis of the number of payments and were charged to the client's account twice-yearly.

Late in October 1953 the telephone rang at about 5 in the morning - Jim Henderson

⁵ Joe had been operated on for a stomach cancer and as a result his stomach was reduced in size - he always had some sandwiches with him to eat at morning and afternoon tea breaks. He was a very good and faithful employee for a few years until his health gradually deteriorated.

was on the phone. "Ivan," he said, "the office has been burnt out!" I thought he was kidding but it was no joke. The firm had the first floor in J E Watson's building in Tay St. This was a fairly modern building but the upper floors were wooden and therefore had fallen through as the fire gained hold. There was a great number of primary client records in filing cabinets which had collapsed in the furnace although a lot of files and data on which the staff were working had been wheeled into the strongroom overnight. Even in the strongroom, the files all had blackened edges from the intense heat but the papers were readily recoverable. Not so with the cabinets which had fallen through the floor. Some had burst open and the contents largely destroyed while others were partly intact but badly burnt round the edges of the pages.

The partnership held some hurried meetings to resolve what was to be done. The bulk of the reorganising fell naturally on the Head Office partners and staff but I came in on some of the major decisions. Quite quickly they found empty premises in the H&H Building on the corner of Don and Kelvin Streets where the clerical staff were housed while the interviewing and typists pool went into the AA building diagonally opposite on the first floor of the AA building. There was a lot of to-ing and fro-ing between the two buildings. If a client called unexpectedly to see one of us in the AA Building, we would have to phone across for their file to be brought over. Files with draft annual accounts for finalising had to be ferried across to be ready for the interview. This was a comparatively minor worry as we were fortunate to find vacant premises large enough for the good-sized firm the business had grown into. A full set of new desks, chairs, filing cabinets and minor office equipment was quickly arranged - Dunlop Joinery secured a very good contract for this. Staff were gradually reestablished in their work.

A long time member of staff, Eric Russell, who had started with Mallochs as an office boy and eventually spent all his working life in the firm, was delegated to reconstruct all the damaged files. These were in three main categories: Files where the accounts had been completed and were awaiting final adjustments or typing - with these he had to get the prime information back from the clients and redo the accounts; Files in the course of being worked on - most of these had been in the strongroom and had to be salvaged and restored; Files where even the prime information had been destroyed - in these cases, duplicate statements had to be obtained from stock firms and accountants. In addition banks were asked to look up the paid cheques which had gone through the accounts to find the name of the payee. In many cases this schedule of payees had to be gone through again with the client to find out the nature of the payment for coding purposes. There was therefore a terrific amount of extra work generated by the disaster, a lot of it falling on the banks and stock firms of clients. The cooperation of these institutions was greatly appreciated. Eric spent a full twelve months working on this reconstruction work. Handling the charred and burnt papers was a dirty and time-consuming task. Fortunately it was covered by loss of profits insurance.

At the office in Gore we were pressing ahead at the time of the fire with our own seasonal work and trying to get as good a finish as possible before Christmas. Invercargill had about half a dozen workers who commuted every day from the Wyndham-Edendale

area. They had no work available to them in Invercargill and they had no tools with which to work. So my partners asked if I could manage these people and give them space and work in the Gore office to help finish our annual programme which was a bit behind. Reconstruction gradually took place in town but it involved a lot of duplication of work. The partners asked me to come to Invercargill to assist with the finalising (and re-finalising) of draft accounts with their clients and I did so on one or two days a week. This proved quite interesting but led me into one very difficult case

A certain client had sold his farm during the previous year and purchased another. His accounts had been completed and the details finalised with him just prior to our office fire. Eric had re-done his accounts showing a taxable income of about 15,000 pounds and tax of about 5,000 pounds - I drew the short straw to go over these new accounts with him. He declared that prior to the fire his income had been shown at only 5,000 pounds.. He persisted in his statement. I asked him to go away and Eric and I went over everything carefully and were sure the new figures were right. Eventually he accepted the situation. I was never quite sure if he was serious or having us on but suspect strongly that the latter was the case. The fact that he did not change accountants because of the post-fire incident convinces me he was bluffing. Great, he must have said to himself, they have lost my figures, I've a chance to get this tax reduced. He had changed farms about 11 times in 14 years. His next move was to Wendonside so I had him as a client for a year in Gore. Then he went to the Oamaru district and we heaved a sigh of relief.

The effects of the fire went on for a year but my partners decided that it would help the overall situation if I were domiciled in Invercargill to increase the interviewing strength there - I would service Gore two days a week on Tuesdays and Fridays. So we were asked to move to Invercargill. Immediately the news got around, Norman Hamilton from a few doors up the street called and asked if he could buy our house. This was agreed very quickly. His sons, Bruce and David, were playmates of our David and Ron. The fact that they were also walking to school from our street was a help to our boys, particularly when they were passing the house in Thistle Street where there was a fiercely (at least to a five-year-old) barking dog. So we were looking for a house in Invercargill - but I will deal with that in another chapter.

The Gore clients thought this move was a very retrograde step. They had dealt with an absentee accountant for many years and were relishing having me on hand any day they were coming to town. However, it must be said that they accepted the situation and I don't think we directly lost any existing clients. It may well have benefitted other local accountants in respect of new people looking for an accountant. From time to time there would be an aggrieved complaint from a client that I was not readily available. The fact of the matter was that the days in Gore were very busy and very tiring. Gradually as time went on, Jim McLennan would see more and more clients, particularly for the taking of information. I found that I learned a great deal in Invercargill about the good management of a wider variety of accounting clients and of the more secretarial side of the practice. This was very helpful when I returned to Gore later. In time the travelling became a pest although it was enjoyable at first. Half of the accounting work was done in Invercargill and I always had

deed boxes of files in the boot. I would park at the door in Gore to take these metal boxes up to the office and if there was already a client waiting, I would find at lunch that my car was still at the meter long expired. There was a physical toll from of manhandling these boxes up and down the stairs. A Gore day would be something like this: 8.30am arrive at the Invercargill office; 8.45am leave for Gore; 9.45 arrive in Gore; 12.30 sneak some lunch - often with Mother and Father in Mary St. which was a good way of keeping in touch with them; 5.30 see the last client out, load up the car with the file-boxes and head for home.

Just before this period, the owner of the Waikaka Store had decided to close down and there seemed no prospect that it would remain open. The district decided to do something about this and a meeting was called to discuss the proposal to form a company to purchase the store I was asked to be present to give technical advice. I warned that the success of the venture, which was to be a cooperative one, would depend entirely on the success of the directors in obtaining the right management. It was decided to go ahead. The company was formed and a board of directors elected who met monthly in the evenings. They kept country time - getting there when the day's work was finished - and the business was conducted in a conversational way which usually kept me later than necessary. When I lived in Invercargill it was that much worse and I was often not home until midnight. Returning one night near Brydone I suddenly heard a nasty noise from the engine and I limped home very slowly. A gudgeon pin had broken and caused quite a bit of damage. Jack McClean put in a good word for me at GWD Ltd with whom he had a good professional relationship and I was able to buy a secondhand Vauxhall Wyvern for immediate use. The Morris Oxford was repaired and we kept it for a while as a second car. It was later sold.

I had another difficult problem with a certain partnership which I will just call Dad and Son. Dad had retired to town but still owned a half-share in the farm which Son was running. Son was not a good manager and had a phobia about paying tax. It has been well said that if you are not paying tax you are not doing well. He did not believe it. He must have experienced poor lambing percentages as there was a mysterious shortage in the reporting of lambs. However, he started making allegations that drafts of lambs sent to the works had not been accounted to them by the Stock Firm. The livestock officers of the firm had carried out extensive checks to see if draft proceeds had been miscredited but to no avail. I am sure these allegations were intended to cover up the results of his poor farming skills. Dad consulted the solicitor R B Bannerman while Son had employed G M Salmond whose office was in our building. After many discussions and investigations, I had decided to leave the attache case with all the case files in Gore between my visits. One Tuesday morning when I arrived Jessie Lindsay told me with some trepidation that Son had come in and had asked for the case to take into George Salmond as they were having a meeting with me later. With some hesitation she had given it to him but was disturbed that he had apparently gone straight down the stairs instead of into Salmond's office across the vestibule. It was a hoax, of course, as there was no meeting arranged. There was no great harm done as there were no secrets but I was left completely without tools for any enquiry or discussion. Two days later the case was left at the office door stuffed with copies of Australian Truth with the headline showing THE GIRL WHO HELPED NED KELLY. On top was a scrap of paper with a scrawled note: "TO THE GIRL WHO HELPED SON." Jessie was quite mortified. A few

days later an Invercargill accountant phoned me to say he had some files of mine. They had been taken to him for investigation and he just handed them back to me. Ron Bannerman said he had visited the farm with Dad and found coils of fencing wire thrown into the well, untidy heaps of new fencing posts and unused bags of fertiliser in a shed. Such was the result of his phobia about tax. The problems went on for another year or so until Son died.

In 1953 the Firm employed Alan Dunn, a qualified accountant who came from Dunedin. Alan was a Korean war veteran and came to Invercargill virtually penniless. Ted Maloney had decided to leave and take up a job with Millar Lange the bread makers - his half of the Gore files were taken to Invercargill and Alan was put in charge of them. Alan was a lovely chap, very smart and a neat worker - we got on very well together. He was a Christian attending Waverley Presbyterian church and early in the piece married his girlfriend Johanna. I was harbouring dreams of he and I possibly taking over the Gore business in partnership at some indeterminate future time. Alan had a spiritual experience while at Waverley Church and was greatly helped and blessed by the minister. The end result was that he decided to enter the ministry and he resigned from his job and went to Knox College for training. I have recently re-contacted him in retirement in Napier, and he told me that they really struggled for money during those training years and that Murray Malloch gave him a small monthly allowance which was very helpful. So ended my dream. Alan is now quite handicapped with Parkinsons and is unable to drive - he does not complain.

Commuting from Invercargill to Gore continued from 1954 until 1959 for two days a week and sometimes three in the busy season. About the middle of that year came the surprising news that the partnership of D M Malloch & Co would break up.

Family Life in Invercargill

Winnie's visit in 1953-4 had been a real tonic for Millie. Winnie had taken unpaid leave from her job with Blackpool Coop Society to come to New Zealand. This must have entailed a significant financial sacrifice but she gave Millie a very pleasant year. The two sisters got on very well together and shared very similar ideals. Susan was only two and Winnie enjoyed her in this stage of life. We moved to Invercargill in 1954 and that was an interesting venture.

Selling our house in Gore had not been a problem. Our neighbour Norman Hamilton wanted the house and we agreed on a price which was just twice what we had paid seven years earlier. However, we had also subdivided the two-and-a-half acres into seven lots in addition to the larger house lot. These we put on the market for £250 each. One was sold to Andrew and Nellie Johnston who built a new home with henhouses at the rear of the section so Andrew could use to good effect the skills he had learnt at St Dunstons in London in 1919-20. Another went to Allan and Shirley Williamson, one to Tom and Kitty Bredin, one to Stan Turnbull and another to Anderson and Joyce Allan. All of these sections were built on except Joyce and Anderson's as they moved away to Papakura before they were ready to build. Looking back the prices seem very cheap but at that time we were not required to form a sealed road with footpaths and kerbing. That was carried out in due course by the Council. In our case we were dependent on a subdivision taking place below us to link with Johnston St. which was then known as Level St. That name is a puzzle as the street rose very steeply to the end of Thistle St. The name Johnston was given in recognition of Andrew and the way he coped with his blindness. He lived a very full life, and one never heard him

complaining. His evangelistic campaigns resulted in many people committing their lives to God. I think we felt honoured in some way to be living where he and Nellie had spent a good number of years and it seemed good that they bought one of the sections and came back to the site of their early married life.¹

For our initial outlay of £1500 we received a total of £5000 less some survey and legal costs, and this was a big help when we started to look for a house in Invercargill. Of course part of the sale price was required to repay the balance of the original mortgage which had only been running for about seven years of a 20-year term.

The call to move to Invercargill was not a very welcome one from our personal point of view. We had settled in Gore and our circle of friends were all here - in fact all of the friends that Millie had made in New Zealand. We had established our home and had an interesting lifestyle. My parents were at hand to baby-sit on occasions. We had put time and effort into our property. On the positive side we would no longer have a cow to milk night and morning. As junior partner my voice was not very strong in the corridors of power. Certainly the business in Invercargill had grown rapidly over the nine years or so since the war and the fire had put a lot of pressure on the partners. Looking back I think this fact had weighed heavily with them in arriving at this decision and I don't think they gave full weight to the needs of the Gore Branch. However, that was the decision and we were obliged to agree. In addition to the visits that I would be making to the Gore branch there would be a weekly visit to Wyndham and a visit to Otautau would be made by other partners from Invercargill.

I think it is only fair to say that our announcement of our departure from Gore was greeted with dismay by the Gore Church. I was on the Deacon's Court, was Treasurer, and Chairman of the Court during pastoral vacancies. Millie was Girls Bible Class leader, active in the BWMU and the Ladies Fellowship. She was in great measure responsible for the success of the Ladies Fellowship in attracting the 'outsiders' of the congregation to enjoy an undemanding time of fellowship and inspiration. Her outgoing personality and ability to meet people on their own terms and her lateral thinking and fresh ideas were of great value. We were farewelled very warmly with the presentation of a china teaset in the pattern 'English Rose' in honour of Millie's origins. She had endeared herself very much to the folk there.

We consulted Estate Agents in Invercargill and were not very successful in finding a place we liked. In a rush of enthusiasm we purchased a double section in South Invercargill on the corner of Elles Road and Martin Street with the idea of building. However, we realised that there were a lot of problems associated with building and looked round further. We were shown a lovely house in Wellington St., Georgetown but the price was a bit steep.

¹ It might be interesting to record here a couple of interesting stories that Andrew used to tell. At St Dunstan's in London during their training, the school used to have open days when supporters and the public could see what was being done. One lady seriously asked how they knew the chickens were not getting sick. She was solemnly told that the chickens were taught to put their legs through the wire netting fence so that their blind attendants could take their pulse. She turned away marvelling. Bereft of his eyesight, Andrew had developed his other senses to a very high degree and used them to inform him of many things we see and take for granted. He walked all over town by himself, even into the Main Street. One day, only some two hundred yards down his own street he stumbled over some repair works on the footpath and came a cropper. He was not seriously hurt but he said that his first instinct was to look round and see if anyone had seen his embarrassment - after some thirty years of blindness.

We were shown a house in Duke St towards Waikiwi but the exterior was unattractive. "But you should see the inside," said the agent. Millie thought the street appearance of the place would always disappoint her but it was in the "IN" district. We looked at another house at the east end of Herbert St, about as far from the city centre as one could get at that time. It was while we were looking it over that I talked over the Wellington Street place with the agent. The vendors had reached their rock-bottom price but I wondered if they might leave say £250 owing as second mortgage to be paid off over two years. Millie heard me raising this question and started hugging herself, thinking, 'Ivan's thinking of buying it! Ooh, Ooh, I hope he does'. The vendors agreed and Millie was delighted with the home - and my aura went up. It was a truly lovely home - very very attractive from the street and with a large hallway which had highly French polished oak panelling. There were two-and-a-half bedrooms upstairs and a guest bedroom down. There was a lovely lounge, a sizeable kitchen with an electric heat-storage range, and a living-cum-dining room. The section was not large but adequate with an attractive drive to a one-car garage. We moved in with our three children. David and Ron's room was large and had also a very big walk in wardrobe with shelving. Susan had a little sunroom off our bedroom. Winnie was still with us at the time and she had the downstairs guestroom. There were fireplaces in the corner of the living room and in the lounge. The kitchen with the heat-storage range always seemed warm and got very good morning sun. There was also a good bathroom and separate toilet with access both from the bathroom and the laundry.

We had a tortoise-shell cat at this time and we took him to Invercargill. He was in a box on the roof rack on top of the car and it must not have been a very pleasant place to ride. He would have spent an hour up there with the wind whistling by. The car was full with three children and all the final left-over bits that were not on the mover's van. When we got to Invercargill we made the mistake of opening the box outside the back door. When he saw daylight, the cat took one gigantic leap out of the box, flew straight across the lawn, over the tin fence into the neighbouring property and we never saw him again.

It was in this house that Millie lost her engagement ring. She was in the habit of taking it off when she was doing the laundry and putting it on the window ledge. She must have opened the window to release the steam from the laundry and it fell out. My parents visited us before we discovered the loss and my father had cleared the long grass and weeds along the narrow strip at the back of the house. I searched through the compost heap where this rubbish had been put without success. We compensated for it a good many years later when I bought a very nice diamond ring for our thirtieth wedding anniversary.

We were very happy in that house. I well recall telling Murray Malloch and Jack McClean that we had decided on the house. The news was greeted with a disapproving silence. We had bought in the wrong area of town, as we found when we came to sell some six years later and found the disfavour with which "south of the tracks" was viewed. We lost money after having the house on the market for quite a while. North Invercargill was the elite sector of town and the south end was, by and large, much more proletarian. In actual fact Wellington Street was a little jewel in the middle of Georgetown, having been opened up much later than the surrounding area and containing a group of more recent homes.

On the other hand it was old enough for families to have grown up and moved out - it had become a street of elderly couples, widows and widowers. We had a lovely retired couple living right next door, and on the other side the Knox Church Manse² was occupied by Rev Robert Scott and his family of seven. In the year we arrived no fewer than eleven children moved into the street and Dick Ferris was almost opposite already with seven girls in his family. He had purchased the lovely imposing home of the late Alex Derby, a prominent Invercargill citizen who had been the very successful manager of The Southland Frozen Meat Company. Dick was Secretary and shareholder in Gormack Wilkes Davidson Ltd and on the death or retirement of the original partners, became the General Manager.

Wellington Street was not very far from the Georgetown Baptist Church. This had been a daughter church established by the central Esk St Church many years earlier and was not a very thriving cause. There was considerable temptation for us to join the central church³ but we felt we should belong to the church in the district where we lived so we threw in our support there. We were soon roped in. I was elected Treasurer for my sins and Millie soon found herself with the Girls Bible Class. She had some lovely girls in the class, but the leader of the Boys Class was very difficult to get on with. He had very rigid ideas and was very unreceptive to any suggestions to lighten up the atmosphere among the young people. On the other hand we had a lovely minister in Jack Beck, who with his wife had been missionaries in China and who had been forced out by the new Communist Regime. Millie was Bible Class leader and I was on the Deacons Court at Georgetown and Treasurer virtually all the time we were there.

Leadership in Bible Class work led to involvement in arranging outings. One of the early BC outings soon after our coming very nearly ended in disaster. We had planned a visit one Saturday afternoon to Tussock Creek Reserve at the south end of Forest Hills out towards Winton using a hired bus along with a couple of cars. We arrived at the Reserve, and before anything could be organised most of the youngsters headed into the bush on a track leading from the reserve. Our boys of about seven and five were away with this group before we were aware. We had Susan who was just a few weeks old and while we were attending to her the boys were gone. We assumed the party would return once they had reached the end of the track but they did not. Following them in we found that the track petered out but the kids had not stopped, just carrying on with any slight opening leads they could see. There were deer in the forest and these would have opened up the bush to some extent. When they did decide to come back they could not retrace their steps. We could hear faint calls far in the distance, but there were too few of us to venture in to lead them out. We raised the alarm. Millie took Susan back into town in the car and Mrs Beck came round to baby-sit her. Millie came out again in a Police car with siren screaming all

2 That house had been originally built by Captain Cargill after whom the city had been named. It was a very interesting house but we never had the opportunity of seeing through it.

3 While we were having lunch in Gore on the Sunday we announced to the Gore church that we were shifting to Invercargill, we had a phone call from the minister of the Esk St church saying he had heard the news and was offering us a warm welcome there. I suspect that Ian Gardiner was the informant either directly or indirectly - probably the former. Ian was an ardent admirer of Rev Cecil Boggis who was a noted expository preacher. In retrospect I think it may have been a mistake for us to go to Georgetown. In the central church we would have found much more compatible friendships. The whole atmosphere of the fellowship, the building itself and the music, would have been much more enjoyable for Millie in particular. In Georgetown we found some members with very rigid orthodox views.

the way out North Road. In the meantime we had contacted a local farmer, Bert Evans, who was a member of the church and he had gathered a group of locals to instigate a rescue. With their local knowledge they led us into the bush off a side road from where we could hear voices. Every 40 or 50 yards we would drop off a member of the search party within voice range of the previous anchor-man to guide us back out with the kids. After a lot of cooee-ing and halloo-ing we found them and led them out of the bush in the pitch dark. Our two boys had had enough and I carried Ron out piggy-back fashion with his arms tightly round my neck as if he would never let me go. David disdained to be carried and walked out on his own feet. We were extremely disappointed with some senior members of the class who were in this group for not having had more common sense. It was very close to midnight as we had a very welcome cup of tea at Evans home. Needless to say, we were very late home.

The church had only a hall with no church building. It served all purposes but was not very inspiring for normal services. Jack and Mrs Beck moved on in due course and we had two younger ministers just out of college in the persons of Roy Upton and his wife Jean, and Harold Pidwell and his wife. Harold later went on to be a lecturer at the Baptist College in Auckland and then as Registrar of the Melbourne College of Divinity. Ron was to see more of him in Baptist College. We had a long term friendship with Roy and Jean Upton with contacts from time to time around the country or at Baptist Assembly. Jean eventually became President of the Baptist Women's Missionary Union. Her Presidency was marred when she developed cancer and was ill during most of that year. - she died during the following year. She was a very lovely and capable person. We met up with Roy in his retirement in Morrinsville. One year we got no Christmas card from him - on making enquiries we found that he had died fairly suddenly when we were overseas and we had not heard the news. His cards were nearly always in the form of a thought provoking poem of his own composition.

The Baptist Churches of Invercargill had a combined Women's Fellowship and Millie enjoyed this as she there met up with women from other churches with whom she developed real empathy. It was here that Millie met up with Elsie Lepper and Nell Jackson and others with whom she clicked very strongly. After we returned to Gore, their meetings were rare but always a delight. Elsie, after the loss of her husband, built a small house in King Street in North Invercargill which was very like the style of our eventual house at Kelvin Heights and we met up with her occasionally there. After Millie's death I got a very touching letter from Elsie in which she sounded almost perplexed as to why Millie's death had happened. I was surprised as Elsie had a strong faith and I felt she would have understood that we are not exempt from death, that illness does come, and that all things work for good to those who love the Lord. Little did she know then that less than two years later I would be attending her own funeral at North Invercargill Presbyterian Church and wondering much the same thing.

Susan was only a baby when we went to Invercargill. The boys went to St George School at the south end of Pomona Street. Much later Susan was to join Ron at this school. It was quite a long walk for them but they used to come home for lunch. One day at lunch-

time Ron wanted his Mum to make him a marble bag. She said she would. At the end of lunch Ron asked about his marble bag. "Oh, I can't make it now for you to take this afternoon," she replied. "Don't you know its the marble season?" he said. 'Well, I still can't make it now, but I will for tomorrow," she told him - and she did. As the boys graduated from St George they went to Tweedsmuir Intermediate which was considerably closer to our home. David, I recall, took cookery as an optional subject. One of the things he learned to make was Lemon Meringue Pie which we enjoyed at home on a number of occasions. I think Ron only had two terms at Tweedsmuir before we returned to Gore. The boys had bikes and one day Ron's was pinched from outside the Scout Hall. We reported it to the Police and some time later were invited to go with them to a house in Tweed St where his bike was standing with several others on the verandah. He was a greatly relieved boy.

Dawn was born while we were in Invercargill. A friend at Georgetown, a single lady called Ruth Edmonds who was living with her father, was shifting house and Murray Thomas and I had arranged to help her with the moving on the Anzac Day holiday. About 5am Millie felt Dawn was on her way - about three weeks late - and I took her in to the Dee St Maternity Hospital. David was committed to attend the Dawn Service at the Cenotaph with the Scout Troop which he did independently. It was not the thing for husbands to attend births in those days so I went home for breakfast and to help with the shift. We had invited my Aunt Edna and Aunt Iza to keep house for us while Millie was in the Home so they were looking after Ron and Susan. Murray and I were shifting furniture and nowhere near a phone for quite a while. When I did phone I found that Dawn had certainly arrived. I went in soon after lunch to see Millie and there was Dawn in the nursery among all the other babies, eyes wide open and just looking around. Later the Ward Sister came to Millie and said, "Your baby is bursting her skin". Millie was puzzled. In actual fact, presumably because she was overdue, her skin was flaking - hardly 'bursting'.

Back home a week or two later, the church ladies were coming on afternoon visits to 'see the baby'. One such lady stayed on and on and Millie was thinking I would be home soon and she had not started making tea. When finally Mrs Meikle left she went into the kitchen to hear Auntie Edna say she had just made a Macaroni Cheese. Millie was still a bit weak after the birth and tired after the prolonged visit and to hear that news was a profound relief.

Dawn's birth was not all that happened during that period. Susan became sick - very lack-lustre and tired. We called the doctor - who did house visits in those days - and he diagnosed Pneumonia. So off I went to Kew Hospital for Susan to be admitted. She could probably have been looked after at home at any other time but was sent to Kew because of the imminence of Dawn's arrival. The children's ward must have been crowded. I was asked to put her to bed in the foyer and had to leave with her settled into her bed but not in a permanent position. She was exceedingly brave as she was not much over five years of age. When Dawn was born two days later I had a busy time, visiting Millie and Dawn at Dee St. and then going down to Kew to see Susan. I can recall hurrying to get to Kew, feeling frustrated about the speed limit but not wanting to be caught and held up in consequence. Visiting times were fairly limited and the hours were strict. There was a curious situation at

Kew. When the bell rang to end visiting, Susan would be very anxious for me to go as if she did not want me to get into trouble for over staying. It was a few days later we found that the sweets came round immediately after visitors left and she did not want to miss out! It is interesting to compare the strictness of visiting times in hospitals at that time with the situation today where parents have continual access to their kids in hospital. I found out one day when I had been away in Gore that Auntie Edna had been down to visit Susan. She had checked up on the hospital bus schedule and found out where she could catch it. She was that kind of person.

In consequence of her connection with the Bible Class Millie and I got involved with Easter Camps. These were at first held in a variety of places, such as Winton and Wyndham schools. One year at Winton Primary School, Millie was camp cook with Muriel Dark and we had arranged to borrow a caravan from a church member. It was a very robust one and it was just as well we were not going too far as it was heavy to pull. The boys had gone to Gore to stay with Grandma and Grandad, and Millie, Susan and I occupied the caravan. The speaker at this camp was Rev Bob Thompson, then a lecturer at Baptist College and later to become Principal. He was very good value. I recall two boys from Gore who were out to make mischief - Albert and Maurice Bredin. I recall them making it difficult to get camp settled down for the night - more just simple mischief than serious trouble. I believe before the weekend was out Albert in particular was seriously moved by the messages. At the conclusion of the weekend we had to get that caravan back to its site near the Stead St. bridge in town.

Muriel and Bert Dark were long-time friends and were also close friends of the Gardiners - I had known them both in Invercargill before the war.⁴ I recall a party at Ian and Phyllis Gardiner's some years before at which Bert and Muriel were present. One of the party games involved one member going out while the rest selected some action to be silently mimed by the victim. Bert was the actor and the action was 'Catching, killing, and cleaning a chicken'. Bert gave a very realistic mime of stalking and catching the chicken, wringing its neck, plucking it and removing its entrails with very exaggerated actions while the group deliberately guessed all kinds of alternative wrong answers to his mounting frustration. It was hilarious - for the rest of us if not for Bert.

In the 1960s the Baptists of Southland purchased a property at Riverton Rocks and moved buildings on to it that they had purchased from the work camp from the Bluff harbour project. These buildings required some renovation and there was a series of working bees to do this. We were Camp Parents at Riverton one year. Camp inspection was a daily occurrence to ensure that a decent standard of cleanliness was kept. On one of these inspections the senior girls dormitory had a pile of dust in the centre of the room with a placard reading. "God made Man from the dust of the earth, please use this to send us a Man."⁵ It reminds me of the Peter Marshall story of the little boy who asked his Mummy if God made man from dust and did we return to dust when we died. "Why do you ask?" "Well, Mummy, there must be a man either coming or going under my bed".

⁴ Muriel was an ex- Gore girl who had been in the Sunday School there many years before. Her maiden name had been Harrison and her younger sister is Hazel Johnston, married to Alex Johnston, a nephew of Andrew Johnston.

⁵ All of those girls eventually 'found a man' except one who became a missionary nurse in Papua New Guinea. The missionary nurse was 'found' in 2004 by a widower and they are now happily married.

In our first year in Invercargill we were involved with an Easter Camp and Winnie took the children to Gore to spend Easter with my Mother and Father. They went by train, leaving Invercargill about 1.30pm. We took them to the station. Susan was only two and was wearing a jumper suit with long overpants. The elastic round the waist was perishing and a lot of the stretch had gone. As she hurried along the platform to the train with her arms full of her treasured possessions her pants kept slipping down. She kept having to stop and pull them up, one-handed and not very successfully with the boys calling for her to hurry up. Winnie told us later that once they were on the train, Susan, sitting back in the seat with her legs stretched straight out in front of her, said to Winnie, "Isn't this nice travel?"

Invercargill was a good place for family outings. Oreti Beach was only six miles out of town and was a popular place for a swim on a hot day. One Sunday afternoon we went out to the beach. David, Ron and two-year-old Susan, already in togs, were straight out of the car and into the water. The boys, of course, were soon well ahead of Susan and she was trying to keep up. Oreti Beach is noted for the rollers that come in even on a relatively calm sunny day. The boys coped very well, but the little girl got knocked off her feet by each incoming wave. She would just get to her feet when the next wave would keel her over again. The boys were quite unaware of what was going on - the noise of the waves breaking prevented them from hearing her cries or my toots on the horn. After a few waves had done their worst, I decided this was getting dangerous so I hopped out of the car and dashed into the water to the rescue, still in my trousers, shoes and socks! It was a bit uncomfortable on the way home. I learnt afterwards that my rescue had been seen by some members of the Georgetown congregation. There was a Scout camp at Fosbender Park just over the Oreti river bridge and the boys spent time there occasionally. They were both in the Georgetown Scout Troop and I found myself on the committee for a while. Sometimes the Saturday outings involved the young folk from church - at other times on our own. Much fun was had sliding down the sandhills at Oreti, often on a sack pulled by Dad. I recall one expedition out to the white gravel deposits near Dacre where we got some gravel for the strip between the concrete runways of the drive.

We had started having annual holidays at Queenstown even before we went to Invercargill, renting one of Ritchies Flats in Shotover Street. We had the front one and Adam and Jean Nichol used to take the one immediately behind. Their daughter Beth and friend Ann Johnston often had fun with our boys and Susan, although they were somewhat older. We were handy to town and the children were often sent to get milk in a billy-can or a loaf of bread. The bread was baked on site and was always very fresh. The old type of half-loaves had a soft end and this fresh soft doughy end was often very sunken by the time it got home as a result of hungry picking fingers. The event of the day was the departure of the Earnslaw in the morning for Glenorchy and the Routeburn trip, returning again in the late afternoon. Often the children would go down to see it off in the morning or arriving home in the evening. We could see it easily from our lounge window. There were two big attractions for us in Queenstown at that time. One was the beach at Frankton, very undeveloped at the time, where the shallowness of the water meant that it was much warmer than the lake generally. Sunny days were whiled away on this beach with the children spending

most of the time in the water. Changing into and out of swim togs was done among the gooseberry bushes and lupins and many a sneak feed of gooseberries was taken. Dawn was a bit of a Water Nymph, getting into the water on arrival and almost having to be dragged out when we were leaving. We shared many of these days with the Gardiner, Hamilton, and Ernie Gardyne families. The other attraction was the Strawberry Gardens up at Fernhill. There were no houses there then and the gravel road up was very steep with a sharp turn where the gravel always seemed very loose and there was some wheel-spin. Strawberries and cream at the Thomson's garden were very popular on a hot day.

A big day out was the steamer journey up the lake with the bus trip at the end to Routeburn. There was no road to Glenorchy, so the Earnslaw was the supply vessel for all the lakeside sheep stations. Stops would be made at Mt Nicholas, Mt Crichton, Rere Lake, Glenorchy and Kinloch. Farm supplies, fertiliser, sheep, vehicles and wool on the homeward trip could be part of the cargo on any day. At Kinloch, those who were going to Routeburn would pile aboard Harry Bryant's buses. In good weather these were open-topped and provided a wonderful view of the mountains surrounding the Dart River. I recall Ron lying prone crosswise on the parcel shelf at the back of the coach. A few miles up the road, after passing through patches of beech forest, the road turned sharply left up the steep climb into the Routeburn. In the beech forest the driver would point out to us the different varieties of beech. Bryant's had a shelter building at Routeburn and would provide a cup of tea. There was time for a foray across the river by swing bridge and a short trek up the Routeburn Track. This track eventually led to Lake Mackenzie and Key Summit on the Te Anau - Milford road. At the end of the day there was the nearly two-hour trip back to Queenstown in the lowering sunlight of a perfect day. Children would be tired and showing signs of sun and wind. Not all days were perfect and we have been on the trip in steady rain with no views of the surrounding mountains.

In January the Presbyterian Church would hire the boat for their annual Sunday School picnic to which holiday visitors were invited. I recall one such day at Mt Nicholas when the family of our Gore minister, Frank Duncan, were with us. Their boys and ours were competing in the races - flat-race, sack-race and three-legged-race - and a lot of fun was had by all. Another year the picnic was held at Mt Crichton. At the end of the day there was the 'marathon' which was an all-comers race round a fairly large field. Robert Gardiner was about six and a good runner. As a smaller boy he was given a start and set a good pace out in the lead. In the last home straight Robert was still in the lead being egged on by Ian and Ivan in the crowd when he came to a dip in the field. He ran down into the dip and ran safely along a few yards of flat ground but when he came to the rise out of it his legs just collapsed under him. "My had it, My had it", he kept saying. He finally picked himself up but did not win the race.

So those were happy days back in the 1950s. The trip from Gore was a long hot one in those summer days. Very little of the road was sealed at first, but a stretch was being completed each year and the dusty corrugated gravel portion was growing shorter. I always enjoyed the trip up from Invercargill to Lumsden through a lovely part of the Southland plain with picturesque homesteads along the road. Many of these homesteads had stands

of beautiful English trees in almost parklike settings. One got lovely views both north and south from the top of the Caroline Hill between Dipton and Lumsden. Beyond Lumsden the hills began to press in with a rugged beauty of their own and there was always excitement in the car at the first sight of the lake. "I was first to see the lake!" was inevitably shouted by one of the kids to the dismay of those who missed. We enjoyed the Central Otago weather. Once in our first car, a Morris 8, Millie left Gore with a winter coat, warm gloves, and a scarf. It was like a strip tease. First, off came the scarf; past Lumsden, off came the gloves; near Kingston, off came the coat. The holiday had begun.

Changes in our life were to come. In July 1958 Millie's mother Emma Haigh ventured on a visit to her daughter away down in The Antipodes. This must have taken a great deal of courage. She came by sea on one of The New Zealand Shipping Company's liners. We parked the children with friends and went up to Wellington to meet her. She had not had a very happy voyage. The sea had been rough through the Bay of Biscay and she was not in the most comfortable part of the ship. Before she left England there had been a waterside strike and there were a few days' delay in sailing. One of her girls had come with her to London. The shipping people said that she could go back home until things settled down and the ship was actually sailing. "No," she said, "If I go home I will not come back". So she and Marjorie did some sight seeing in London.

After her arrival and before leaving Wellington for Lyttelton by ferry, we took her into the shipping office to book her return journey. We struck a very helpful man, who reserved a cabin amidships, close to the lounge and also handy to the restaurant. Being amidships she would experience less motion in the event of rough weather. From Wellington we crossed by ferry and then boarded the train for Invercargill, an all-day trip. She became part of our family for the next ten months and learned about Millie's life in New Zealand. For a 76-year-old she coped with the travel and the different life very well indeed. Every so often she would have a severe bout of homesickness which always made her physically sick and she would have a miserable day or so. But she would bounce back and be cheerful again.

That summer we planned a North Island trip to show her something of our country. However, in December Susan contracted hepatitis and was confined to the house. The doctor indicated that the disease would just have to run its course and we were to check the colour of her urine to monitor the progress of the infection. Grandma Haigh prescribed Parsley Tea which we gave Susan to drink. The leaves were cut up very fine and steeped in boiling water. Hepatitis discolours the urine and Dr Howell said she could not travel till it was clear. It did clear eventually but he was skeptical and we had to produce a specimen to convince him. Was it the parsley? Who knows? Susan probably still remembers the horrible flavour. So we started off on our trip by car. I think we spent the first night at the Brydone Hotel in Oamaru. On the ferry from Lyttelton to Wellington Ron was mildly sick. Seasickness? The next day we drove to Hawera and booked into a hotel. Ron was again sick that night and we realised it was hepatitis. He had a very miserable time the next day travelling from Hawera to Hamilton, where we had rented a house for three weeks. The road was very winding virtually all the way but it seemed best that we should push on and get to our base. The journey was magnificent, firstly along the coast with Mount Egmont's snow-capped

peak; then over Mt Messenger, a very beautiful part, and through typical North Island hill country to Taumarunui; then into the fertile King Country and the Waikato. We actually stayed only two-and-a-half weeks as we needed some of the time for travel. We kept very quiet for the next few days because of Ron's infection. The children swam in Lake Rotoiti in the city but Ron was very disconsolate as we would not let him in the water. He recovered fairly quickly and we started going further afield. We packed night clothes and went to Rotorua and were able to book into Crowther House even with our mixed family. Emma thoroughly enjoyed the Maori concert on our last night. She also greatly enjoyed the visit to Whakarewarewa, though she thought it was very weird. We have a mental picture of her running laughing from the spray of Pohutu Geyser which obligingly erupted for her. We returned to our rented house in Hamilton after the Maori show. Coming out of Rotorua David wanted the car stopped and threw up his dinner on the side of the road. Fortunately that was all the problem he had. We were so very thankful that Grandma escaped the bug. With a somewhat easily upset tummy, she could have been really ill. We also went to Auckland for a night and saw some of the sights of the city before returning to Hamilton. We were fortunate to find a motel close in on Gt South Road in Newmarket which was run by a Lancashire lady - she and Emma got on famously. At Bulls we stopped for a cup of tea at the Bridge Cafe and found that it was also run by a Lancashire couple. These incidents all helped Emma to enjoy the holiday. The whole trip was very good but in a tape spoken later before her return home to England she talked of always having to move on to the next place. "It was go, go, go," she said.

At the end of her stay in May 1959 we again took her up to Wellington to catch her boat. She settled into her cabin well and liked it. There were flowers waiting for her in it. On her first day at sea a lady about her own age said, "You must be Emma Kirby," using her maiden name. It was a former classmate from primary school. She very much enjoyed this company, entered into shipboard life and even won the Table Tennis competition. She was a tough competitor but her game was more Ping Pong than Table Tennis. So she had a very much better trip home and was very proud of her accomplishment in making the visit. It was a pity we were not living in Gore during her visit as the people she had heard most about were all resident there. However we did get to see them as often as possible and the Hamiltons and Gardiners frequently recalled her visit with pleasure. They were also pleased for Millie in having her mother here. Dawn was about fifteen months old when she came and just turned two before she left. She was a favourite with her Grandmother - just at that appealing age.

Susan had the opportunity of seeing her Grandma again at Christmas 1977 not long before she died in February 1978 at the age of 97. By that time Emma's memory was a bit fogged and she was very deaf. When Susan said she came from New Zealand, Emma told her that she had a daughter in New Zealand. Susan replied that she was in fact the daughter of that daughter of Emma's in New Zealand. Not entirely sure that Emma had got that quite straight, Susan went on to talk about the difference between England and New Zealand. She said that when it is day in England it was night in New Zealand. Emma took a moment to take this in and then said, "I didn't find it like that when I was in New Zealand." I mentioned her deafness. Susan was well aware of the commitment Marjorie and Winnie

were making to look after their mother, and deliberately took her attention by talking to her, necessarily in a loud voice, to free her Aunties to get on with housework. Susan has a recollection of Winnie being upstairs tidying or cleaning and hearing her chuckles coming down the stairs at some of these funny situations. We were delighted out here in New Zealand that Susan had gone over and had that time with her Grandma and Aunties. She also shared in one of the typical Christmas parties which Millie had talked about year after year during Susan's growing up. Emma was a very fine woman.

Our time in Invercargill was to come to an end. Late in 1969 a division of opinion - more accurately a row - in the partnership came to a head and steps were put in hand to split up the practice. This was to involve me in taking over part of the Gore practice and residing in Gore for the purpose. It was then that we found that our very lovely property was hard to sell in South Invercargill. Not only was this the case but a good property with four bedrooms was hard to find in Gore. As I recall it took three or four months from putting the house on the market before it was sold. Eventually a buyer was found who was only prepared to pay about £200 less than we had paid for it. We were not unduly perturbed. It was a lovely home and we enjoyed living in it very much indeed and felt we had had our money's worth. The boys had enjoyed a lovely room in which to spend their young years, Susan had her own room, if small, and Dawn slept in the downstairs bedroom until we came to Gore shortly before she turned two. We had borrowed a cot for her to sleep in. It was capable of being disassembled and as a result was not very rigid. Dawn discovered that if she swayed in the cot it would make a noise. She would go to sleep swaying and Mum and Dad upstairs were often disturbed by the rattling of the cot. We would go down and find her asleep, shift her position and go back to bed. Sometimes this worked but often she started again after a short while. The answer was to put her into the full single bed at a fairly early age. As soon as we did so we were relieved of the disturbance and I think she actually slept better - and we were able to return the cot.

We were scheduled to move from Invercargill on the 1st August 1959 and had indicated to the purchasers that we would be clear of the house by 10.30am. Our movers, Empire Forwarding, had loaded up the major items of furniture the day before and had cleared out the balance by about 9.15am. We had intended to finally clean and check the house before the promised clearance at 10.30. Unfortunately our driver saw the newcomers drive up with three small trucks, moved his truck out of the driveway to give them access, and they started moving their stuff in right away. In the end we did a fairly cursory check over and left them to it but it was rather disconcerting. I wished I could have stopped our driver from moving out but did not know he had done so until the new owners started coming in. So we left Invercargill behind us and set out for Gore again. Millie had approached the need to go to Invercargill very positively and had made the most of it there but I am sure her heart was singing when she found we were coming back to Gore.

Accountancy in Gore

Sometime early in 1959 a difference of opinion arose between Murray Malloch and Jim Henderson. I never learned details of the row which blew up but it was obvious from the negotiations that followed that relations were strained indeed. The plan which emerged was that Jim would take his proportionate share of the gross fees of the partnership in the form of clients with whom he had developed a personal relationship. I was offered approximately a half share of the gross fees of the Gore business. Murray Malloch and Jack McClean would take over the balance of the Invercargill gross fees and the other half of the Gore clients.

The question immediately arises as to why I was dropping out of the partnership, particularly as the firm was retaining part of the Gore business. I think the answer to that lay in my attitude to business and personal interests - those in my case being particularly my Christian interests. Both Murray and Jack were members of Presbyterian churches - in fact, treasurers of their respective congregations - and held strong Christian convictions. However they were also totally committed businessmen. I feel, in retrospect -and to some extent felt at the time - that they took the opportunity of the break-up to remove me from the partnership. Perhaps that is an unnecessarily blunt way of putting it but I am sure that was the object. I think both of them were more efficient than me. I know that Murray had a lot of respect for me but I think he thought I was not sufficiently dedicated to business. Mrs Malloch told me years later at her husband's funeral that he had a lot of respect for me and I believed her. Sensing the way the situation lay I was quite happy to accept it and venture out on my own. During the course of the division process, Jim Henderson phoned me one night suggesting we talk about combining our shares and joining forces, perhaps taking over the full Gore business. I gave him a firm negative to that suggestion out of respect and loyalty to Murray who had initially given me my chance. In retrospect I think I may have been hasty in doing so.¹

¹ Jim Henderson took with him Wattie Adam who was a senior employee and formed a partnership with him. The firm of

Dividing the business into three parts involved many night meetings. I was in Gore by this time and made many late trips home after these sessions. So far as Gore was concerned Murray and I went through the list of clients name by name, he choosing clients with whom he had a long association and I choosing clients with whom I had built a relationship. At the end we just notified the clients of the impending change and to whom their work had been allocated. There were extremely few changes to this allocation. However, three or four years later one client who had been left with Murray said he and his brother were very disappointed not to come with me. I told him that if they had said so then, the choice would have been theirs to make. At that later stage, having got used to the change, he thought it was too late to do anything. I heard of others later who were of the same feeling.

Staff were allocated to each section by negotiation. Murray and Jack had offered to let me take over the lease of the Gore office and had decided to build a new office for themselves in Ashton St. Their new office was not ready by the time of the change over on 1 April 1960 so we had the awkward situation of Murray interviewing his clients in my office. He took Jim McLennan with him which I thought was fair. He had also specially requested Jessie Lindsay for his office so as to give his clients some continuity of personnel. Some years later I heard from Jessie's Dad that she had been very disappointed at this as she considered she had been taken on by me and was my employee. A year or two after hearing this I visited her with an offer to come back and join me. She rather sadly said it would not be fair to me as she would not be able to continue working for very long. She had cancer and died only a year or eighteen months later. I was very sad that she had not seen fit to talk to me at the time of the split. I'm sure she would have said as much to Murray but he must have talked her round.

I was rather sad that such a disagreement had occurred. There was a lot of drama and tension. The atmosphere in the meetings to arrange the dissolution was very frigid at times but to their credit the parties never let their feelings erupt while in conference. The many night meetings to work out the dissolution of the partnership were a considerable strain involving me in many night journeys to Invercargill and late returns. I think for Murray Malloch it must have been very disappointing to see the empire he had developed crumble around his feet. For myself, I had mixed feelings. I had been happy in the partnership. Certainly I had been alone in Gore and had missed out on informal partner conferences and discussions but there had been the backing of the larger association when needed. The decision that I was to take over on my own implied that I had come short in some way. However, I believed it was as much an ideological difference as a business one. I felt that the business was taking all the time the rest of my life could afford and I was not prepared to sacrifice my church and christian commitments for the sake of business.

There were, however, some bright spots for us. Millie and I would be coming back to Gore and this would be a bonus. I would have independence and would be more free to chart my own course. In hindsight, I realise that I would probably not have gone into local

Henderson Adam & Co commanded respect in Invercargill. Both Jim and Wattie died at a relatively young age, though I think Wattie had some time in retirement. Jim had connections through his wife to the Paterson family. When the partnership split Jack Burns took his personal work to Henderson Adam & Co because of this relationship but left me to wind up his brother's estate of which he was a Trustee.

government had I been in partnership on the original basis or even if I had taken up Jim Henderson's offer to amalgamate Gore with his part of the practice. Again with hindsight, I was fully convinced that I was in God's will in accepting the Mayoralty - the signs were so clear. Maybe decisions being made then were in line with God's later plans for my life. I just know, now, that I have been happy with the turnings in my life at various stages, unexpected as some of them were.

Malloch McClean & Co opened up in Ashton St in their new offices. Jim McLennan, who had gained all of his office experience with me became the senior accountant in Gore and Murray came regularly to interview clients. Jim had started with me some years earlier and had completed his exams by correspondence and gradually built up his experience and ability to deal with clients. Jim's status and confidence developed and their staff grew as was the case with me. From outside observation he continued to do well for Mallochs under the direction of Murray Malloch in the early stages and then more independently as Murray gradually moved into semi-retirement. It was very sad that Jim developed cancer at a relatively early age and died in 1985 when he was only about fifty-five years old. In Invercargill the firm went on from strength to strength. Murray Malloch's name was still a strong influence but Jack McClean was a very efficient operator and very pleasant with clients so the firm prospered. The principals of the firm now include his son Jeremy. I have maintained contact with Jack and Vyvienne from time to time over the years and have regarded them as good friends.

I operated as Ivan G. Elder ACA, Chartered Accountant.

As well as having to share the office with Mallochs, those three months in 1960 were a nightmare for me for another reason. The Inland Revenue Dept had decided to send a group of Tax Inspectors into country towns to carry out multiple inspections of farmer clients. Their first step was to go to the stock firms to glean details of wool, dags, lambs and other stock in the name of casual clients. For the most part these were in the name of wives or children of the farmer and were often a reward for services given on the farm. With plucked wool the story was that during lambing the shepherd could not touch a dead sheep for fear of carrying infection to the lambing flock. The wives or family members would be told, "If you want to pluck these smelly dead sheep you can have the wool." Pet lambs or calves which were raised entirely by the wife or children also came into this mix. The Inland Revenue Dept took the line that the wool and animals were the property of the farmer and not of the family member and therefore assessed him for tax on the amount received. Often if the sale came to our notice when doing accounts we would bring in the proceeds of the wool as income and contra this by a debit to wages. This was an acceptable treatment although later with the introduction of PAYE tax on wages it did not work.

The Dept sent fifteen inspectors for six weeks and they were followed by a fresh batch for a second six-week block. We called them the Rugby Fifteens. It necessitated me having sessions with the inspector followed by a final interview with the inspector and the client together. Although the inspector often had incontrovertible facts, I nevertheless had to protect my client wherever possible. I remember one dreadful day when I started

with an inspector and one of my clients at 8.30am and then had five other clients in similar situations that day, finishing about 6.30pm. There were several prosecutions for failure to declare income - of course once they were charged it was their barrister's job to assist them in their defence.

One case I recall involved two brothers in partnership who were good farmers on a fairly large property. The inspectors had found a fair number of casual sales of dead wool and dags in the names of various members of the family. The two brothers were prosecuted as the size of the property meant that substantial sums of undeclared income were involved. After the case had been decided they revealed to me that their sheep numbers had been appreciably understated in the stock on hand figures. This had been done without our knowledge in order to save some tax. Or so they thought - in actual fact the saving was virtually a one-off. It did not benefit them in later years but simply increased the problem of transferring the stock on sale or retirement later. They felt that they had got away with something in spite of the prosecution. We instituted a programme of gradually bringing up the numbers to a more realistic figure.

Eventually the trauma of the tax inspectors and the sharing of the office with Malloch, McClean and Co came to an end and the experience of being a sole practitioner began. It was good to be independent but this came at the cost of carrying the sole responsibility for the work, for the employees, for finance and for the clients. Looking back, I can say I enjoyed being independent and building my own relationship with my clients. Many of them knew my family very well, others by reputation only. That fact did me no harm as my parents were well respected citizens despite being thought to be 'religious' and a bit odd in a Presbyterian area by being Baptists. My father had done extensive lay preaching in Presbyterian parishes and was known in a wide range of districts.

I had to build up my own connections with clients and to assure them I could do a good job, look after their interests and give them good advice. I quickly found one disadvantage. I had no one with whom to discuss any problems which may have arisen. It was true that I had Ted Maloney, but he was younger and relatively inexperienced and not very knowledgeable concerning tax matters. So I was indeed pretty much on my own. It was a good thing that senior practitioners were very willing to be consulted on serious matters, though I seldom took advantage of this. Much later I had to consult a top accountant in Dunedin about an intricate accountancy exercise and found him very helpful. Being full time in Gore proved to be very helpful. I began to build a relationship with the local stock firm managers and solicitors. Many times over the years I would have to consult with them concerning mutual clients' affairs.

Staff was now my sole responsibility. At times it was not a simple task. By this stage the shortage of juniors was not so acute and one could expect more than one reply to a job advertisement. Ted Maloney was a very great help. He boarded with a Mrs Bedwell in Ardwick St next door to the Baptist Church and found this a home away from home². He

2 It is of passing interest to record that his landlady left him the house when she died. He rented it for some years and eventually sold it to the Baptist Church. I think my connection with him made him favourably disposed to the church and my recollection is that the price was very reasonable. The old house was demolished to make way for the Baptist Church Centre opened in the late sixties, and

carried out most of the coding and preparation of clients' accounts while I did the interviewing and finalising. Ted was a very steady worker and achieved a good volume of work. He also handled casual callers when I was busy interviewing, particularly in the matter of receiving information. There was always a big volume of material waiting for processing.

Typing of the finished accounts was often a bottleneck. They were typed by hand with two carbon-copies. Frequently a copy had to be supplied to a bank or stock firm and a fourth carbon copy would be made. If a copy was required for anyone else then two strikes had to be made. The problem was tackled in three ways. First, other girls helped with extra typing in any spare time. Second, the typist would do overtime two or three nights a week. Third, a part-time extra typist would be employed. One such part-time typist later became full-time and went on to be employed by Macdonald and Associates. She graduated on to clerical work. The special skills required to get these annual accounts typed were illustrated by the comment of a girl who was a typist in a legal office. She was used to the straightforward language of the legal work and was not prepared to take on a job with a majority of figure typing.

These were some of the immediate consequences arising from the dissolution of partnership and starting out alone. I had no back-up from Invercargill for loan of staff, for help with typing, and in many other ways. However, apart from that awkward three months with Murray meeting his clients in my office, it went very smoothly. In some respects I was surprised that the clients accepted being put through the drafting race, in farming terms, so meekly.

Accounting machines were coming in. The firm in Invercargill had earlier updated their machines and the older one had been shifted to Gore - I had taken it over as part of the dissolution. It was a 27-total Burroughs machine with a wide carriage and was used with an analysis sheet where details of payments were required and with a paper roll for the multitude of ordinary payments requiring no extra detail. The staffing of this machine was a problem until one night my mother mentioned that my niece Grace Nicholson was thinking of leaving High School. I contacted her and offered her the job. She accepted and I gathered that she was really boosted in her confidence because her Uncle Ivan had 'head hunted' her, as it were. Grace was quite an intelligent girl but was not confident in her own abilities. She became a very valuable member of the staff and carried a heavy load. The operation of analysing a client's year's work was carried out in two parts - the accounting machine work followed by the manual entering of quite a bit of detail onto the analysis sheet. These details were required by the accounting staff and could not be done by machine. It had always been my intention to have two operators for the accounting machine but keeping up the second machinist was difficult - at one stage Grace was carrying the total load. She was a very conscientious girl and I did not realise that in addition to her work at the office she was doing a lot of housework for her mother who was not very well and suffered from migraine headaches. A hint from my mother alerted me to the problem that had arisen during our very busy season and I had to take steps to relieve her of some which is now incorporated into the new church complex.

of the work.

Good staff was not easy to get. After Joe Davidson I was fortunate to get Valda Barrett to become the Wages and Telephone clerk. Her greater maturity helped to stabilise the other girls in the office. At one stage I had a problem. There were two good junior girls doing a great job but during a period where choice of workers was limited I had to hire two girls who turned out really badly. They greeted clients rather rudely and were lazy and talkative. Much of this could be seen by clients at the counter or in the waiting area. Sadly they affected the first two girls and there was a lot of wasted time spent in chattering and just not getting on with the job. Finally I called all four of them into my office for a dressing-down. After I had said my piece, one of the good girls said something like this. "Well, Mr Elder, I would just like to know what my job is. When I came I was the wages machinist and now I'm being asked to do this and to do that as well. Shouldn't I just be doing the machining." By the way machining included reconciling her machine balances with the bank balance and believe me this sometimes took quite a lot of time. "Well, Miss X," I said, "When you started work here you were on a certain wage according to the award. And every six months you got a raise and now your wage is more than when you started. And what were those increases for. They came as a result of your experience in the job and your maturity as you got older. Perhaps if you don't want more responsibility and work, you could just go back to the machinist's job for the pay you started on." She kept nodding at each point until the last. After some more telling off and stressing that the waste of time would have to stop, particularly in the presence of clients, I sent them back to their work. The telling off worked as within a couple of months both of the troublemakers left and the other girls settled down again.

On another occasion I got an application from George Wallace who was at that time clerk in charge of the office of Webb, Stark and Co in Gore. I contacted Murray Farley of the firm in Invercargill who spoke highly of George. George was ostensibly studying for his accountancy qualifications and I had in mind the possibility of his later joining in partnership. Murray Farley said he believed that George would never complete his exams and would therefore never qualify - he turned out to be quite right. Very recently I was at an Institute meeting in Invercargill when Murray Farley was presented with a certificate of fifty years membership. I talked with him briefly and confirmed to him that his opinion had been proven correct. At the same time I never regretted employing George. He brought with him a few clients from Webb Stark with whom he had been dealing and also had some other friendships which brought in work. He became Treasurer of the local St John Chapter, and was later inducted into the Order as a Serving Brother. He was a very good and reliable worker. I dealt with the interviews of most of the clients he worked with but he completed the whole job with the clients he had brought into the business. George was a Christian which helped to sustain a good harmony in the office. He did little, however, to supervise other staff. He tended to keep his head down - his production was considerable and his work always done well. Up until the time I sold the practice I invited him to use the office facilities for his St John work whenever it was convenient.

The business progressed. There was no quick influx of clients but it gradually grew

with a little natural increase from sons of clients and others. When Dick English left Gore to go to Christchurch some of his former clients transferred to me including Gavin Cruickshank, a former pupil of East Chatton school who had crossed the Atlantic with me in 1942. He had been an Air Gunner who were often referred to as 'Tail End Charlie'. Later his two sons became clients when they each took over half of their Dad's farm. I recall one farmer from Moa Flat who was referred to me by a Dunedin accountant for advice about estate planning. The particular accountant was Tony Anderson of Anderson & Co who were strong on Farm Accounting. Tony had felt it unwise for him to give estate advice as the client was married to his sister but he felt that some guidance was needed. The farmer was rapidly developing a fairly large hill country block and almost outrunning his available finances. He was a most pleasant chap and I enjoyed my relationship with him. He had two sons only one of whom was interested in farming, so he had quite a problem. Alan Chisholm was dealing with him when I sold the practice but sadly when I was overseas shortly afterwards he developed a severe lung condition caused by spray poisoning and suffered an early and painful death. His widow retired to Roxburgh.

Towards the end of the 1960's the growth of the business meant that more qualified help was needed. I advertised in the Accountants Journal and received some nibbles with one firm enquiry from a Dunedin accountant. Alan Chisholm came down for an interview and during our discussions certain references were made which resulted in my discovery that he was a Baptist. This probably made it easier for me to offer him a job with a view to future partnership if all went well. So Alan and his Dutch wife Marjike came to Gore and he joined the staff.

I also had a tentative enquiry from an accountant from Wellington who was treasurer of Ron's church at Newlands. After some contact he decided that he was not prepared to make the move south and our discussions came to an end. About a year or so ago when I was in Wellington I decided to attend the Sunday morning service at Wellington Central Baptist Church and took a seat beside a couple. We got talking before the start of the service and I found that he was the very man who had replied to my advertisement some thirty years earlier.

An earlier member of staff who should be mentioned was Ray Eddington. Ray worked with W F Young, a Secretary deeply involved with the Gore Racing Club. Ray operated the Totalisator at all Southland Racing and Trotting meetings. As most of these were at weekends he could do this work in addition to his full-time job with me. A few times a year there might be a mid-week meeting and he would take the day off. He was a first class worker with a good rapport with staff and with clients and was a very great help. He had a peculiar weakness of transposing figures, which occasionally made it difficult for him to balance a set of accounts. For example, if the amount was \$239.43 he might well transpose it as \$293.43 and it could take quite a lot of searching to find the error. When Millie and I went for our first trip overseas I left him in charge of the office for the period of three months. Crises are always likely to crop up in such a period and he phoned me at Blackpool to say that the typist had resigned. He had already located a typist, Rena Butel, and I authorised her appointment. Rena was from Ranfurly but had recently married Ivan

Butel, a local builder whose family originally came from the Maniototo. She was a very good typist but their marriage was not many months old when the usual occurred and we lost her services.

Later I had a junior accountancy clerk named David Reid. David was studying Accountancy and he was serious about it. I was encouraging him and usually allowed him some days off near exam time. David became a Christian and his christian life was fostered to quite an extent by George. He was a good worker and became a very great help in the office. His work was pretty accurate and he was very useful in keeping the basic accounts preparation ticking along. After three or four years he sensed a call to the ministry and left to go to the Melbourne Bible College. While regretting his loss from the office, I could hardly disapprove of his move as it seemed a very serious life change. I initiated a regular automatic payment to a trust account which George operated for his support during the period of his training. It was not a large amount but it was regular and I trust it was of help during his non-earning years. During the latter part of his training he became associated with a suburban Baptist Church in Melbourne in a part-time pastoral capacity and I think became full-time on completion of his course. I have gathered more latterly that the church has been unable to support him fully and he has taken up part-time accountancy work to help pay the bills.

I had a client named Harry White from Otama. Harry was a very good farmer on a fair sized farm up in the Otama Valley. He did a lot of livestock dealing, frequenting the stock sales and buying in lines of sheep and cattle which he thought were going cheap. He would put them on good feed, bring up their condition and put them back on the market again or send them to the freezing works. He did quite well with this trading. Unfortunately, keeping track of the various mobs and making sure the proceeds of those he had bought and later sold were in fact received took a lot of careful reconciliation. I did not have the time to spend on this close accounting work, so he was looked after by Ray who had more time free from clients and able to give him the necessary attention. Ray also had ideas of completing accountancy qualifications but eventually realised that he could get on quite well without. He had three young children and his wife did not drive so she often phoned him when he was needed to bring her into town. He eventually realised he would never be more than a senior clerk in a chartered accountant's office and applied for a position as Bursar of Christs College in Christchurch. George Wallace might have been able to take over Harry White's work but Harry decided that he would go to John Williams of Richmond and Bone who could give him the time he required. I understand Ray did a very good job for Christ's College. He was well fitted to mix with the kind of families that sent children to the school and he would have been an efficient administrator.³

Harry White was a committed Christian and conceived the idea of establishing a charitable trust into which he could transfer income free of tax. He formed his own business into the J H White Trust, one of the beneficiaries of which was the Otama Trust. The Trust

³ About the same period that Millie died a death notice announced the death of Ray's wife from cancer. I sent him a message of sympathy. I also received a message from him at the time of Millie's death. These are the only contacts I can remember since he left the office and went to Christchurch. I have heard that he has remarried.

Deed contained provisions for charitable purposes as one of the beneficiaries of the Trust as well as the usual provisions for family members. For many years he would apportion up to \$50,000 dollars to the Otama Trust and would allocate from this very substantial sums to missionary societies, churches and other charities. Lewis Mackay, a local farmer married to a cousin of Harry's, Harry and I were Trustees of Otama Trust and we had an annual meeting to decide on the allocation of these gifts. I recall that on one occasion on the way out to his home for one of these meetings I got a stone on my windscreen and had a cold ride the rest of the way there and home again. When the Baptist Church had some project on, I would raise its needs with the Trustees and some money might be given to the church.

Harry was also instrumental in forming the Waidale Trust. This was operated on a cooperative basis among a group of twenty or more Christian farmers. A line of young cattle would be bought and distributed among the members of the Group to rear through the season. The following year they would be sent to the works or sold elsewhere. As the cattle were owned by the Trust, the proceeds belonged to the Trust. The only contribution by the farmers was to provide the grazing and some minimal amount of animal health expense. Again the Group would have a meeting and allocate the profits each year to various missionary and church causes.⁴

An associate of Harry White's was Bruce Heslip. The Heslip family came from the Pukerau area and there was quite a large family. The parents and at least two single members of the family retired to a small farm property in Talbot Street in East Gore. Bruce was an employee of Harry's, was a keen Christian with Bible College training and the two got on very well together. As time went on, Harry decided to expand his land holding as he had four boys by this time who might want to farm. He was attracted to a property in a valley of the west Hokonuis at Glenure. This was bought by the J H White Trust in half-shares with Bruce who went to manage it. Bruce was married to Ngaire Butler who had been brought up next door to us in Broughton Street. A lot of development work was carried out at Glenure as the property had quite an area of tussock which was capable of being converted to grassland. After a number of years and as Harry's three boys grew older and indicated that they were going to be farmers, Harry got the option of another block of land near Balfour. The J H White Trust took up this opportunity and Bruce bought out the Trust's share in Glenure to help release Trust funds to buy the new property. Harry's sister's son from Timaru came in as manager and part-owner. When Harry took his accountancy work elsewhere at the time Ray Eddington left, I lost touch with his further developments but he made a success of the Glenure block and retired to Gore.

Another very interesting client in this period was Bill Walker of the Gore Construction Company. Bill was an entrepreneur. He developed basic plans for low-cost houses, both on-site and for transport to a final site. By having this fixed plan he was able to develop economies of scale and the repetitive nature of the components enabled them to be constructed speedily and efficiently. To keep up the volume of work in the permanent side

⁴ Harry was a bachelor until he was about forty when he met his future wife on a trip to Australia. They had four boys, one of whom had cerebral palsy and was considerably handicapped. This boy had a very good brain and learned to use a computer back in the very early years. He, too, was a strongly committed Christian. The other boys became farmers.

of the business he got involved in developing blocks of land on which to build the houses and this involved quite a lot of legal work. Obtaining approval for subdivisions required applications to the Council for planning approval and as Company Secretary I was involved in affixing the Common Seal of the company to various documents. I developed a good relationship with Bill and the accountancy side of things went well. When I was elected to Council in 1965 I realised that my involvement with his company and my membership of the Town Planning Committee would come into conflict. Whenever there was a Gore Construction item on the committee agenda I had to 'declare an interest' and refrain from discussion or voting and the same would apply at the subsequent Council meeting. This was not so bad when I was just a Councillor but when I was elected Mayor it was just going to be a thorough nuisance. Whenever a Gore Construction item came up I would have to 'declare an interest', vacate the chair to allow the Deputy Mayor take over, then have the control of the meeting revert to me after the item was dealt with. I decided to ask Bill to find another accountant as it would be very difficult for me. I had to take time to explain just how difficult it was to become. It was gratifying that he was quite hurt by my request and agreed to make the change only with some reluctance.

Local Government

The Borough Council elections were to be held in October of 1965. One Sunday morning I was in the vestry with the church secretary Ian Gardiner and our minister Barrie Hibbert after counting the offering. Talk turned to the election and they suggested I should think of standing. I would make a good councillor, they said, with my accountancy experience. I think it was suggested that Christians should not ignore this type of community involvement. We went our various ways but their comment stirred something in my mind over the next few days, though I think they forgot all about it. I talked it over with Millie and checked out the extent of the commitment that would be involved and we decided I should offer my name. Ian was pleasantly surprised when I took a nomination form for him to sign. Barrie was not immediately available but I met Les Thomson on the street and he was most willing to give me his signature. In hindsight, I realised this was a very good move as Les was a very respected member of the community and had been a member of Council many years before.

The election came round and a bit to my surprise I polled second overall to sitting Councillor Tom Shirley. I do not seem to have the figures for this first election but think Tom got something like 1850 votes while I had about 1750. I think I was second in every booth except Gore Main where I topped the poll. I can well recall the warm sense of appreciation at this result as this was where my community service had been displayed in the PTA. Elections are funny things. Voters like to know the people they vote for so the important thing is to be widely known. This is not achieved by service in a small congregation like our Baptist Church was in those days, although it could bring votes if you belonged to a larger church like St Andrews. Sitting councillors have an advantage and Tom Shirley had been prominent in the sports field in Rugby and Cricket as well as being the owner of a well-known paint shop in town. I was chuffed to be second to him. I am sure that having my practice operating in my own name, having a group of clients who trusted me and

operating a wages payment service through which many workers received their cheques all helped people to say, 'Ivan Elder, yes I know him - he will be O K.' Workers who collected wages from my office seldom actually saw me so any credit from that source was largely due to my staff doing a good job for them. It has occurred to me that if I had remained with Mallochs my own name would not have been so well known and I am sure that the firm would not have given me permission to stand.

Shortly after we came back to Gore about 1960 there was a series of fires in Gore. On one single night the Borough Office, the Pie Cart in Main Street and the Town Clerk's rented home in Crewe Street were all on fire at the same time. Sometime later there was another fire in the Council's temporary office which was below the offices of Smith Barton & Co , Solicitors. Serious damage was done on both occasions. There were also other fires around the town all of which seemed to occur at full moon. The suspicion grew that the fires were the work of an arsonist. Some very pointed press editorials were published pointing the finger of suspicion at the fairly recently appointed Town Clerk. This resulted in the alleged offender entering the office of the editor of the Ensign and threatening him with a gun over these, according to him, calumnies. The Town Clerk tendered his resignation and moved away from the district. The fires were never sheeted home to a culprit, whoever it was.

The town was in trouble with no Town Clerk and with nearly all of its records destroyed. The Town Clerk of Invercargill City came to the rescue and offered the services on loan of a promising clerk in the person of R G Winwood. He set about resurrecting the town records , with the very knowledgeable help of the treasurer Jim Smith. Jim had worked for the Council all of his working life and had a very good memory. The Council of the day decided to erect a temporary relocatable office on empty ground between the old Carnegie Library and the old Courthouse in Main Street. It was there that I went to see Gil Winwood five years later about the time commitment that being a councillor would involve. About two or three years after the fires the Council had virtually demanded that Gil Winwood accept the permanent position of Town Clerk and this was his position in 1965. Council had not stood still on the question of new Council Chambers and the erection of the office building on the former Hokonui Park was well under way. My name appears as a councillor on the Plaque in the foyer commemorating the opening of the building in July 1966. Perhaps I should say that the rationale of the Council siting the administration building on Hockey Park was with the intention that the area should be developed as a Civic Centre, with a hall and meeting rooms and eventually a theatre. This concept has been realised with the James Cumming Wing and the Senior Citizens Centre. I doubt very much that the theatre will ever eventuate. It is interesting that since that time the Kerridge Odeon group decided to sell the cinema in Irk Street and were persuaded by some very civic-minded people to sell it to the St James Theatre Trust. A considerable renovation and upgrading project was carried out at that time. A further renovation project raised something over two million dollars to provide a Fly Tower to enable full theatre shows to be staged in the theatre. There is no need now for the intended theatre adjacent to the Administration Building and the James Cumming Wing and this will leave a permanent open area of lawn which is very attractive.

The new Mayor was Jim McLeod who had won a landslide victory over Lyall Barron. The former Mayor, Bob Hankey, a retired farmer and prominent local National Party official, had stepped into office on the death of the long-serving mayor W G Mackay who had fallen asleep for the last time sitting in his chair by the fire early one evening. He was well known to me as a client and as a friend. His family has this quote on his tombstone, 'Let him who would be chief among you, be servant of all.'

Jim McLeod was the retiring manager of Reid and Gray Ltd, the agricultural machinery agents and was very prominent in the RSA over a number of years. His wide business experience and his knowledge of human nature acquired though the RSA fitted him well for the job. His time-availability after full retirement meant that Jim would come into the Town Clerk's office mid-morning to see if anything required attention and stay till lunch time. Gil had to carry on his work with the Mayor sitting looking on. I gathered later in 1972 that Gil wrote all of Jim McLeod's formal speeches. I remember him saying how relieved he was that he no longer had to do that for the new Mayor.

The Council had just completed and published the Town Plan Scheme and objections had been called for. I had been appointed as a member of the Finance Committee and the Town Planning Committee. Council had received about 146 objections and these had to be heard and considered. So the Committee was meeting three nights a week in the Courthouse hearing objections and deciding on recommendations to Council. This was hardly the workload that Gil had indicated to me before the election. However, we both knew that this was a temporary situation and that in the New Year the Council would get down to a more orderly routine.

The chairman of the Finance Committee was another Chartered Accountant, Dick English, with whom I had worked in the Land and Income Tax Dept in Wellington before the War. He was rather a bumptious person and a bit 'common', but he had done well with the finances in consultation with Gil Winwood. He remarked to me once that he had been on the Council long enough and that he was unlikely to continue unless it was to 'Wear the Robes' - that is as Mayor. I privately thought he was optimistic to think he could achieve that. A few years later he moved away to Christchurch and I gained some clients from his practice. The chairman of the Town Planning Committee was a retired builder called Eustace Thomas Evans who was known as 'Jim'. He had experience of building under the previous plan and regulations and made a pretty good fist of the job. I am pretty sure he was a first time Councillor as I was but he coped well. We had good advice from the Town Clerk and the Borough Engineer, Roy Buchanan.

I recall that after the poll the Town Clerk expressed his suspicion that Tom Shirley might not take the position of Deputy Mayor in which case it would then fall to me as next in line in the poll. Tom did take on the position which was just as well for me - there was enough on my plate. The three years fell into a routine and before long it was 1968 and another election was due.

The Deputy Mayor Tom Shirley did not seek reelection but instead stood for and was

elected to the Southland Harbour Board where he served as Gore representative for some years and later became Chairman. Jim McLeod was returned unopposed as Mayor. In the Council vote Ivan Elder topped the poll by almost 200 votes. Second was Peter Wood, a new candidate and a well-known local dentist with rural family associations whose interest in standing was the fluoridation issue. Other sitting councillors returned were Bob Briggs (rural mail contractor and Shona's father), Lin Petrie (later to be a very good Works Chairman), Dick English, Hugh Walker (local builder and later to be my Deputy Mayor) and Lyall Barron, the unsuccessful Mayoral candidate from the previous election. New Councillors were Hugh Walker, Theo Smyth and Bill Devine (an insurance agent, ardent Labour supporter and a very outspoken and confident person - he was usually very sound and treated me with respect and warmth). In accordance with precedent, I was elected Deputy Mayor and Chairman of Finance, was again a member of the Town Planning Committee and was made a Council Representative on the Gore High School Board of Governors. I was also made chairman of the James Cumming Trust Investigation Committee.

The question of fluoridation was under discussion at the time and this had been a considerable issue during the election. There was a strong division between the proponents of fluoridation and its opponents. Fluoridation occurs naturally in a few localities in the United States and it had been noted that teeth decay in these areas was minimal and that young people developed strong teeth. Many areas in the States had decided to fluoridate their water supplies with sodium fluoride, a manufactured substance. Opponents alleged that this contained carcinogenic qualities and that inserting it into the water would increase the risks of cancer in the population. Councillors were supplied with a lot of information on the subject from the Health Department which on balance suggested that the proven benefits of fluoridation outweighed the risks of adverse reactions. Some of the councillors felt that the matter should be decided by referendum so that the public could express its majority opinion. I was swayed by three main factors - the comprehensive information furnished by the Health Dept and the considered recommendation they made; the support of the dental profession who were closely in touch with the condition of children's teeth and who actively supported the scheme in spite of the fact that the reduction of dental caries would reduce their own work and income; the fact that as councillors we were elected to make decisions on behalf of the public with much more information and study than the majority of the public would give the matter. For this reason I felt that a referendum would be strongly influenced by a few enthusiasts in opposition by what would amount to scare propaganda.

In the debate I emphasised our responsibility as elected councillors to bring our informed opinion to the debate and decide the matter on the basis of expert advice. I was supported strongly by Peter Wood and one or two other councillors and the decision to fluoridate was made. I know that my stand influenced one or two councillors who were inclined to favour a referendum but who faced up to the challenge of making the decision. The main beneficiary in our family was Dawn, who grew up under fluoridation and grew the best teeth in the family.

A few years later some lobbyists in the States quoted the higher cancer statistics for

a particular mid-sized town where the incidence of cancer was higher than the national average. This issue was raised locally with the urge to stop injecting the fluoride. I wrote to the Health Dept about this paper and they replied that health authorities had investigated the claim. They discovered that the town in question was largely a retirement town with a higher than average age of population which would therefore be more likely to have a higher cancer rate than a normal age-mix area would have. This sounded very like Gore which had a higher average age also. It did not seem to me that the objectors case was proved and I took no action. Some time later again, I discovered that the fluoride equipment had broken down and no report had been made to Council by the engineer. In the term after my retirement the Council debated fluoridation again and the proposal to reintroduce it was defeated. So ended fluoridation for Gore.

I found the membership of the High School Board very interesting. The roll was running at a very high level as a result of the 'baby boom' after the war. Generally the school was running smoothly and the Board meetings pretty standard. About 1970 I was elected Chairman of the Board and felt it to be an honour to hold this position for my old school. It had come a long way from its days by the river when I was one of the three hundred or so pupils. During this time I would be consulted by the Rector, D N Y Olsen, when disciplinary problems arose. Doug Olsen tended to be a bit fiery and I found that a few hours' reflection often saw the situation resolved without drastic action.

The chairmanship of the James Cumming Investigation Committee was very interesting. James Cumming of Arthurton used to come to Gore by train to do business. The return train did not leave Gore till 6pm and he would have time to fill in after businesses had closed. There is a delightful story of him in Boyne Bros Stationers, the forerunners of Smiths Stationery. Prayne Boyne who operated the shop was a very competent retailer with everything very neat and done on time. He used to walk to work from East Gore, passing the shop to clear the mail from the box at the Post Office and then returning to open the shop door at 8.30am. If your watch had stopped you could set it by him! He was equally prompt at closing. One afternoon he still had a customer in the shop at 5.30pm. The customer was examining books and magazines and the time was getting on. Prayne had cashed up the cash register, had the cash tray ready to put away and was standing behind the counter for this last sale. Finally, James Cumming (for the customer was he) asked the time. When told it was 5.45pm he remarked that he had better get along to the station for his train and walked out without buying anything! James Cumming saw the need for a reading and writing room for farmers such as himself who were waiting for transport after shops had closed. A bachelor, he provided in his will quite a large sum of money to be used for this purpose. By the time of his death in the mid nineteen-forties motor transport had dramatically changed the situation. The amount of the bequest was inadequate for its intended purpose and the fund was accumulating in the Public Trust Office in-house investment fund.

The public hall situation in Gore at the time was inadequate for the growing town. It was conceived that the Cumming funds could be the basis of a public appeal for sufficient capital to establish a major public hall. A decision was made to seek Court approval to

vary the terms of the will to enable the fund to be combined with public donations to finance the building of a major hall complex. This hall with a reading/writing room would be available for the use of waiting farmers, though this was no longer a need. A fund-raising committee was set up to launch a public appeal. The Borough Council would be asked to provide a site and plan the appropriate structure. The Gore Lions Club agreed to establish the fund raising committee to carry out a district-wide appeal under the chairmanship of Gabriel Farry. This appeal was very successful and with court approval granted, the project became possible. My committee became the Planning Committee for the suitable hall.

This was no sinecure. To the original committee of myself, Jim Evans, Lin Petrie, Hugh Walker and Peter Wood, we added representatives of the Cumming Trust and one or two other groups and employed Owen Lawrence of Lawrence and Mollison, Invercargill, as architects. Lin Petrie was active in the Gore Repertory Society and had a very informed view of that type of possible use. Much work was done and Owen produced an upbeat plan which costed out far in excess of what our funds would allow. Owen Lawrence went overseas at this stage and the work was carried on by Alan Morrison who came up with a modified plan with a more straight-forward construction and eventually this was finalised. The hall was to consist of a main hall to seat up to 500 people with a raised stage and dressing rooms behind, a supper room to seat about 120 people, a lounge with more comfortable seating to seat about 100, an upper floor above the Supper Room and Lounge with five differing-sized meeting rooms and a theaterette to seat about 80 people, a well-equipped kitchen, caretakers office, ticket office in the foyer and toilet facilities.

We received two tenders from local firms with a significant difference between them - we decided to accept the lower. However because of the big difference the committee recommended that acceptance be subject to a confidential inspection of the lower tenderer's balance sheet by the mayor and the chairman of the committee (myself) to ensure their viability to complete the contract in case they had under-costed their price. This assurance was forthcoming and Jones and Cooper were awarded the contract in 1973.

During this term and particularly towards the end of it, Jim McLeod was having trouble with prostate cancer. He was carrying on bravely but needed to go into hospital for treatment from time to time. Gil Winwood said that during the Municipal Conference in Dunedin he was having bouts of severe pain which caused him to leave meetings. This came gradually to my notice and I was called on to deputise for him from time to time. One of these occasions was the farewell visit of the Governor General, Sir Arthur Porritt. He was a New Zealander by birth and had been a renowned athlete who had won a bronze medal at the Olympic Games. He trained as a doctor and was well known as a surgeon in England. He had proved an excellent governor. This was the first major official function Millie and I had experienced as acting Mayoress and Mayor and was rather a nervous occasion. Jim McLeod's wife Violet was a charming lady and was a very good hostess as Mayoress. There was a little embarrassment at first as she expected that she would have to hostess this occasion too. However, the Town clerk told her she had no standing in the absence of the Mayor and that Millie would be the hostess along with me as host. We softened the blow for Violet by making sure she had an invitation to attend and introducing her to Sir Arthur and Lady

Porritt at an appropriate time. It was a brief afternoon visit and we had afternoon tea in the Council Chambers. They were a very friendly and delightful couple to meet. Speeches were pretty informal. I did not wear the Mayoral chain as that is the sole prerogative of the Mayor. The occasion went off very well.

In October 1972 I was asked to deputise for the Mayor at the Golden Jubilee of the Gore Croquet Club on a Saturday afternoon in the dining room of Colony Catering, the old dairy factory at the foot of Broughton St hill. Jim McLeod was quite ill that week at home and the Mayor of Invercargill, Russell Miller, came up and visited him on the Friday night. Russell Miller was a practising surgeon at Southland Hospital though I do not think he had been Jim's surgeon. Jim was apparently very chuffed about this visit but on Saturday morning I learned that he had died during the night. When my turn came to speak at the Croquet Club Luncheon, I opened with the announcement of Jim's death and called for a minute of silence. This was Millie's and my first experience of representing the Borough at such a function. As I sat and listened to other speeches and read the notes about the Club, I was very impressed with the dedication of so many people over fifty years to fill the officer roles of President, Secretary, Treasurer and Club Captain in order to ensure the smooth working of the Club for so long. I told them so. The rest of the weekend was taken up with thinking about and preparing Jim's eulogy and taking time to go to church.

Jim's funeral was arranged for the following Tuesday and I had been asked by the family to give the eulogy at the service. Back in those days it was not customary for families to speak at their loved one's funeral so I obtained his background life details from the family and added my own comments about his public life. The funeral, held in St Andrews Church, was like a miniature state funeral and quite formal. The Councillors filed in at the last moment, paused briefly at the casket and took reserved seats just behind the family. The Mayoral chain was carried on a velvet pillow and placed on the casket for the service. This was my first experience of presenting a eulogy and it was a pretty nerve-wracking experience. The family expressed themselves as being happy with it – and who else matters. We do not seem to have kept a copy of the news reports of the funeral which attracted a fairly large crowd, well-filling the church. Jim was 72.

The consequences of Jim's death were pushed aside over the weekend but one or two councillors left me in no doubt as to who they wanted to step into his place.

OE in Mid-Life

We chose to go to England in 1970 because our Silver Wedding was to be on 27th June that year and we thought it would be nice to celebrate it with that branch of the family. In addition this was about the first time we could imagine a major trip overseas being achieved. We had been married in England. Millie had been away from her homeland for twenty years since her visit with the boys in 1950 and I felt she deserved to have her family around her. It meant that our own family could not share in the occasion but we felt that was unavoidable - we hoped they would share in later anniversaries.

We left Gore on 27th May for Dunedin and had a night in Auckland before flying out the next day. Our itinerary included stopovers in Fiji, Honolulu and San Francisco before heading to Manchester via New York. Fiji was a lovely stopover except that we arrived about midnight and left in the wee small hours just over 24 hours later. In the evening we attended a Fiji feast with Kava ceremony and entertainment. The day we spent in Fiji was Ron's birthday - we left Fiji at 1.35am on 30th May and arrived in Honolulu at 9.40am on 29th May so we got to celebrate his birthday all over again - that did not make him a day older or get him any extra presents! At breakfast in the hotel the first thing we were given upon placing our orders was a cup of coffee each in an American custom that was novel to us. We took a coach tour of the city and environs.

Our arrival in San Francisco caused us acute embarrassment. An American chaplain at the Invercargill Borstal, Rev Mervyn Betts, had insisted that we should stay with friends of his in that city. He offered to let them know of our coming, took a note of our arrival time and gave us their telephone number. There was no sign of them at the airport so we phoned them. They had no knowledge of us whatsoever - he had never made contact with them. We said we would make other arrangements but she said, no, she would come for us, we would be most welcome but it might be an hour before she could be at the airport if we

were prepared to wait. We decided to go to the café for coffee, dragging all our baggage with us. After coffee I realised I had left my Trilby hat where we had been waiting before. I went back but it was not where it had been left. I enquired at the baggage office and the attendant's face broke into a big smile as he asked "The one with the bullet hole in it?" The 'bullet hole' was made by Millie's stiletto heel at John and Janet's wedding about five months earlier at the reception in a marquee. I had put my hat under Millie's chair when we sat down knowing that I would be getting up to take photos of the entrance of the bridal party. When they came in ALL the people stood up. Millie stepped back slightly, the ground was soft under the hat so her heel went straight through the brim. The hole was not obvious while I was wearing the hat but was easily seen when it was off. The attendant had drawn his own conclusions.

Mervyn's friends the Bells were very nice though we felt very embarrassed at the hole we had landed them in. They were Baptists and took us to church with them the next morning which was a Sunday. We joined in their All-Ages Sunday School class before the service. There were separate classes for men and women and there must have been 25 or 30 in the men's group I attended. The church was considering a candidate for the vacancy in the pastorate, a minister who had preached with a view to a call just previously. At the congregational meeting after the service our host, Monte Bell, brought a recommendation from the Deacons Court that a call be not approved without really spelling out the reasons. The congregation accepted this resolution without demur. I was very interested in the whole procedure and maybe intrigued that there was no discussion or questioning by the ordinary members. The Bell's home was on the hills overlooking San Francisco Airport. The night was very hot which made it difficult for sleeping. Planes were taking off and landing until very late at night - at 6am after only a six-hour break the jets started taking off in rapid succession. I understood that the airport was closed after midnight for six hours because of the nearby residences. The Bells treated us very well, taking us to a restaurant where some 20 or 30 members of the congregation regularly met after service for lunch. This was a very friendly group and made for good fellowship. They then took us for a tour round the city, down as far as the Golden Gate Bridge at the harbour entrance, round Chinatown and Fishtown to see the cable cars (which reminded me of Dunedin) and eventually to the airport. We got very nervous as to whether we would be late for our flight but they were very casual about that - they got us there on time.

We had a very interesting trip across America, looking down from a great height first at the Sierra Nevada and Rocky Mountain ranges, then across the western and central plains, over the Appalachian Mountains (famous for the 2350-mile Appalachian Trail) to the Eastern seaboard and New York. In New York we stayed in the Piccadilly Hotel which was quite central and had been recommended to us by Graeme and Shirley Botting. We took a coach ride in the morning round Manhattan stopping at various places, including the rusty girders of the Twin Towers which were under construction at the time, then took a lovely restful boat trip round Manhattan Island. It was Millie's birthday and she got greetings and flowers by cable from various members of the family in England and New Zealand. She bought a frock. It was a little on the expensive side but she thought it might just suit an important function we were to go to in England. She then found that the price was marked

without the State Tax which I think was 12.5%. This rather spoiled the purchase making it even dearer. What was worse was that it got soiled somehow and when she washed it the colours ran and the material was ruined. It was only worn once – for dinner on the night of her birthday.

We had another embarrassment there over the question of tipping. When we were leaving we phoned the Porter's desk to send a porter to our room. No one appeared for quite a while and time was getting on. We eventually grabbed our bags Kiwi self-help style and took them down in the lift. When we appeared in the lobby a porter was soon at our side. He helped lift them out on to the footpath and signalled for a cab - I gave him a tip of 50c. On the way to the airport the cabbie, sensing that we were strange to the matter of tipping, told us the porter had complained to him about the amount of the tip. He had said nothing to us. We explained to the cabbie how little the porter had done and he understood. However, the fact of the matter was that I was in the dark as to what a reasonable tip should have been. I hope those reading this will remember that money value was very different then than it is today. We had two major bags so the tip should have been \$1 per bag at least. I still think he actually got what he deserved. The flight from New York's J F Kennedy airport was by Super VC10 and the landing at Manchester was the smoothest I have ever experienced as the wheels just seemed to kiss the runway. Winnie, Margaret and Geoff were there to meet us. It was our first introduction to Geoff. We were a bit of a crowd in his older model Ford Cortina which he drove fairly hard. It overheated - a fault he had known about - and we were stopped at the side of the road while it cooled down drinking coffee from a thermos which Margaret had brought. There was a very warm welcome home from Grandma Haigh 11 years since she had left New Zealand at the end of her visit. She had been up early that morning to make an apple pie, remembering how fond I was of this delicacy. I think she knew by this time that I had made her daughter happy.

Geoff Bonney was Margaret's husband - they had met at badminton. He had three children from a previous marriage. Vicky, who was severely handicapped, was in care but Margaret and Geoff regularly brought her home for weekends or short stays. Margaret took great care to build a family life with the two older children, Perry and Sharon. Perry maintained more contact with his mother but remains on good terms with Geoff and Margaret. Sharon was and is a part of Geoff and Margaret's family. Margaret and Geoff have a son of their own, Giles, whose birthday is on Boxing Day.

Just a very few days later we made our way to London for our visit to the Buckingham Palace Garden Party. We went down to Jean and John's place at Nazeing in Essex and they made our day in London an easy one. Millie was dressed at home in an off-white frock with a large brown floral pattern topped off with a wide-brimmed straw hat she had found in Blackpool. John took me to Moss Bros to outfit me in tails and top hat. For five pounds - I still have the receipt - I was fitted out in about 10 minutes. Everything was returnable except the socks - they do not rehire socks someone else has worn. Moss Bros specialise in providing these outfits for guests at such events as the Royal Garden Parties. John took charge of my other clothes and we hired a cab to take us to the Palace. It was enormously hot, dressed up as I was including a waistcoat, in this black London cab joining a slow pro-

cession to the gates of the Palace. We were fairly early and soon found ourselves in the inner courtyard at the main entrance, being shown through to the other side and into the garden. Eventually there were about four thousand guests and we stood along a cleared path which the Queen followed from the Palace steps to the Royal Pavilion where she took tea and talked with the more important guests. Selected people were introduced to the her and members of the royal party along the way. The heat produced a thunder-shower, which was quite heavy for some minutes. We got quite wet though we found shelter under some awnings near the tea booths - the straw hat was never worn again. Afternoon tea for the proletariat was very daintily served from booths all along one side of the gardens and people took refreshment as they liked. I noticed that many of the cakes were decorated with an elaborate scrolled E for Elizabeth. After some hours we emerged from the Palace to find John outside the gates ready to take photos of us and to take us away. He took us first to Moss Bros to return my finery and then we met up with Jean.

John and Jean had got tickets for the musical 'Fiddler on the Roof' at Her Majesty's Theatre in the Haymarket. Jean had come in from Nazeing all dressed up for the night out. We had seats quite high up with a very good view and it was a most entertaining night. We left London after midnight following a very full and exciting day, John taking us through 'The City' on the way home - The Bank of England, Stock Exchange, Mansion House, and Lloyds were all as deserted at midnight as the Main Street of Gore would have been at the same hour.

Millie had been invited to be the speaker at the annual Missionary Garden Party to raise funds from the Blackpool Station Road Church for the Baptist Missionary Society. When we got to Mrs Roberts home in the notably flat Stony Hill Avenue we found that Millie's Uncle David was there in Winnie's care. He had come from his home in Peel Brow, Ramsbottom, north of Manchester, for the occasion. He was a favourite with the Haigh family and was very much like Millie's father Bert. His presence was a lovely surprise for her. For her speech, Millie simply told them about being at the Garden Party and the folk were fascinated. You will all know how well she could tell a story like that.

After much discussion about our wedding anniversary, it was decided to hire a coach to take the guests into the country for the celebration. Some of them met us at the Hodder Bridge Hotel just over the border in West Yorkshire by their own transport. Ian and Phyllis Gardiner came up from London, staying with Jessie and joining us in the coach - it was lovely to have this link from New Zealand. I recall that Margaret Wallwork (nee Snape), who had taught with Millie at Claremont School at the time of our wedding, was there along with Renee (Pedal) Mackenzie who had been a close friend at Teacher Training College. Paul and Roger Culpin were gauche teenagers already displaying their eventual height. Paul sat at our table and embarrassed himself by knocking his glass of water over and drenching the table cloth. It was lovely for Millie to have all these relations and old friends to celebrate this important milestone - it was all a very wonderful occasion.

During our time in England we covered about four thousand miles in a Volkswagon Beetle hired at £1 per day from a friend of Eric Culpin's. It never missed a beat and we got very

fond of it. We travelled down to Lands End and visited Mr and Mrs Day near Wadebridge. They were delighted to see us again. I had got to know them quite well, through Wilfred initially, and Millie and I had attended their daughter's wedding. They had approved of Millie and Mr Day had proposed the toast to the Bridegroom's Parents at our own wedding a little later. While there we visited the ancient castle ruin at Tintagel - very spectacular, right on the coast, perched on the top of the cliffs and with a very long history. We also visited their daughter and son-in-law, Audrey and Archie Beare, on their leased dairy farm. I was horrified at the low standard of hygiene in the cowshed, especially as their milk went for household purposes. They were not interested in improvements to the farm where fields were reverting to rushes and pastures had deteriorated, saying it would only mean that the rent would go up. They took us to a 25-acre freehold property they had bought which had an apple orchard and some partly derelict buildings formerly used for cider making. Here they were very interested in making improvements - what a difference in attitude. We went right to Lands End but only long enough to take a photo against the signpost there. On our way we passed through the attractive seaside village of St Ives where I recalled the riddle from childhood: "As I was going to St Ives I met a man with seven wives. Every wife had seven bags. Every bag had seven cats. How many were going to St. Ives?"¹

We visited Stonehenge and were able at that time to walk among the stones. They are noted for the key stones being exactly in line at the summer solstice. We got a close-up impression of the size of the stones and marvelled at how they had been placed with such precision so very many years ago. We also visited Salisbury Cathedral just over the hill and marvelled at its size, beauty and symmetry. We observed the inverted arches installed at a later date to stabilise the whole structure and particularly the tower which nevertheless still leaned at a noticeable angle. We spent a few days in London and were fortunate to be able to attend the annual service of the Order of St Michael and St George in St Paul's Cathedral. The members of the Order who paraded in full dress regalia were a very impressive group of men, who looked very distinguished and capable.

In Scotland we drove in loose convoy with Marjorie and Winnie, travelling separately during the day and generally meeting up each evening. After a lunchtime visit to Renee Mackenzie in Old Kilpatrick we ventured further into Scotland "By yon bonnie banks and by yon bonnie braes" of Loch Lomond to Oban. We made a day trip from Oban to Iona, travelling by boat to Craignure, by coach right across the Island of Mull and then by open ferry to the island. During the 20th Century a community was re-formed on Iona, a small isle off the western tip of Mull which was the site of the original migration of Irish Christians to Scotland. The original cathedral has been largely restored and there is a miniature chapel for personal worship. It was moving to be in this chapel and to think of the many worshippers who had prayed there down through the centuries.

From Oban we journeyed on to Fort William where we had nine holes of golf. The greenkeeper told us in broad Scots, "Ut's a teight wee coorse" - it was indeed. The fairways were formed but the heather rough had been cut to about six inches - the little branches were tough and did not let a club get at the ball very easily. It ruined the score if you were

¹ The answer is very singular!

in the heather as you might take two or three strokes to get back on fairway. Millie very proudly got a par three at the final hole by the Clubhouse.

We travelled along the shores of Loch Ness and then up to Inverness beside the Caledonian Canal which links the coasts of Scotland. We did not see the Loch Ness Monster. A tourist once asked a guide when could one see the Loch Ness monster and was told "After about the fifth whisky." We did not have any whisky! We stayed for three nights in a private hotel in Inverness where we had fresh raspberries and cream every night for dinner. The raspberries were simply delicious and I remember being very interested that they grew so well in the far north. They were not imported - the landlord went out and picked them each day. On the downside, the bed we slept in was partly broken. We visited Inverewe Gardens on a road which ran right over the neck of Scotland from Inverness on the east coast. They were very beautiful and contained many sub-tropical plants even though situated about 57° north. We heard a story of the Chatham Island Forget-Me-Not, which had not been thriving. Miss McKenzie read that it grew by the sea in the Chathams and restored it by dressing it with seaweed. Though well to the north, the climate is modified by the Gulf Stream which flows up the west coast of Scotland and by the micro-climate established by plantings of very large shelter trees. On the way back from Inverewe I got the biggest fright I think I have ever had on the road. A car coming towards us behind a truck over the brow of a hill suddenly veered right out onto my side of the road and as quickly swerved back as I also took a swerve to the left. He was in a left-hand drive car and would not have been able to see if the road was clear for passing without coming out a long way. I was driving Marjorie's car. Fortunately she did not see the incident happen or she might have been concerned about the ability of the driver. On this trip we sampled Scotland's famous one way roads with widened passing places at regular intervals determined by the sight distance. We called these 'varicose vein roads'. I found Marjorie's driving on these quite tedious. If she saw a car coming the other way she would pull over at a passing place, disengage the gears and put on the hand brake - even for about ten seconds. Then she would go through the process of starting up again. She seemed to have no idea of slowing up a little so that both cars would arrive at the passing point together and meet without stopping fully. We had a solemn look at Culloden Moor and the massive graves of the Highlanders killed in that rout by the English. We came through Aberdeen, where we contacted Stewart Rose's cousin by phone, and around Friockham and Carnoustie, exploring Gardyne country where we met Dorothy Greig, my second cousin.

In September we joined a 22-day Frames Tour of Europe. The route crossed from Harwich in Essex to the Hook of Holland, then to Amsterdam, up the Rhine river to Ulm and into Bavaria for the Oberammagau Passion Play. This production is performed every decade for a whole summer season. It was a very moving experience. Although the dialogue and songs were in German we had English translations and almost all of the dialogue was direct scripture so we could follow it well. We had only one night in Oberammagau as our party were staying at Garmisch-Partenkirchen and were making an early start the next day for Italy and Venice. This was a 12-hour trip which took us first over the Europa Bridge, a curved structure across a very wide valley, and then through the Dolomite Mountains. These have very spectacular peaks rising very steeply indeed to considerable heights. It

was a lovely day and we enjoyed the long drive down the valley of the River Po to Venice. In Italy we visited the other well-known historic cities of Florence, Rome and Pisa, covering many famous Art Galleries and the Duomo in Florence, The Vatican, St Peters Cathedral, the Trevi Fountain and Spanish Steps and other historic places in Rome, and the Leaning Tower of Pisa, along with its Cathedral and Baptistry. We came along the Italian and French Riviera coast to Nice and up by Route Napoleone to Switzerland. In Nice Millie was suffering from an attack of 'Continental Tummy' and wanted to go to a Chemist for some medicine. She swotted up the word for 'diarrhoea' in her English-French dictionary, and rehearsed the phrases she would need. When she was greeted by the Chemist, she asked, 'Do you speak English?' 'Non, non, Madame'. So she launched into her carefully prepared French and obtained the desired result. As she left, the chemist made her day by saying, 'Vous parlez Francais tres bien, Madame'. A moving moment on the top of a pass on this route came when we found a memorial to half a dozen 'Soldats de Resistance', obviously caught and executed by the Germans during the war. In Venice we visited the Murano glass factory on Murano Island and bought four pieces of Venetian glass. Some of these are now spread around the family but I have the parrot here in my home - that was my special choice.

Our return to New Zealand included a couple of days in Singapore where we stayed at the Overseas Missionary Fellowship headquarters where our friend Norman McIntosh was in charge of the Christian Bookshop. He took us to a mid-week Chinese church where he asked me to give a greeting. It is the only time I have had my brief message translated. One morning we had planned a boat trip round the harbour and a fishing village on stilts in one of the bays. It had poured overnight and was still raining hard at breakfast. We suggested to Norman it would not be worth going. He reassured us that the rain would be over before 10am and it was. There was only one other passenger on the trip whose accent gave him away as being Scottish. He came from Aberdeen and we found that he had been a college pupil of Stewart Rose's cousin whom we had contacted in that city only a short time before - a strange coincidence.

It was good to be home and to take up the reins of our normal life again. We found that Dawn had not been too desolate. She had been very well fed by Betty Mitchell, her hostess over the back fence, and would have to get used to our style of life again. She tells me that just before our return there had been a fall of soot from the kitchen chimney, probably because it had been cold and rain had got into it. She spent quite a bit of time cleaning this mess up before we got home, encouraged by Grandma Elder who was not really able to help. The office seemed to have survived but was ready for an input from me to push the seasonal work along.

In hindsight we felt we had a wonderful trip. I was a bit bold leaving the business for a full three month period but I was very aware of Millie's separation from her family. I was also aware that if she had married and lived in England, all the history and art and notable architecture of England and Europe would have been on her doorstep. I suppose, through marrying Millie and visiting her family over the years, and through my war years in England, I have seen much more of the United Kingdom and Europe than I was ever likely to see if I had married a New Zealand girl.

Mayoralty and Civic Events

Cr Lin Petrie had indicated on the day of Jim's funeral that I would be nominated for Mayor. However, I wondered whether it would be right for me to accept office. This question gave me great concern. Millie and I had always sought God's guidance concerning any moves in our lives and particularly about a major decision like this. In fact before we met we had both prayed that God would lead us to the right partner for marriage. I think that the funeral was to be on a Tuesday and I was praying that God would show me clearly what He wanted me to do. On the Wednesday we went to the Baptist Church mid-week meeting. The early part of the time was given to prayer and while others were praying aloud I was praying silently for God to give me a clear sign. After a hymn, the minister John Thomson started to speak. It was usual for him to read a passage of scripture and I picked up my Bible from beside my chair to follow the reading. Things began to happen.

I had brought with me the Bible my parents had given me for my twenty-first birthday. I was not in the habit at that time of using this King James Version bible, as for some time I had been using the New English version in order to have the benefit of modern scholarship in the translation. Why I had brought the old version on that occasion I have never been able to explain except that at the last minute when leaving for the meeting I had not been able to see the other. At the appropriate moment for the usual reading, I picked up this Bible from beside my chair - but John Thomson did not read. Instead he started on an overview of the life of Abraham about whom he intended to present a series of studies. I was left with my unopened bible in my hands. It was a special edition with a clasp which had got quite worn and the leather was flaking away. I can remember the thought going through my mind, "No wonder - it is thirty three years old, it is entitled to be a bit worn." Then I opened it up to look at the date of my 21st birthday inscribed on the flyleaf. I knew the date - I did not need to look at it. Fat lot of attention was I paying to the speaker!

The flyleaf was inscribed with not only my name and the date of my birthday but also three verses of scripture. The first was one that had been a great comfort to my father during the war when he thought Wilfred and I were in danger, even to the point of waking in the night and claiming assurance from the words - "And I will bring the blind by a way that they knew not; I will lead them in paths that they have not known; I will make darkness light before them and crooked things straight. These things will I do unto them, and not forsake them." This was followed by two verses that had meant something to me thirty-odd years before - "I can do all things through Christ who strengtheneth me." and "Faithful is he that calleth you, who also will do it". What more could I ask?

Why did I use that bible? Why did John Thomson not take a reading which would have distracted my attention? And all this when I was particularly seeking guidance for my decision? Millie could not argue with all this when we talked about it at home. Maybe she did not think she should because she thought {bless her} that I could do the job. I don't think she realised at the time just how capable and popular she would prove herself in the role of Mayoress.

Three days later on the Friday of that week I was presented with a nomination paper signed by the ex-Mayoress, Mrs McLeod, all eleven other councillors and later by the minister who remained unaware of the part he had played.

The mayoralty proved to be a lot of work, especially on top of my accountancy practice, but it was also very rewarding and led us both to a feeling that the town was a part of our family in a special way. I was very proud of the impact that Millie made as Mayoress, though it was not without its toll on her nervous energy. We had no doubts that we had received divine guidance as we sought the answer to our question.¹

The headlines appeared in the press the following week: "No Contest For Mayoralty. FULL COUNCIL SUPPORT - Mr I. G. Elder Nominated For Mayoralty, New Mayoress was War Bride." The installation took place at a Council Meeting on 31 October 1972. All the members of my family were present except David and including my mother. I have often wondered what her feelings were to have me elected as Mayor. Was it only pride and pleasure or was there an element of thought that this was not the kind of thing that she expected of one of her family. I am sure that she was proud. Councillors' wives were also present and supper was served afterward.

I gave the following statement to the local newspaper, The Ensign: "In accepting this office of Mayor, I have been deeply moved by the spontaneous action of my fellow councillors in joining together in my nomination. I understand they have done so fully aware that as I am still actively involved in business, I would, if elected, find it difficult to give as much time as previous holders of this office have been able to give over recent years. It is possible that I may have to call on them to represent the council in my place rather more frequently

¹ We have known God's leading in other times in our lives. One such was the decision to come back to Gore from Kelvin Heights. Events regarding this unfolded in strange ways, leaving us in no doubt what was best for us. Strangely, we were left without doubt and worry even when our house at Kelvin Heights took quite a while to sell. And later events which we could not have foreseen at the time, proved the move was absolutely right for us. God is in his temple. Let all the earth rejoice.

than has been the case in the past. They are, I understand, prepared to accept this fact, and the extra commitment it may involve them in. I have naturally given this much thought over recent days. My wife and I are just ordinary citizens who happen by circumstances to be challenged by this situation. I have prayed about it, and feel that I should make myself available if the people wish to elect me. I shall, if elected, endeavour to represent the town to the best of my ability on all occasions when I feel the presence of the Mayor is expected or required." Such was my acceptance, a bit with tongue in cheek as it was patently obvious that there was unlikely to be a challenge. The result was that I was elected Mayor on the nomination of twelve people without any vote of the public. The term had two years to run.

The first stage of the installation was the signing of the Oath of Office. This was followed by the investment by the Town Clerk with the Robes of Office and the placing of the Chain round my neck. Councillors were then sworn in by reading their Oath of Office before me and each signing their respective document. Then followed congratulatory speeches from most of the councillors, to which I replied, expressing appreciation for the vote of confidence and assuring them I was counting on their continued support. I said I did not expect councillors always to see eye to eye with me but asked those who disagreed to do so with good humour and in good spirit. I was confident that my wife would ably support me and that both of us would carry out our duties with the dignity and grace they demanded. So began a new and different stage of our lives

We received numerous congratulations on our election.² One of the cards was from Gladys Gardiner, older sister of Ian. Millie had met her just a few times and Gladys had visited Millie's mother and sisters in England during her trip there, but a deep rapport had been established. The printed words; 'Delighted to hear of your success and to wish you all the very best for the future'; were followed by the written words; 'It sure is something to have the honour of being a personal friend of Lord Mayor and Lady Mayoress' in her large positive hand. Leslie Dolamore, member of a very well known early Gore family, and himself probably in his eighties, sent a cable from Wellington Hospital, which read; 'Delighted to learn you are accepting nomination. A good thing for Gore best wishes'. The Baptist Church weekly news-sheet contained this; 'Warmest congratulations from all the church family to our secretary, Mr Ivan Elder on being elected as MAYOR OF GORE. We are very proud of you, dear brother, and we want to assure both you and your good lady of our prayers for you both in the days that lie ahead as you assume your important responsibilities in our community'.

The Director of the Southland Progress League offered his compliments on my decision to be available. 'You will make an excellent job of it and I wish you every success'. He told me that I was ex-officio a Vice-President of the League. The league was a very good consulting forum among Southland Local Bodies and I was interested in the scope of the subjects discussed. Gordon Grieve from Otahuti was President at that time and was a very good chairman. He had been a Member of Parliament and had a wide range of experience. Another letter we were delighted to receive was from the Mayor of Invercargill: 'I am more

² I say, 'our' election, but in reality it was I who was elected and Millie, as my wife, assumed the position of Mayoress. But there is no doubt that her mana in the town was a very supportive influence in my acceptance by the public, and the word 'our' is appropriate in that sense. I believe that there were instances in Gore of otherwise worthy men missing out in the poll for this reason.

than delighted to offer you my congratulations on your election to the Mayoralty of Gore. Mrs Miller joins with me in extending felicitations to yourself and Mrs Elder and we both trust that you will have an interesting and enjoyable term of office'. I respected Russell Miller very much, and Millie was very fond of his wife Dorothy. Congratulations arrived from a host of other folk and relations such as Auntie Lizzie in Oamaru.

We were immediately inundated with a flood of invitations to functions from all sorts of organisations, many of them to mainly end-of-year events. Much of our time was no longer our own. My daughter Susan mentioned, I think at Millie's funeral, that on a Saturday we might be working in the garden, cutting lawns, baking, or doing housework, when, at a certain moment, all this would cease, we would have a quick bath and a change of clothes and be off to a civic engagement. We very quickly found that it was very embarrassing to be late for a function but it was also a mistake to be early. If we were early, the hosts might not be ready to meet us. If we were late we were rude, even if, as in some cases, the function itself was running a bit late. I discovered another thing - people liked to see the Mayoral chain. I carried it in a satin-lined jeweller's box and often donned it as we parked. It seemed to give more prestige to the occasion and also acted as identification as we arrived - not everyone knew me personally on sight at first.

The Mayor's chain bore the names of all previous Mayors and was in itself a historic item. Millie was to find as she was invited personally as Mayoress that she was not recognised and this led to the first consideration of the need for a Mayoress' chain. The Mayoral Robes were quite different. These were worn at council meetings and at more formal and official functions. For example, the opening of the St John Ambulance building on Main St was conducted by the Grand Prior of the order in New Zealand. I was invited in my official capacity. I was not advised that wearing the robes would be appropriate but I had taken them with me in their suitcase. It was an inspired precaution as the hierarchy of St Johns from Wellington were all wearing their ceremonial robes. I donned my Mayoral robes for the formalities, which included an inspection of the serving uniformed members of the Order of St John, and was therefore wearing them as I spoke on behalf of the Borough..

We were on a rapid learning curve. From the date of my inauguration till just before Christmas it was a constant succession of events. Many of these were regular annual engagements but there was also an element of wanting to see the 'new' Mayor and Mayoress. Most of the engagements at that time of year were evening ones but Millie found some of her invitations were to womens' clubs during the day. We were left wondering over this period how we would cope with any end of year preparations for our own family Christmas, but about 15th December the engagements stopped as if a tap had been turned off. So we had ten to twelve days almost completely clear.

In the newspaper interview headed 'New Mayoress was War Bride', Millie was quoted as saying, 'Once I've stopped being nervous about it, I hope to enjoy being Mayoress. It's a little daunting in a sense'. She had taught Bible in Schools at East Gore and Gore Main schools and the Ensign column called 'Topics for Women' by Paulette quoted a schoolboy 'howler' which occurred about this time. 'Mrs Elder is my Bible teacher. She is also the new

Mayoress. In other words, she is the Mayor's husband.' The Ensign interview went on: "Mrs Elder believes her task will be made much easier by the support of the Council on her husband's nomination as Mayor. 'We have been very moved by the support of the council behind Ivan's nomination'. Mrs Elder intends to fulfil her duties as Mayoress to the best of her ability and to 'stand behind' her husband in his work, "although the job is more or less sitting beside him. Mrs McLeod did the job so well - she seemed to be just right. That is something I will just have to work hard at".

In the New Year the routine job recommenced. There was the regular monthly cycle of Committee meetings together with the meeting of the full Council. The arrival of the monthly council agenda papers would stuff the letter box full but as chairperson I had to make a thorough reading of these and settle any unclear points with the Town Clerk, or occasionally the Engineer. In addition there were consultations going on all the time with the Town Clerk and the Borough Engineer about various matters for the committee and council agendas and also about routine matters. For the Committee and Council meetings, every councillor was expected to come fully informed on the agenda. On several occasions a councillor would suddenly raise a point in connection with a recommendation and I would have to gently direct him to the fine print in which the very point had been dealt with - a clear case of not having studied the agenda.

The Mayoral duties covered a wide range of events and activities as can be illustrated by the following reminiscences drawn from my scrapbooks and dairies.

Gore Hospital Clinical Services Block

What seemed at the time to be a very important occasion in the history of Gore, was the official opening in June 1973 of the new Clinical Services Block which was a significant addition to the Gore Seddon Memorial Public Hospital. I was invited to open this unit officially and the occasion was otherwise in the hands of the Southland Hospital Board. The official programme described the new additions: "The new building has a new calorifier room, and service tunnels, a dangerous goods store, an oxygen bank, high-pressure air system, a store, loading dock and covered way, a central sterile supply department, a department of pathology with associated services, a physiotherapy department with a gymnasium and hydrotherapy pool, an occupational therapy department with workroom, kitchen and bathroom especially designed to facilitate physical rehabilitation and an intensive care unit."

In my speech I said I was sure the people of Gore and District would derive much benefit and help from the new extension. I paid tribute to the staff who had served the hospital over the years including the Superintendents, Dr J E Rogers, Dr J M Watters, Mr McLoughlin, and the present superintendent Mr Denis Hurley. I said the people of Gore appreciated the forward planning at Seddon Memorial Hospital. I pointed out that while the population of Gore was only something over 9000, the hospital served a district with a population of nearly 25000 people. 'We hear much of intensive care units today, and I am assured that the unit in this new block has up-to-the-minute equipment, services and

furnishings, the best that are available. It is reassuring and comforting to know that this centre, the equipment and the skilled staff to operate it, are here ready for any emergency".³

Council Visit to Invercargill City

An interesting occasion was a visit of my Council to the Invercargill City Council for one of their regular meetings. My scrapbook has a press photo of Deputy Mayor Norman Jones assisting Russell Miller to don his robes, with my Deputy Mayor, Hugh Walker preparing to place the Mayoral chain over my head. I was invited to sit with the Mayor at the top table but other than formal speeches of welcome and reply, we took no part in the meeting. Councillors mixed together over a supper break and I recorded that the meeting finished at 12:05 am !

Governor General's Visit

One of our early very official occasions was the visit in October 1973 of the Governor General, Sir Denis Blundell and Lady Blundell on their first visit since their appointment. The official welcome was arranged for the Conference Room at Croydon Lodge where Their Excellences were staying. It was arranged that I would meet him in his room with the Town Clerk and conduct him to the venue at the appropriate time. There was a brief embarrassment when he offered me a whisky. When I declined and preferred a soft drink, he was almost offensive in insisting I have something stronger - but the moment passed off. Sir Denis in his youth had been a keen cricketer and a member of the Wellington team. A former Governor General, Lord Cobham, spoke in one of his speeches of a young swing bowler by the name of Denis Blundell being a nuisance with the aid of a cross wind to his visiting MCC side. It remained a sore point that Wellington had defeated the MCC. I referred to this in my speech of welcome. Sir Denis was also an officer with the NZ Expeditionary Force in North Africa and Italy and very quickly made connections with those who had served in those campaigns. Much reminiscing was done during the later evening function. The Southland County Council chairman Erskine Bowmar and the Maitai Borough also joined in the welcome. Gil Winwood had shocked Millie by telling her it was her duty to organise the ladies' evening. In point of fact, the Borough Office did all the donkey work of contacting the Womens Clubs and then issuing the invitation to the President and Secretary of each⁴ while Millie organised the programme. She had learnt that the Blundell's had no less than eleven engagements for the day and arranged an interesting programme including junior dancers from the Verona Favel School of Dancing. The function was held in the very attractive and comfortable rooms of the Gore Womens Club. Upon meeting her the next morning, Lady Blundell said to Millie, 'Didn't we have fun last night?' That made Millie's day.

For Sir Denis we had arranged a function at the RSA Club to which we had also in-

³ In practice I believe that the intensive care unit was rarely used to the full. Such a unit requires the presence of a fully qualified nurse for 24 hours a day and such staff were just not available in sufficient numbers to sustain three eight-hour shifts each day. About 25 years later, the whole philosophy of medical care underwent a radical change and Seddon Memorial Hospital was disestablished. Gore at best would have a cottage type hospital with all specialist and surgical services concentrated at Kew hospital in Invercargill.

⁴ It is interesting to note that when the office was preparing the guest list they found a total of over one hundred clubs, societies, youth groups, and other organisations and had to limit the invitations extended to each.

vited guests representing organisations in the town. It was our job to introduce these folk to our visitors and we had to do some neat remembering of names. I developed the plan of scanning the next table while he was chatting to the previous group and asking for the names of those I did not know - by this means I managed fairly well. There was little in the way of a programme of entertainment at the mens' evening apart from welcome and reply. Sir Denis just moved round the room meeting individuals.

The following day we went with them to the hospital which was their last function. I noted that Sir Denis made a point of thanking the police patrol for their care during his time in Gore and also thanked us for our hospitality and for showing us so much of the town. Millie later received a hand written note from Her Excellency's Lady-in-Waiting thanking her for the floral presentation and for the opportunity to meet so many ladies at the happy evening at the Womens Club.

Mayoress Chain.

Millie felt, as I have suggested, that she was seriously disadvantaged in not having some obvious badge of office when attending functions to which she had been invited on her own. We had lapel badges but these were not prominent enough. She discussed the idea of a Mayoress' Chain with the Town Clerk who agreed that it should be done. The Mayor's chain contained the names of all previous Mayors and he suggested that she should first research the names of all the former Mayoresses. This proved quite a task but eventually she was able to build up a complete list with one person leading her to another in respect of the earlier names. There was a manufacturing jeweller operating in Ordsal Street and she approached him about it. He was very cooperative and they planned a nice pattern which he manufactured for us. I think the cost was \$280 which seemed to me to be very reasonable. She found it very helpful, not only in the circumstances originally envisaged but also when visiting dignitaries came to the town.

Shopping Complex Proposal

Only a year into my first term I struck the most controversial set of circumstances of the whole of my Mayoralty. My accountancy office held an agency for Broadlands Dominion Finance. The company was largely engaged in taking deposits and lending on hire purchase and other short-term loans. I had been visited by a Mr Tom Harland of Christchurch, their South Island representative, who urged me to become an investing agency for the company. I discovered that he was a Christian and a very straight man and I accepted the proposal. This proved to be a very profitable sideline to the practice and gave me a vehicle to offer to clients who had temporary surplus funds or capital sums for longer-term investment. As time went on Broadlands began to invite agents to Auckland to acquaint them with the nature and extent of the Company's business. Millie and I flew up and stayed over a weekend at their expense and found it very interesting. They had developed a Marina in the Eastern Bays and were in the middle of a housing development in the vicinity. They also had a fairly new housing development at Snell's Beach near Warkworth. They flew us up from Auckland City by amphibian to see this development as the distance by car would have been very time-consuming. I found the executives of the company to be very straight-

forward and honest and discovered that the Company Secretary was also a Christian.

In mid 1973 representatives of the company called to advise me that they intended to investigate a new shopping complex for Gore. They indicated that a block of land between Irwell and Medway Streets was in mind and that they planned to develop about two thirds of this for their purpose. I immediately sensed the possibility of this move being an embarrassment to me in my role as Mayor. I informed them that I could not cooperate with them in any way in my role as their investment agent as it could well appear that I was using my position for private pecuniary advantage. They accepted this and never sought my advice or help, only keeping me informed of progress on the project. About this time figures had been published by the Statistics Department stating that Gore had the highest retail sales per head of population in New Zealand (closely followed by Te Awamutu !) They saw this as a town which would justify additional shopping facilities. A press article at the time said: "Gore does not have a particularly high number of stores for its population, so if you want to start a business and get rich, head south to the thriving centre of Gore. Down there the streets are paved with gold." I always treated these figures with suspicion as the shopping public included the whole of Eastern Southland and the retail figures were averaged over the population of Gore only.

The developers moved in and negotiated sale agreements with nearly all of the property owners. The key property was that of Gore Implement Exchange which had frontages to both streets. This company was paid out and re-established itself in North Gore which was zoned industrial. Somewhere about this stage the developers ran into finance problems and so did some of the vendors. A Mrs Burgess had purchased another home on the basis of her sale to them and her settlement date was overdue. The Pipe Band had bought another property unconditionally. All this was coming to a head early in December 1973. A deputation of four had an appointment to see the General Manager of the National Bank in Wellington. Late in the time frame the Deputy Manager of Trustees Executors in Dunedin could not go to Wellington because of a clash with a company board meeting, and the Solicitor for the developers urgently asked me to take his place. As this was no longer concerned with the development as such but with the urgent situation of some of my constituents, I agreed to go.

This became known and raised a real flurry in Gore. Theo Smyth, a councillor but also in business, hurriedly convened a protest meeting of Main Street businessmen to protest at my action and to voice the behind-the-scenes murmuring about the complex might take future trading away from Main Street thus dividing the business sections of the town. I was in contact with the Town Clerk and learned of the meeting then being held while in the bank manager's office in Wellington. In the circumstances I had to indicate that my hands were tied, although I was still very concerned about the embarrassed vendors. I came back home to an inflamed situation.

My initial comment was that, while I conceded that I may have been at fault in not making a statement on the matter, I was aware, as were the businessmen, that it was a private negotiation and I was not involving the Gore Borough Council in any way. I further

said that I had no personal financial involvement in the new complex, and that I was not using my position as Mayor to protect my own involvement.

I don't intend here to go into details of the four-column statement in The Ensign outlining the whole sequence of events and stating that I considered it my duty to help any citizen in difficulty if I could. The Town Clerk pointed out that the Mayor was elected directly by the people and had a direct obligation to them separate from the Council. Several businessmen interviewed by The Ensign agreed with my assertion that not all who had attended the protest meeting had agreed with the resolutions passed and sources said there had already been one scene between the two factions. The President of the Gore Businessmens' Association stated that they had not been involved in the meeting's organisation.

I was taken by surprise at the next meeting of the Gore Borough Council when Cr Evans proposed a vote of confidence in me as Mayor. He said: "In my mind he has served his people as a good Mayor, sacrificing time and business at some considerable expense to himself and, knowing him as we do, we know that even when he was involved in Wellington, it was not so much fighting for the cause as to ensure the welfare of the community and town that he serves. I would like the Council at this meeting to record its appreciation of the Mayor, confidence in his judgment and our admiration of his integrity".

I do not know the details of how the vendors' money was found but the complex did not go ahead at that time. It is interesting to look back with hindsight and see what has developed quite painlessly since 1973. The block concerned was resold into several independent titles on which have arisen: A large Woolworth's supermarket and carpark; Mitre 10 (The building was originally developed by McGregor Kerr Ltd who were taken over by McKenzie and Willis Ltd who later withdrew from Gore. Mitre 10 took over, redeveloped and extended the premises for their own purposes.); The Warehouse Mega Store; Guthrie Bowron Ltd, Paint specialists (in premises previously developed by other firms); Placemakers Builders' Warehouse and Timber Yard; and Young Bros - relocated from Medway St. East. All this development has been paralleled by the establishment and later expansion of New World across the street to the south..

Other engagements in 1973

The invitation to the 20th Anniversary Dinner of the Gore League of Mothers on 23rd June was signed by Fay Irvine and K Grace as President. At the time of writing Fay is still doing a Secretary-Treasurer job for the Travel Club some 33 years later.

I was guest speaker and official opener of the Intellectually Handicapped Childrens Society's new home, Ardwick House, on 19th August 1973. This home was established in the former home and surgery of Dr Vic Harris and was intended to enable handicapped people to learn to live together under supervision so as to be as independent as possible. The Official Party was quite impressive: Mayor of Gore I G Elder and Mrs Elder, Member for Clutha J B Gordon and Mrs Gordon, Chairman Mataura Licensing Trust A L Adamson

and Mrs Adamson, Minister Dedicating the Building Rev. A Murdoch and Mrs Murdoch, President Southland Branch of IHC W P Devine and Mrs Devine, Chairman Gore Committee IHC P Campbell and Mrs Campbell.

The Gore Plunket society rooms in Eccles Street behind the Medical Centre were opened on 17th November 1973.

The Charter Night of the Inner Wheel Club took place on Saturday 29th Sept 1973. The Inner Wheel Club consisted of the wives of Rotarians at the time when Rotary was a men-only club. The charter programme was conducted by the District Chairwoman, Marge Allen. There was a roll call and remarks by the District Extension Officer. The Inner Wheel Club charter president was Ethel Abercrombie, wife of the Manager of the Paper Mill at Mataura. Charter members were introduced, a welcome was extended to Inner Wheel International, followed by Mayor's Remarks by Ivan Elder. I have no idea of what I may have said !⁵

In my scrap book is a press photo where the participants are wearing wide smiles. The cause of the merriment is that Mrs Evelyn Gillan is presenting a cheque from the Inner Wheel Club to her husband, immediate past-president of the Gore Rotary Club, in support of the emergency vehicle fundraising appeal being conducted by Rotary⁶.

James Cumming Wing.

Good progress had been made towards the completion of the James Cumming Wing and it was ready for opening in March 1974. The Wing was a very major achievement for the Borough and District and the Council invited the Governor General to come for the opening. Sadly the the timing did not fit into his programme. An invitation was then sent to the Prime Minister, Rt Hon Norman Kirk, who accepted. Council and I felt we had made a coup in obtaining such a high-profile person for the opening but it caused a few ripples. The weekend it became public one of my clients wrote to The Ensign in high indignation at the invitation. Eastern Southland was a Blue Ribbon parliamentary seat for the National Party, he said. The appeal for funds to add to the Cumming Trust Fund had been subscribed to generously by many rural folk [presumably National supporters] who would be insulted that a Labour person had been invited for the occasion. He, himself, was highly incensed. He got a small amount of support in the form of a couple or so letters but most people respected the office of Prime Minister, irrespective of which party the incumbent represented. Norman Kirk had a family link to Eastern Southland as his Great-Uncle had once farmed on the property my parents eventually occupied and had later owned a property on the Pinnacle Road. This local connection was part of the reasons supporting the approach to him.

⁵ It is interesting to record that many years later, while Millie and I were looking round Hexham Abbey in northern England near The Roman Wall, Millie noticed a lady who looked familiar. At the same time I had noticed a man who looked familiar to me. We recognised George and Ethel Abercrombie and the four of us got together to renew friendship. They had moved to Auckland, and we had not seen them for some years.

⁶ In the picture are the Mayoress and Catherine Christie. These latter two ladies both died in 1997 and are laid near each other in the Charlton Cemetery. Catherine's death was quite sudden and unexpected in her early fifties and was very sad. Millie's death was also very sad for us, her family.

I think the afore-mentioned letter was in the Saturday edition of the Ensign. Two things happened in the early part of the following week. The client involved called early in the week and stated that he was taking his accountancy business away from my office. His reason was that we did not seem to see eye-to-eye in various ways and he did not feel that we could continue to work together. I made some effort to ameliorate the situation, but he had made up his mind and I decided I was probably better off without him. The second thing was that on the same day I arrived home to find a letter from a country farmer simply congratulating me on the way I was serving the district as Mayor and expressing confidence in the job I was doing. At that time the country areas were not in the Borough but in the Southland County, though I found that many country folk talked of me as 'their Mayor'. The writer was a brother-in-law of the complainant! This letter was never made public but it was very heart-warming to receive it and it was the action of a true gentleman. No mention was made of my client's letter to the press but the inference was clear.

At the opening I extended a warm welcome to Mr Kirk: "In the first place I want to extend a very warm welcome to the Rt. Hon. Norman Kirk, our Prime Minister. We appreciate very much, sir, that you have honoured us with your presence on this occasion, and that you have consented to officially open this new amenity. We very much regret that Mrs Kirk is indisposed and unable to be with us. You may possibly be aware that Gore is what may be described as a National Party stronghold, and that your political views are not wholly acceptable to many in the area but, nonetheless, we all join to honour you in your position as Chief Minister of New Zealand and we are deeply honoured that in this capacity you have agreed to open this wing of our Civic Centre"

After other speakers had taken part, I invited the Prime Minister to speak and declare the Wing duly open with the comment "... before doing so I wish to say that in addition to welcoming you as Prime Minister, we also welcome you because of your ancestral connections with this district. Mr Kirk's Great-Grandfather, I understand, farmed at Benio many years ago. His Grandfather lived and worked in Gore. Mr Kirk's Great-Uncle farmed for many years at East Chatton in the place later farmed by my own parents and where I myself was born and brought up. Mr John Kirk later farmed at Pinnacle Road and another Great-Uncle was for many years a respected businessman and manager of a well-known stock firm in the town. Therefore, for these reasons as well as for your official position, we welcome you'. It is interesting that after the event in his regular political column, the local member of parliament, Hon Peter Gordon, fully endorsed the invitation which he described as quite proper and correct.

The Kirk family had produced a family history in which reference had been made to the early days of the family here. In his speech Norman Kirk noted facts about the early history of the district including the interesting detail that some foreign nationals were introduced to assist with the construction of the railway from Dunedin through Gore to Invercargill. He pointed out that some of these immigrants stayed in the district and their presence is reflected in some of the surviving family names. In some cases foreign names had been anglicised and were now not quite so obvious. He was generous in his praise of the pioneers who had settled the land and turned it into the district it now is. He also

mentioned the contribution of women to the development of the province as 'truly outstanding'.

I have made mention of Mrs Kirk's indisposition. Norman Kirk himself was not at all well. He had been in Malaysia for a conference shortly before coming to Gore and had picked up a 'tummy' bug which still troubled him from time to time.

Gore and District Senior Citizens Club.

When I came into the Mayoralty, I very soon learnt that there were proposals for the establishment of a Senior Citizens Centre. I was aware that the previous Mayor Jim McLeod had not initiated anything as he was under the impression that the Vickery Trustees were not quite ready with support for the venture. Age Concern Southland, which ran a senior citizens centre in Invercargill and was the parent organisation for seniors clubs throughout Southland, were keen to see a club established in Gore. I learned also that the Vickery Trust⁷ were keen to be in support. A nod is as good as a wink they say and I took the hint, as I was not a blind horse. I called a public meeting to discuss the proposal and from it were elected persons to become members of an Investigation Committee along with about six members appointed from the Council. While the meeting had been enthusiastic it represented only a small number of the elderly of Gore. The church womens' organisations were recruited to canvass the town and find out the names of people who would welcome such a club. They came back with over 600 names, showing that there was quite widespread interest.

Millie was one of the visitors and she came in one evening full of mirth to tell of her visit to a 90-year-old woman. 'Oh, Mrs Elder, do come in. I was not expecting you but do come in. If I had known the Mayoress was coming I would have worn my best frock.' Millie did not want to get tied up in a long call but reluctantly entered under some pressure. Seeing the television in the corner, she asked, to make conversation, 'Do you watch television?' 'Oh, yes, I quite enjoy it and it passes the time' 'What is your favourite programme?'. 'Oh, the All-In Wrestling!!!'. Seeing the lawn outside, Millie asked, 'Do you get someone to cut your lawns?'. 'No, I cut them myself. Mr Pullar up in the next house tells me I'll kill myself one day. So I just says to him that if that happens will he ring the Police and tell them there is something here needs clearing away'. The courage of the old!

With this endorsement the committee went ahead and in March 1974 I called the meeting at which it was resolved to form the Club elect an interim committee. The Club met in the newly-opened James Cumming Wing free-of-charge for the early stages and enthusiastic membership flourished. Various sub-activities were set up including Arts and Crafts, Canework, Housie, Card Groups, Indoor Bowls and Concerts.

The new committee immediately set about raising funds to erect their own club rooms. This was very energetically pursued and within three years they were ready to start

⁷ An explanation of the Vickery Trust is appropriate here. Mr P H Vickery operated long term a motor business in Invercargill with a branch in Gore. He was in on the growth of the motor industry in the pre-war years and had apparently done very well financially. At the time of his retirement he established a very substantial charity trust for the benefit of 'the elderly of Southland' which was known as the Vickery Trust. One of the Trustees at this time was Mr Alf Walmsley, General Manager of the firm, Mr Vickery having died, and he was also very keen for us to get going. Another Trustee was a Solicitor in Christchurch.

construction. This is where the help of the Vickery Trust was to be of great assistance. The completion and opening of the rooms will be recorded later.

The Lions Clubs of Gore spearheaded a district-wide appeal on behalf of the Senior Citizens. Another fundraiser was a dinner arranged by the Young Farmers Clubs at which the guest speaker was the Minister of Agriculture, the Hon Duncan McIntyre. Millie and I were on the platform with him and Millie was very struck with his nervousness. Despite having spent many years in public life he was still very nervous before the delivery of his speech which he had in his pocket fully prepared and typed out. Once he got started, his nervousness did not seem to show. A feature of the evening was the piping in of the Haggis with the traditional formal address. McIntyre had a great liking for the Haggis and pressed the Mayoress and me to have second helpings so that he could also.

At one of the early meetings of the Club Honorary Life Memberships were awarded to Maurice Adair, Chairman of the Investigation Committee, Gabriel Farry, Chairman of the Lions Club Fundraising Committee, and to me the Mayor who had initiated the formation.

Gore and District Early Settlers Association

On 7th July 1974 we attended the 50th Anniversary of the Early Settlers Association. This association had kept alive the memory of the pioneers of the early days in the district. There were some stalwart long-term members who had kept this group going and they were very proud to be celebrating their Jubilee. The president was a retired farmer from the Kaiwera District, Mr Jack Wylie, and the secretary was Russell Richmond. In my scrapbook of press cuttings there is a picture of the Mayoress cutting the Jubilee cake and smiling at the camera. Some time not so very long after this occasion the Association dwindled in support and went out of existence. At the time of writing the Gore and District Historical Society is fulfilling much the same role and working with the District Council in developing the Museum where it has its headquarters.

League of Mothers.

The Mayoress was invited to meet the New Zealand President of the League of Mothers at an informal coffee morning. Mrs Jean Doull was touring the country and visiting local Leagues. She expressed herself impressed with the enthusiasm of the Gore League. She was pictured in The Ensign, talking with the Mayoress and Mrs C Goble, Southland President. When Millie first glanced at it in the photo she thought it was Dawn Gardyne and wondered what Dawn had done to have her picture in the paper. Looking closer, she saw it was herself. In ordinary life Dawn and Millie were sometimes mistaken for each other. We both purchased petrol from Gormack Wilkes Davidson Ltd, and Millie would be asked, 'Shall I just book this, Mrs Gardyne'. And this happened to Dawn in reverse on occasions. I hope we never in fact paid for some of Gardyne's petrol, nor they for ours. The picture was sent to her daughters with a fashion note: "suit is emerald green on white. scarf emerald green". Just another of the occasions when she was called upon to attend.

Anzac Day

In 1974 I was photographed preparing to lay a wreath at the Cenotaph on Anzac Day morning along with A P Shields, president of the Eastern Southland Home Servicemens Association. This took place in the darkness of the Anzac Day dawn. Quite a number of the public laid wreaths of remembrance for lost family members or for servicemen who had not returned. These occasions held very poignant memories for so many people. The parade and many of the public went on to the RSA Club rooms where breakfast and refreshments were served.

Billy Graham Crusade.

We tendered a Civic Luncheon for Dr Grady Wilson, Associate of the Billy Graham Crusade, and were snapped outside the Borough Office. Included in the group alongside Dr Wilson and myself were Keith Robertson who acted as luncheon chairman, The Mayor-ess, the Baptist minister Rev John Thomson, the Presbyterian minister Rev Geo McLean. Dr Wilson was in Gore in advance of Billy Graham's visit to New Zealand and spoke at a rally in the evening in Gore. This demonstrates the wide variety of organisations with which the Mayor makes contact

Rates up 24 per cent.

This was the headline in The Ensign in June 1974. Surely enough to destroy any confidence in the new administration. In consultation with the Town Clerk, I prepared a very full statement setting out the various reasons for the dramatic increase including:

Salaries - there had been a staff vacancy the previous year	11.50%
Petrol Tax Revenue - down 1.75% due to fuel crisis	1.75%
Waikaka river diversion to protect Hamilton Park	2.00%
James Cumming Wing	1.75%
Sanitation Contract renewed	1.00%
Conversion of Baths heating	1.00%
Catchment Board rate	1.15%
Loan Servicing Charges for the Sewage Treatment Plant	3.50%
Shortfall of Sewage Treatment (one-off) capital cost]	4.00%

These were the main items in the overall increase in rating and we took the public fully into our confidence. My statement took nearly a full page in The Ensign and was accompanied by a picture of the Town Clerk and myself studying the papers which were revealing the necessary increase. At this stage, thinking back, I do not recall any serious reaction from the public. At the time there was a rates rebate scheme for pensioners and anyone whose income was under a certain amount had part of their rates covered by the Government. It was an illustration of the public's willingness to accept unpleasant realities if they are fully informed of the reasons.

Sewage Separation and Treatment.

Central Government was very concerned with inadequate sewage treatment and

the discharge of untreated sewage into the sea and into rivers. It was well-known that for many years Gore's sewage had been discharged into the river above the traffic bridge. This had been discontinued and the outlet changed to the south end of the town. This improved the condition of the river in the bridge area, which was popular for swimming before the baths were built. The Government set up a fund to assist local bodies to instal sewage treatment plants and Gore Borough embarked on such a scheme. The site chosen was to the south of Gore Hospital with easy outflow for the treated effluent to the river. By that stage, of course, the effluent would be clear of sewage and would not interfere with river life. There was some jocularly about the sewage ponds with some referring to them as Lake Elder! The completion of the treatment plant itself was not sufficient to make the scheme fully successful. Many of the town's drains combined both sewage and storm water. In itself there was no harm in some storm water getting into the ponds. However, the combined drains brought too great a volume of water in time of heavy rain, causing the flow-through to be too quick and affecting the plant's efficiency. So a great deal of separation was required to lessen the volume of material flowing into the plant. About this time, the Borough employed an assistant engineer who was able to draw plans for purely storm water drains to capture much of this excess⁸. All of these works over a relatively short space of time necessitated raising loans which led to the rate increases referred to earlier.

Southland Pest Destruction Board. [Rabbit Board]

At the opening of the Board's annual conference I facetiously suggested that I had been a member of one of the first "rabbit boards", consisting of myself and my three brothers. "During our schooldays", I said, "rabbiting had proved a good source of pocket money". Then I congratulated pest destruction boards on the work they had done over the years and the tremendous stock increases that had resulted. It was possible to drive through many country areas at night and seldom see any rabbits.

Memorial service for Rt Hon Norman Kirk, Prime Minister.

On 4th September 1974, a memorial service was held in the J C Wing for the late Prime Minister, Norman Kirk. The Prime Minister had gone into hospital for some relatively minor surgery, shortly after which he had suffered a heart attack which along with other complications finally proved fatal. It was decided to hold a Memorial Service in Gore. This was conducted by the Presbyterian minister Rev Alex Murdoch. There were prayers led by Rev G Archibald (Presbyterian), and scriptures read by Rev R James (Methodist) and by Kevin Kelly and Helen Bruce (Catholic). The Tribute was in the hands of the Mayor, a Baptist

My tribute went as follows:

⁸ Part of the problem was flood water entering the Borough from the rural area, such as at Thomas Street where a creek draining a large catchment up as far as the golf course was feeding into the existing storm and sewage mains. This caused overloading of the drains in heavy rain resulting in flooding in lower Broughton St. and other lower areas. A new storm water drain was taken down Devon and Irwell Streets direct to the river with very considerable benefit as it took all the water from this creek. Some time earlier there was demand from the Koa St-Ruia St. area for drainage and sewage reticulation to enable housing development. This land had been transferred into the Borough from Southland County some years earlier to provide more available land to cope with housing growth. This area was a long way from the river and the treatment plant and the cost had to be met by the Borough. Local connections to the mains system could then be made at the expense of the developers.

"Just six months ago, Norman Kirk was here with us in this hall, when he officially opened this building. Now, tragically and unexpectedly, he has passed from this scene, and we have lost one who has become a part of New Zealand's history for ever.

That day, in March, Norman Kirk gave us a glimpse of the essential man who was our Prime Minister. First, he showed us the family man - one who was interested in his forebears - the stock from which he had sprung - men who were the pioneers of this district. He revealed the fact that he had given more than passing interest to the story of his family. He obviously had pride in his family.

He showed us his interest in people. In fact he improved our education in aspects of our own district, telling us facts of the people, the families, and the pioneers we did not know ourselves.

He revealed his attention to details in the material of his address. It was no series of platitudes that might have filled any occasion anywhere in New Zealand, but an address which matched only the situation in which he found himself that day.

I have been struck with the personal sense of loss which has been experienced by people of all sections of our community, no matter what the political opinions of the individuals may have been. This illustrates the extent of the personal impact he made during his all-too-brief tenancy of his high office. During that time he showed himself to be a leader of considerable stature - he has made his mark in the international sphere in no insignificant way, and yet he maintained his ability to meet with, and talk to, the ordinary citizen. Those of us, last March, who had the opportunity of meeting him personally, and of having lunch with him, found him to be perfectly friendly, perfectly natural, and yet able to contribute in depth to conversation on any subject.

But I feel my tribute must go to Norman Kirk for his evident integrity of character, and his moral courage. He was not afraid to state his opinions on moral issues, even though he knew those opinions would not be wholly popular. I believe him to have been a man of Christian faith and conviction. In these days of Watergate, and all that word has come to mean, it is good to have men of courage, integrity and moral fibre. The United States has just changed its leader. In vastly different circumstances, New Zealand has lost its leader, and unexpected change is forced upon us, too. In reading of the change of Presidency in America, I came across a poem which impressed me deeply. It was written by an American who lived from 1819-1881, so that these words were written at least 100 years ago. How well they fit our late Prime Minister. The poem is in the form of a Prayer.

God give us men. A time like this demands
Strong minds, great hearts, true faith, and ready hands;

Men who the lust of office does not fill;
Men whom the spoils of office do not buy;
Men who possess opinions and a will;
Men who have honour; men who will not lie;
Men who can stand before a demagogue,
And damn his treacherous flatteries without winking;
Tall men, sun crowned, who live above the fog
In public duty and in private thinking.⁹

New Zealand has lost one such man, who was still too young to have fulfilled his full potential and destiny. Just today I received a reply to a letter of sympathy concerning a friend and from which I quote. "It is not the length of life, but the quality, which is most important".

But, also, alas, a dear wife and a proud family have lost a husband and father. During the years, and the last two years in particular, Mrs Kirk and the family have given much to New Zealand, and to us. Now they have suffered an even greater loss, and we feel for them, I am sure, a very tender and loving sympathy

Norman was not a man without faults, and no doubt he had many more faults in the eyes of his political opponents, than in the eyes of his supporters. But we all, whatever our beliefs, honour him for the man he was, and as one who achieved the position of Chief Citizen of our country.

On your behalf, and for myself, I pay tribute to Norman Kirk the man, and to Norman Kirk, our Prime Minister."

Other Events.

Other events which occurred during a very busy first term from 1972-4 include;

The visit of five National Members of Parliament for the Annual Meeting of the Clutha Electorate Branch of the party. They included J B Bolger (King Country), V S Young (Egmont), Rt Hon J B Gordon (Clutha), L R Adams-Schneider (Waikato). The Mayoress and I made them welcome to Gore.

The Canadian High Commissioner came to Gore. He told me that when he came to New Zealand he knew the names of two of our rivers - the Tongariro in the North Island and the Maitai in the South Island. He was a keen fisherman. He was entertained at the Gore RSA Tin Hat Club at which I had been invited to be Guest Chairman. A letter from the Secretary, Steve Little, [who will be remembered as a High School teacher] thanked me for "the major part you played in our last tattoo, not only for the official part in welcoming the High Commissioner but also for the excellent manner in which you carried out the duties of Guest Chairman".

9 "God give us men", Josiah Gilbert Holland (1819-1881)

Gore Festival Week Gala was at Dolamore Park in fine weather. A picture in The Ensign showed folk in summer wear enjoying the sun and festivities. Another picture featured the Mayoress and me with Mr A L Dolamore and his daughter Miss Natalie Dolamore. The development of Dolamore Park was made possible by generous legacies left to the Borough by his Uncle and Aunt and has proved to be a wonderful amenity. Both have since passed on.

The Mayoress spoke at the opening of a joint day of the coordinating committees of Womens Division and Country Womens Institute. There was a very special display produced by Mrs Leila Herron assisted by Mrs Jill Chittock.

The Floral Festival of Praise featured annually as part of Festival Week. It was presented by the churches in turn with each year's display being prepared by the ladies of the host church. These were unfailingly very lovely displays based on the line of a Bible verse or of a hymn.

There was a meeting with the Deputy Chairman of the National Roads Board, Jack Thorn - later Sir Jack. He was Mayor of Port Chalmers for over 20 years and had been a member of the Municipal Association Committee, including a term as President, even though he represented a very small Borough. I also met him at Municipal Conferences.

Mention should be made of an annual duty which took me by surprise when it first occurred. The Mayor was ex officio Patron of the Gore Operatic Society and I found that I was expected to close the final performance with a speech of thanks and present the bouquets to the leading players and the conductor of the orchestra. I had not attended many productions, often acting as baby sitter while Millie went with some of her friends but I had seen Jim McLeod on at least one occasion perform this duty. When I took office, this possible engagement was far from my mind and I sensed a little apprehension among officials on the final night. For the first year in 1973 I had just purchased a new suit in a rather startling maroon-purple shade and I think it was its first public outing at the Operatic final night. I had done some homework and was afterwards congratulated on the appreciation I had shown for the performance and the work of the Society. I found, though, that at close quarters and in the bright footlights recognising the correct leading players from the side of the stage to present the bouquet was not so easy. To their credit, they made it easy by a slight movement to help me out. The Society tackled some very good musicals for their performances and there seemed always to be a good pool of talent for each year.

Mayoralty - The Later Terms

My election to the office in 1972 had been already one year into the term of that Council so at the end of only two years fresh elections were due. I was again nominated unopposed, this time facing a full three-year term. There were minimal changes to the team of Councillors. Peter Wood, the dentist, did not stand again after the Fluoride question had been resolved and there were one or two other changes.

The Colours - Otago Regiment

Early in 1975, we were invited to a ceremony with a big difference. This was the occasion of the Laying Up of the Colours of the Otago Regiment. This took place in First Church in Dunedin and was a very formal military occasion. There were hymns, a Bible reading read by the Colonel of the Regiment and the reading of the History of the Colours by the Hon Colonel. The Queen's Colour and the Regimental Colour were presented by the Commanding Officer to the Minister of First Church, who received them "for safe custody within the first Church of Otago". The service concluded with The Lord's Prayer, The Blessing and The National Anthem.

Prior to the Laying Up of the Colours, the Regiment had been presented with its new Colours in a military parade on the Caledonian Ground. This also was a very formal occasion. With the regiment assembled, the dignitaries arrived in ascending order of importance: Hon Colonel of 4th Battalion, The Colonel of the Regiment, The Chief of the General Staff, The Minister of Defence and the Governor General. We were just ordinary guests. The ceremony followed a traditional pattern: The Inspection by the Governor, The Trooping of the Old Colours, The Marching Off of the Old Colours, Consecration of the New Colours, The presentation of the Colours by His Excellency, The March Past, Advance in Review Order. It was a very colourful and impressive event, fully accompanied by The City of Dunedin Highland Pipe Band and The Band of The New Zealand Army.

Gore and District Travel Club.

The Mayoress misread public opinion over the proposed formation of a Travel Club. By this time she had experienced the multiplicity of organisations for women and felt there might not be room for a Travel Club. Locals who were members of the Invercargill club so enjoyed their activities that they by-passed her and a Gore club was formed. I have a letter from the secretary, delighted that the Mayoress had agreed to be Patroness of the new Club which was holding its first meeting on 14th April 1975. The Club, of course, went on from strength to strength and at the present time has an attendance of about 90 each month. I joined the committee after Millie's death and served two years as President.

Golf.

In between all the cuttings and mementoes of the Mayoralty is a small cutting for 15th May 1975 recording four players in the Bronze B section of the weekly womens golf, including Mrs I Elder sharing a score of 4 up in a Bisque Par match. That type of game was a favourite of Millie's and latterly when she only played with me we used the Bisque Par system - she had probably used all her strokes after about 12 or 13 holes to win the match! For non-golfers I should explain a Bisque Par game is one where one can take one's full allowance of handicap strokes in any order one pleases. Normally handicap strokes can only be taken on designated holes and cannot be carried forward or back to another hole. Millie would take them generously on early holes to gain wins, and would end up with no strokes left on the last five or six holes which became losses. By that stage, however, she would have built up a bank of holes won.

Violinist

In 1975 we had a delightful visit to Gore by the English violinist Alfredo Campoli. He was accompanied by Maurice Till on the piano and also had with him a young violinist from Christchurch named Belinda Bunt. He spoke very highly of her skill and ability. Campoli gave us a delightful performance in the James Cumming Wing. He was very friendly and even invited us to contact him at his home south of London if we were ever in the UK.

The Atlantic Silver Plough Contest.

As the name suggests, this was a ploughing competition.. In 1975 the New Zealand Championships were held in Southland with the winner to go to the World Ploughing Championship. The contestants were the regional winners from many contests throughout the country. The contest was held on the property of Mr C J Milne at Edendale and was held in atrocious weather with cold southerlies and snow showers. Millie was one of three judges for the Silver Plough Queen Contest run in conjunction with the championships. I think she found this quite a task with her two male fellow judges but she thought they came to a good decision. At the official dinner the Presentation of the Miniature Silver Plough was made by the Mayor to the Champion and I also proposed a Toast to 'The Champion'. It was quite an honour for the district to host the final but Eastern Southland had been strong in ploughing for many years and the then-president of the NZ Ploughing Association was W G Miller from Riversdale.

St. John Ambulance Building.

The Local Sub-centre of the Order of St John had acquired a vacant building on Main Road South and had converted it as their Gore Headquarters. The building had accommodation for the ambulances, and also meeting, display, and instruction rooms to suit the work of the Centre, and their office and alarm centre. I have mentioned this with regard to the wearing of the Mayoral Robes. It was in fact a very formal occasion. I found, I think to my surprise, that I was, ex officio President of the Local Sub-centre, and as such found it my duty to formally hand over the building to The Chancellor A T Gandell, Esq., C.B.E. K.St.J. Chancellor then laid his hand on the building and accepted it on behalf of His Royal Highness [Head of the Order.] and asked the Chaplain to dedicate it to the purposes of St John. The Chaplain then carried out the Dedication with a hand on the building and led in a longer prayer for the Order and its officials, and for the beneficiaries treated by the Order, and for those who were donors to it. There was an address by the Chancellor, and finally by the President, Mr I. G. Elder, Mayor of Gore.

It was one of those occasions in which I had never envisaged myself taking part, and I had to rise to the occasion as it proceeded. The ambulance service has been very beneficial to the town and district over the years. New vehicles have been purchased with funds from appeals which have been launched throughout the district as required. My Rotary Club spearheaded one such appeal for a new vehicle.

Gore High School.

In 1975 I was invited to be the Speaker at the Prizegiving of the School. I think the theme of my talk related to the difference in opportunity available today compared to my day and the earlier days of the school. In retrospect, I think I did not fully take the opportunity to sound a more positive note as to what awaited the graduating pupils in their next few years. I presented the Memorial Prizes and the Dux Award. On one occasion one of the Memorial Prizes went to my daughter, Dawn Elder.

New Zealand Paper Mills.

The year 1976 saw the Centennial Celebration Dinner and Dance for the Paper Mills, which were situated in the Matura. The Matura Mayor was therefore more involved than the Gore Borough, but it was interesting to be invited as many employees lived in Gore and commuted daily to work. The mill specialised in niche markets. It was ideally situated alongside the Falls on the Matura River, which was a good source of power for the industry. Unfortunately, however, all the raw materials needed to be brought to the mill, mostly as pulp, through the port of Bluff. The other disadvantage was that most of its market was out of Southland and there were freight costs getting the product to buyers. Quite a few years later the parent company assessed the operation as uneconomic and the mill was closed. I notice that the Toast to New Zealand Paper Mills Ltd was in the very capable hands of Rt. Hon Brian Talboys, Member for Wallace and Deputy Prime Minister of New Zealand. Brian had been on my flying course at Brandon, Canada, but had been invalided home because of illness. The family will recall how he talked of 'my friend Ivan' at the opening of the Baptist Church Hall. I had great respect for Brian, and always enjoyed listening to him.

Governor General's Visit to Invercargill.

An invitation came from Government House, Wellington, to a Luncheon to be hosted by His Excellency The Governor General, Sir Denis Blundell and Lady Blundell, in the Kelvin Hotel, Invercargill on 3rd May 1976. This was an occasion when Their Excellencies received a wide range of Local Body members and other prominent people of the province. It was another of those occasions when I felt like pinching myself and asking if it was true that I was in this situation. Often I would think of the Christmas Card from Arthur Brammer many years before with the added note 'Is Ivan Mayor of New Zealand yet?' We laughed at that one which seemed so ridiculous at the time but here I was in the office of Mayor - though not 'of New Zealand' - and sharing in these occasions. The following year we had an invitation to a Garden Party at Government House, Auckland but it did not come with air tickets so we did not get to enjoy that one.

Visit of Queen Elizabeth II and HRH the Duke of Edinburgh

A Civic Buffet Luncheon was hosted by the City of Invercargill in honour of The Queen and the Duke at the Kelvin Hotel in Invercargill. This was quite a special occasion. Mayor Russell Miller and Mrs Miller were hosting and were seated with the Royal Guests at the top table. Others were allocated numbered tables situated on each side of a loaded buffet. The Invercargill Licensing Trust had excelled itself in the decoration of the dishes provided. With all the guests in their places, the Royal pair were escorted to their table. After the meal and the speeches, the couple separated with the Queen walking down the right-hand side meeting people and the Duke down our side on the left. Russell Miller introduced me as Mayor of the other main town in Southland. Prince Philip asked very cogent questions, about how large the town was and what was its main function or industry. As he followed the Queen out the door he paused, peeped back round the door and said, 'Now you can all have another go'. We had, in fact, all done very well.

Southland Crematorium.

In September 1977 we were invited to the dedication of the new Crematorium adjacent to the Eastern Cemetery in Invercargill. The Crematorium was a joint effort of the Southland Territorial Local Bodies so the Gore Borough had a vested interest in this venture. The function was a simple formal service of dedication with a couple of hymns, Old and New Testament readings, Prayer of Intercession and Act of Dedication. After the service the whole building was open for inspection, including what goes on behind the curtains. I think Millie decided then and there that she did not want to be cremated.

Senior Citizens Club Rooms

In the three and a half years since its formation the Senior Citizens Club had been very busy. The Council had considered it a suitable organisation to share a portion of the Civic Centre site and it had been allocated a corner just beyond the James Cumming Wing. The building had a couple of rather nice features. The wall panelling round the entrance foyer had been donated by the Speden family from the demolition of the family home in Jacobstown, North Gore. Gordon Speden was the treasurer of the Club and had been

instrumental in making this offer. The Club had also commissioned a design to be both a carved wooden feature in the foyer of the club rooms and a pattern to be incorporated in the badge of the Club. The opening of the rooms commenced with a short function during the week in the foyer of the new rooms where I was invited to unveil this plaque which was secured to the wall opposite the entrance.

The official opening took place on Saturday 3rd September 1977 in the main hall of the James Cumming Wing at the close of which the club adjourned to the rooms where Hon J B Gordon opened the door to the building. It was a very great day for the Club which rapidly put the rooms to good use. At that time there were not so many organisations catering for the elderly in Gore. Nearly thirty years later we have three new Rest Homes and expanded facilities in the older ones, an activity centre at Parata Home, a Probus Club and additional service clubs, all of which provide activities and interests for the wider population of people in the second part of their lives. The scope of the activities has of necessity lessened in Senior Citizens but there is still a section of the elderly living in their own homes, many of them alone, who find the fellowship of the club very helpful.

After Millie's death I joined the Senior Citizens Club to take advantage of their Thursday luncheon. I was quickly elected to the committee, then a year or two later to Vice President and then served three years as President. Having been the instigator of the club as Mayor 30 years before, I had the unique privilege of being the President for the 30th anniversary celebrations. I also wrote a short history of the club to coincide with that anniversary occasion. On my retirement from President I was elected a Life Member of the Club. I appreciated this even though I was already an Honorary Life Member as the later award recognised my record of service in an active capacity.

Anzac Day at Heriot.

I was invited to give the address at the united Anzac Day commemoration service at Heriot in 1977. The chairman was Mr John Hodgkin of Moa Flat who was a client of mine. He was a well educated English immigrant who wrote up his own cash book and brought it to us just to complete the final accounts. The service featured a parade of Scouts, Cubs and Brownies which proceeded to the War Memorial for the laying of wreaths along with those of the ex-servicemen. After the service, Millie and I were invited for lunch at the Hodgkin home up on the hill. Mrs Hodgkin was a charming hostess and she and Millie enjoyed their time together. I respected John immensely and was sorry when he died not many years later. I was shown round the property during the afternoon and was interested to find that he regarded Anzac Day as marking the time to harvest the apples from their small orchard and to lay them up for winter use.

Hokonui Pioneer Park.

Some older citizens, mainly retired farmers, in cooperation with the Vintage Car Club, conceived the idea of setting up a Pioneer Museum to feature the vintage artefacts of the pioneer days. By 1977 this project was coming to fruition with the erection of clubrooms for the Car Club and a building to house vintage vehicles and farm machinery ranging from

tractors to quite humble items. It is located on a good site just adjacent to Croydon Lodge Hotel on the outskirts of the North Gore residential area. At the time of writing, the project has developed considerably and in addition to the main building has the Ferndale School building, the Balfour branch of the Bank of New Zealand, a very old pioneer cottage fitted up with all the furniture and kitchen utensils of the early days and the former Anglican Church from Mandeville. The church is completely usable and is from time to time booked for weddings - I have even been to a funeral held in the grounds. A stream runs down one side of the property and this has a small dam with a working water wheel as a point of interest. A golf driving range was established more recently and is open around the weekends, manned by volunteers. The main building houses some vintage cars, vintage tractors, steam traction engines, and smaller implements of all kinds. The Museum is staffed by volunteers each afternoon. As Mayor and Mayoress, Millie and I were given Life Member certificates to mark the completion of this stage. It is a project which will continue to develop. There are many old items which require restoration and cleaning up for display and volunteers carry out this work as time and energy allow.

A Parade of Power was launched by the committee early in 1977 with the profits used to help finance the Park. The display was held at the showgrounds and a wide range of machinery was shown. There were no fewer than six traction engines, which are massive powerful machines - many old-timers felt a real fascination with steam. There were about thirty two tractors, ranging from a 1917 Moline to a 1952 David Brown Cropmaster. The Moline was 60 years old and the David Brown was 25 years old. Among the other well-known brands in the collection were Titan, International, Bates, Austin, Leyland, Fordson, McCormack Deering, Peterboro, Fiat, Case, Caterpillar, Hart Parr, Massey Harris, Massey-Ferguson and John Deere. There were nine stationery engines of various kinds and thirty-odd vintage cars from a 1911 Ford T and Sunbeam 12/16 down to a 1950 Studebaker Commander Convertible. There were numerous displays of old machinery in action along with displays by the Model Aeroplane Club, the Army, Marching Groups, butter making, working sheepdogs, Gymnastic Club and Judo Club Demonstrations and a Grand Parade. The Official Opening was in the hands of Mr Rex Austin, MP for Awarua, and who was as I recall the Under Secretary for Agriculture. On the Sunday afternoon I was asked to speak and Millie made the Presentation of Awards to winners of the Children's Poster Competition. Two bullocks pitted their strength against a football team in a Tug-of-War late in the day. The Parade of Power was a very successful venture and the Pioneer Park committee were to be congratulated for their vision and for the success of their day.

Queen's Jubilee Medal.

In 1977 The Queen celebrated twenty-five years on the throne and a Jubilee Medal was issued to all persons in office as Mayor or County Chairman as well as other distinguished persons throughout the country. This medal qualifies to be worn with other medals on all appropriate occasions and I am proud to wear it with my War Medals. Since 1982 I have worn it second after the QSO.

Eastern Southland Marching Assn

In July 1977 Millie was invited to be Patroness of this association. She made a point of attending all competitions and displays she could manage and was requested to present trophies at the conclusion of competition. The association had teams of both young and old and their displays were marvels of precision and smartness.

Returned Services Association Diamond Jubilee Dinner.

On 18th October 1977 the President and Executive of the Gore RSA held a midday dinner to mark the sixtieth anniversary of the Association's founding in 1917 during the First World War. At a very early stage, before the war had ended, it was recognised that many soldiers and other servicemen would return with disabilities and health problems of various kinds and it seemed desirable to establish some organisation to represent their needs. In addition the association would enable returned men to meet to continue in some measure the fellowship experienced in service when often a man's life depended on his mates. We were invited firstly in my role as an ex-serviceman and also as Mayor and Mayoress.

Eastern Southland Floral Art Club.

The Mayoress was invited to the 10th Anniversary Dinner of this club on 23rd June 1977. Gore was blessed with some outstanding floral artists, including people like Leila Herron, Dorrie Quertier, Jill Chittock among many others. Even today I receive a small floral posy from the club on my birthday. They aim to do this for all citizens who are over 80. Millie was very interested in their work, including the Floral Festival of Praise which showed the expertise of many ladies in the churches who had a flair for floral decoration.

Gore Garden Club Golden Jubilee.

We were guests of honour at the jubilee dinner of the Club. Those pictured at the top table in my clipping from The Ensign were: Mrs D Bellew (Vice-President), Mr. P. Salmond (Vice-President), Mrs E Herron (Secretary), Mr A W Newman (President), The Mayoress and Mayor and Mr J Robertson, one of the foundation members of the club.

Mrs Herron outlined the history of the Club and paid tribute to the succession of curators of the Gore Gardens and the local nurserymen who had been members and advisors since earliest days. I remarked that it was "pleasing to see that the club is still a healthy specimen after fifty years." Many of the attractive private gardens in Gore, whether tended by club members or others, complement the public plots and I paid tribute to the present Superintendent of Reserves, Mr I D Gilchrist, for his work in promoting horticulture in the district. I added that it was significant that three important local parks - Newman, Bannerman and Hamilton - were named after former members of the Gore Garden Club. The Ensign report went on to say that the massive cake had been baked for the occasion by Mrs Sheila Cleland. Sheila and her sister Frances Scammell were both on the committee of the club. Frances later became the secretary of the Senior Citizens Club and Sheila worked as a volunteer for many years in the club's kitchen.

Fleming & Company Ltd.

A very prominent landmark in Gore over the years has been the Creamoata Mill founded in 1878 by some entrepreneurial men and finally coming under the control of the Fleming family under the name of Fleming & Co. about the end of the First World War. Its products were distributed under the brand of Sergeant Dan¹ whose image is prominently displayed on the factory wall facing Main Street. Sadly the ownership of the factory was no longer in local hands. As I recall, the company had been taken over by General Foods, which was later taken over by Goodman Fielder and then in turn by Wattie Industries - although the product was still sold under the Fleming name².

The officials at the celebration dinner on 15th July 1978 were the Directors and Executive of Wattie Industries. As she sat down to dinner the Mayoress suggested there should be porridge on the menu. "There is", she was told. And there it was - Hot Steaming Porridge (with cream). Sadly I missed this exchange and had already ordered soup before I had really studied the 'Menu a la Sgt. Dan'. The Celebration was an excellent evening. I was very interested when one of the speakers said that there were two areas in the world which were eminently suitable for the production of oats for breakfast foods. These were Eastern Southland and an area in Victoria, Australia to the west of Melbourne.

It was therefore sad not so very many years after the centennial, that the production of oat products ceased at Flemings in Gore. By this time Watties had been taken over by Heinz, Australia, who declared the Gore operation uneconomic and transferred their production to Victoria, Australia. This is a process I have observed over the years. A major firm experiences the opposition from a local firm and makes an offer that can't be refused. They carry on the production for some time, then, on the basis of the tempting price offered for the business, find it 'uneconomic' and close it down with no concern for the employees or the suppliers of the raw materials who lose a market or have to find another outlet. My cousin Clarence Gardyne and his sons Graeme and John had been fairly major suppliers to the Fleming Mill. They continued to grow oats and now supply Harraways who operated out of Dunedin and Timaru. Rolled Oats are still sold under the name of Fleming but they are no longer manufactured in Gore.

Gore Women's Club

On Wednesday 22nd November 1978 the Gore Women's Club celebrated their Golden Jubilee in their clubrooms in Lyne Street, Gore. The Toast List includes interesting quotations under the various headings, such as: President's Remarks - "The company

1 The Sergeant Dan tradename was used extensively as a selling feature. The Company gave away a dessert spoon with which customers could eat their breakfast porridge. I think production of a number of empty bags earned the customer a spoon and I recall some of them coming into the home at East Chatton. This was discontinued in later years and I fancy the war years may have had something to do with it - certainly it never happened after the war.

2 The Company had been first established by Thomas Green, the owner of the site, Richardson, a miller from Outram, and a farmer called G M Bell. Flour was first produced at the mill about April 1878. Richardson died in 1883 and the partnership sold out to Fleming Henderson and Co. for £1500. In 1902 Fleming & Co Ltd. was formed and bought out the partnership for £7000. The mill was destroyed by fire in 1910 and was not recommissioned until 1920 - in the meantime flour was made at Milton. From early days both flour and oatmeal were produced - in 1893 production was 10 tons of flour and 20 tons of oatmeal daily. The Company merged with Northern Roller Milling Co in 1854 and their oat mill was transferred to Gore - the emphasis gradually switched from Oatmeal to Rolled Oats. Over the years new products were developed, such as Creamoata, Milk Oaties, Semolina, Flaked Rice, Quick and Instant Oats, Bran Flakes and Vita Crunch Cereal. Production of flour ceased after a fire in 1918.

maketh the feast"; Music circle - "I do sing because I must, And pipe but as the linnets sing"; The Club - "The female woman is one of the greatest institooshuns of which this land can boste"; Play Reading Circle - "The purpose of playing is to hold, as t'were, the mirror up to nature"; Visitors - "Friendship is the highest degree of perfection in society." The Mayoress was asked to propose the toast to Life Members and Past Presidents. (The Mayor was no where represented as this was 'No Man's Land'.)

I was and am well aware that this Club has been a very popular and well-conducted organisation down through the years and, later, as Millie found time to join in the Club's activities, she very much enjoyed the Play Reading Circle and to a lesser extent the Music Circle.

Gore Plumbing and Sheetmetal Ltd.

An official opening of the Company's new showroom in Gorton St., Gore was held on 23rd November 1978. Rt Hon Brian Talboys, deputy Prime Minister, performed the official opening and other speakers were; Coley Ellison, Managing Director, Noel Harrison, Chairman, Consolidated Bathroom Centres of NZ, Tony Lindop, Senior Consultant Business Development Centre, Otago University. The showroom was for the Home Improvements division of the plumbing company. A buffet dinner and social followed. At the time of writing these premises are no longer occupied. The principal of the company moved with the business to Invercargill where there was more outlet for its products. The building was occupied by Flooring Specialists for some time but they moved to Hokonui Drive and the building has languished since, being out of the general retail area of the town. For many years it was complemented in Gorton Street by the United Trading Co Ltd, a building materials firm which was later taken over by John Edmonds Ltd. When Placemakers and Mitre 10 were established in the Medway/Irwell Streets area, business of this nature faded out 'over the tracks.'

1978 Flood and the Flood Relief Committee.

In October 1978 the Eastern Southland, Balclutha and Alexandra districts experienced a prolonged period of heavy rain which caused very serious flooding and extensive damage. I mention it here in its chronological order but I intend to deal with the story in a separate chapter in view of its extensive ramifications.

East Gore School

I have three lovely letters from pupils in Rooms Five, Six and Seven at East Gore School. The Principal had asked me to come and talk to them about the Mayoralty. I showed them the Mayoral Chain and explained the symbols as portraying a rural based town - sheep, river, grass, fish and turnip. One girl said, 'I was surprised when you told me that you worked as an accountant. It must keep you busy having two important jobs.' A perceptive child.

Hearing Association

I have a card with a little flower sprig on it enclosed in plastic saying; 'To Mrs Elder. In appreciation from The Hearing Association'. Millie was amused at the thought of reciting to the hard of hearing but she was a regular contributor at their annual Christmas Party. She had, of course, a clear voice and most of the children and older people had hearing assistance in some form or other. Her poems all had a lot of humour and most told a story - they were well appreciated by the Hearing Association as well as other groups.

Royal Foundation for the Blind.

A letter on 12th November 1979 invited us to the Christmas Party to be held on 8th December 1979. The letter was written by Valda Barrett who in everyday life was a valuable employee in my office! Such is the cross-culture you often experience in a relatively small town like Gore. The Rotary Club regularly supplied Christmas cakes to the Gore Advisory Committee of the Foundation and these were presented at this function to all the registered blind of the town. A side-benefit to Rotarians was that there were often some cakes left over and I have been able to buy a cake from this source from time to time.

Anzac Day Tapanui.

In 1979 the Tapanui branch of the RSA finally succeeded in getting me to be their speaker at the annual Anzac Day service. The first time they had asked I was already booked up to speak at Heriot. The following year I was still in the North Island after the Municipal Conference in Rotorua. The year after that I was overseas on a trip made in the hope of seeing Millie's Mum for her 97th birthday - she had died just before we arrived. So Tapanui had been persistent.

In my speech I referred to the fact that my Uncle Andy had been a carrier in Tapanui, that my Uncle George who lived in a neighbouring district was closely associated with the Tapanui Presbyterian Church and that my older brother Allan had also spent some years as a carrier in the town.

I referred to the horrors of war - the sand and flies at Gallipoli, so thick they had to be brushed off your food before putting it in your mouth; being pinned down in the trenches; bayonet charges through barbed wire into a hail of bullets; the sadness of children deprived of a parent and parents deprived of a son; decades of blindness and years of lonely widowhood. I went on to discuss the problems which still exist so long after the 'war to end war'! I sounded a note of 'reaching out in understanding,' quoting a verse by Thomas Bracken which I had recently come across:

Not Understood³

For 'not understood' we move along asunder
Our paths grow wider as the seasons creep along the years.
We marvel and we wonder why life is life
And then we fall asleep - 'not understood'.

3 Bracken, Thomas, Not Understood and Other Poems, 1908, Gordon & Gotch: Wellington, pp. 7-8

'Not understood' we gather false impressions
And hug them closer as the years go by
Till virtues often seem to us transgressions
And thus men rise and fall, live and die, 'not understood'.

O God, that men would see a little clearer
Or judge less harshly where they cannot see.
O God, that men would draw a little nearer one another
They'd be nearer Thee, "and understood".

I called on those assembled to remember and honour those who served and sacrificed in war. And I challenged them to reach out in understanding to people, to reach out in faith to God and then go out to serve, and sacrifice if need be, in Peace.

Girls' Brigade Queen's Award Presentation 1979.

This was a lovely evening involving opening devotions by the Regional Patroness, Mrs Wood. The Regional Commissioner, Mrs Hazeleger, was chairperson and there was a combination of games and items. The Queen's Award presentation was made by Mrs Hazeleger to three girls of the 2nd Gore Company and one girl from the 1st Waikaka Valley Company after which I was invited to address the Awardees and the meeting. The girls who had won the Awards each replied. I had the honour of presenting the Gold Duke of Edinburgh Awards to two girls of the 1st Waikaka Valley Company - Alison Brock and Karen Stark. I found these occasions very pleasant and rewarding as they involved young people who were often children of friends, acquaintances, or clients⁴. It was a nice aspect of the position of Mayor.

After offering congratulations to the awardees and to their parents, I commented on the principles of Girls Brigade - training in practical things and in spiritual things and developing fellowship. I said that this training provided a sound foundation for life. "Do not think that society owes you something but rather that you owe something to your country and your community. Serve your family. Serve your church. Serve your community. Serve your country."

St. Peter's College Chapel

The culmination of a ten year project for St. Peter's College was the opening of their Chapel on 25th February 1979. We were both invited to the blessing by The Most Reverend John P Kavanagh, DD, DCL, the Bishop of Dunedin. The Chapel is of an octagonal shape with tiered steps round most of the room facing the altar area. The steps were carpeted for the children to sit on for services and it is a most attractive building.

⁴ It is of passing interest that three days before writing the above, I had attended the wedding of Karen's Dad Alex Stark to Alison's Aunt Dulcie Brock. Each had been widowed for some years but had formed a deep attachment over recent years. They had grown up on neighbouring properties and it was said at the wedding that Alex used to double Dulcie on his bike when they were kids. Again this illustrates the integration of people in the wider area of Eastern Southland. It also illustrates the extent to which country folk regarded me and Millie as 'their' Mayor and Mayoress.

⁵Riversdale Community Centre

We were invited to the Official Opening of the Riversdale Community Centre. The County chairman, C E Bowmar JP, QSO. who lived at Plains Station on the edge of the Riversdale district, officially opened the Centre. The Community Centre was an ambitious project which had captured the interest of the district residents who had succeeded in erecting a very worthwhile amenity for the district. It proved to be an ideal venue for the annual Riversdale Arts and Crafts Exhibition which had previously been staged in totally inadequate premises. I recalled being invited to open this annual arts event some years earlier in crowded and cramped quarters in an old house so I was well aware that the open space of the new hall would be much appreciated. The Centre also provided for a range of sporting activities and meeting rooms with very good facilities for catering.

Gore Repertory Society

The Society had functioned in various rooms and venues from its formation in 1935. A milestone had been reached in 1954 when the Society gained permanent rooms in the old Gore High School buildings adjacent to the bridge. The west wing of the school which had been Rooms 1-4 of the school became the home of the Society. Room 1 and the adjacent corridor provided space for props and dressing rooms while the remainder was converted into the Little Theatre. A raked floor and stage were installed and an entrance porch was added on the south side of the wing. The Society presented two one-act plays entitled 'The Sponge Room', and 'Squat Betty' to mark the Silver Jubilee. The cast members were well known from previous productions - Phil Bedet, Lily Garland, Simon Morley-John, Peter Burke, Margaret Owens and Peter Garland.

New Zealand Croquet Association

MacRobertson Shield Triangular Tournament

In my scrap book of this period I have a lovely picture of The Mayoress hitting the ball through the hoop at the opening of a match in Gore between Australia and New Zealand. It is obvious that she succeeded in doing so quite handsomely. The match was one of a series of eight tests and two other matches of the Triangular Tournament contested between Australia, Great Britain and New Zealand. The Trophy at stake was the MacRobertson Shield, presented back in 1925 for competition between Australia and England. This was extended in 1935 to include New Zealand in a triangular format.

It was indeed an honour for Gore to be included as a venue for this series and paid tribute to the standard of the local lawns. As mentioned earlier in this story, the Gore Croquet Club had reached its Golden Jubilee in 1972 and included quite a number of very keen

⁵ Mention of St Peter's College reminds me of another event in which I was invited to share. This was the farewell to the Principal, Father Hill. I was well acquainted with Father Hill as he played golf and we had been paired together on more than one occasion. Also in the official party was David Nicholson, a farmer client of mine. I was well known locally as a Baptist and took the opportunity of telling a story involving a Baptist and his Catholic friend. This friend took the Baptist to the races. The Baptist noticed that his friend always backed a horse which had been blessed with Holy Water by his Priest before the race. After a similar 'blessing' of a horse in a later race, the Baptist put a bet on the horse. During the race the horse suddenly collapsed and died. The Baptist said wryly to his Catholic friend, "I don't know. When you backed a horse that had been blessed, it always won. When I backed a horse after it was blessed, it collapses and dies!". "Oh", says his friend, "that is because you don't know the difference between a blessing and 'The Last Rites'."

players.

Millie or I were each year invited to the opening day of the club on the first Saturday of the season. This meant the loss of my Saturday golf game but if the golf match was important I would ask Millie to do the honours. The club was very good at placing the ball close to the hoop, making it difficult to miss! On this occasion I think Millie had been invited directly to perform the deed.

I confess that for many years I had the impression that croquet was a game for older ladies and a smattering of elderly men with impeccable manners. Millie and I found that the championships included much younger players, both men and women. Gone also was the impression of Croquet being a polite, good-mannered game. It is in fact a rather vicious game. It consists of banishing your opponent's two balls each to the furthest corner of the field from one another and then proceeding to play out your own game while your opponent sits watching on from the shelter provided. Only when your game breaks down and you make a mistake does your opponent get a chance. Then they have to hit their second ball with their first across the length or width of the green in order to carry on. Yes, it is quite a vicious game.

New Zealand Citizenship Ceremony.

On 15th March 1979 I conducted a Citizenship Ceremony for Mr and Mrs E F Curry and their two daughters who had been in New Zealand for six years. They were South Africans who moved to escape the Apartheid regime in that country. Elmer Curry was the physiotherapist at Seddon Memorial Hospital in the Clinical Services Wing which I had officially opened in 1973 and Mrs Curry was a teacher at Gore High School. The new citizens were asked to swear their Oath of Allegiance to New Zealand and The Queen, which they then sign, and to receive their Certificate of Citizenship which had been sent to the Borough as agents for the Crown. Elmer Curry is totally blind but carried out his work extremely well and many Gore people have been grateful for his help. Some time after retirement the Currys moved to Morrinsville but later returned to Gore. The photo in my scrap book shows me reading a congratulatory message from the Minister of Internal Affairs, Mr Highet.

Rt Hon J B {Peter } Gordon.

The local branch of the National Party held a valedictory evening on 6th March 1979 for Peter Gordon on his retirement from politics for health reasons. He had served a long period in Parliament and became a Minister in the National Government for a number of years. The Prime Minister, Robert Muldoon, came down for the occasion. It was a National Party function to which I had been invited as Mayor to represent the Borough and we were seated at the top table for the occasion. I was waiting inside the main door of the James Cumming Wing to receive the Prime Minister and welcome him to the Borough. He shook hands with me but with his beady eyes at the same time scanning the crowd to spot his Party cronies. It is protocol that the Mayor is the Chief Citizen in his own Borough but Rob Muldoon made no attempt to be even polite to me.

Speaking as Mayor of Gore, I said that Mr Gordon had been a good friend and servant of the town and the surrounding districts. He had regularly met his constituents here and was a 'tiger for work'. On numerous occasions he had supported representations on behalf of the town on such things as water supply, sewage, an industrial area and the abattoir. I said that he was a man of integrity with an innate honesty and a constant desire for the truth.⁶

In his reply Mr Gordon said he was sorry to be leaving politics but after three months he was sure he had made the right decision. 'My medical complaint with its limitations on me is a fact of life'. He mentioned the numerous people in the district who had been of assistance to him during his years in Parliament. He described the Town Clerk of Gore, Mr Gilbert Winwood, as a great servant of the people of Gore and of him personally. Of the Mayor, Mr Elder, Mr Gordon said he trusted that what he had heard about Mr Elder's pending retirement was not true and if it was so, that he could be talked out of it. He concluded by saying that he had served to the best of his ability. He said if there was one message he wanted to leave with the people it was 'not to blame your politician for everything'. I added a note of thanks to Mrs Gordon for her constant support for her husband, travelling with him on many official occasions, keeping him in order, and for her support in the home.

Southern Shears.

In February 1979 The South Island Autumn Shearing Championships were held in Gore in the James Cumming Wing. A strong committee headed by Mr Ron Cunningham was given the task of organising the shears and the hall was a buzz of shearing machines, shouts of encouragement from the audience and the calls of the shepherds keeping the sheep up to the shearers. Sessions were held on Friday afternoon and evening and all day on the Saturday. The finals were held on the Saturday evening. Shearing competitions were regularly held each year around Southland and Otago as in other parts of New Zealand. The Golden Shears were held in Masterton each year and were perhaps the premier national contest. Prize winners at Gore received a Sash and with monetary prizes ranging up to \$100 so it was obvious that shearers entered primarily for the honour of winning rather than earning money. I was invited to the final evening and presented the major prizes.

Gore Volunteer Fire Brigade.

On 28th July 1979 a valedictory function was held to mark the retirement of four long-term members of the Brigade. These were Chief Fire Officer Bruce Wallis (39 years service)⁷, Deputy Chief Fire Officer Russell Rhodes (30 years service), Fireman Allan McGregor

⁶ Mr Muldoon paid tribute to J B Gordon. 'I regard Peter's retirement as a tragic and great loss', he said. He expressed himself delighted to have had the opportunity to attend the function to publicly pay tribute to Mr Gordon. He said that Mr Gordon had received the rare honour for a New Zealander of being made a Privy Councillor, an honour that is usually reserved for Prime Ministers and Deputy Prime Ministers'. He said as Minister of Transport, Mr Gordon had achieved the respect of all those involved in transport for his integrity and honesty and the fact that he did not beat about the bush on issues. Mr Muldoon said in a country like New Zealand politics was a team game, and Mr Gordon was well aware of that fact. 'There was never a more loyal member of the National Party and caucus than Peter', he said.

⁷ The retirement of Bruce Wallis ended a very long period of service by the Wallis family. Very early in the life of the volunteer brigade, the Fire Chief was Fred Wallis of R & F Wallis Ltd., Wool Merchants. This was followed by many years in charge of the brigade by Les Wallis, manager of the Mens Department of H & J Smith, and lastly by Bruce who was retiring that night. My girls may be interested to know that Allan McGregor, a hairdresser, was the husband of Irene McGregor, still alive aged 94. Allan died a good many years ago.

(38 years Fire service and 5 years in the Fire Police) and Secretary Ken Craig (19 years with 8 of those as Secretary).

I talked about the dedication of firemen to the service, the Esprit de Corps built up, their keenness and speed of response, the suspense each time as to whether this might be the big one, and the sacrifice of the wives and families. I referred to the time spent in practice, both for competition work and for the reality required on the job.

I finished with the story of the cuckoo clock. A fireman came in very late and a sleepy voice from the bedroom asked, 'What time is it?' 'Eleven o'clock', the fireman replied. Just then the cuckoo started to strike the real time, two o'clock - he had to mimic the clock another nine times to match his story!

Another farewell night was held in the East Gore Hall in 1980 in tribute to Deputy Chief Fire Officer Noel Kennedy. Noel was foreman of the Works Dept of the Council

NZ Crippled Children Society.

In November 1979 we were invited to the Christmas Party of the Eastern Southland Sub-Branch of the Crippled Childrens' Society. Wonderful work was done on behalf of these children. A very good friend of ours was Elsie Titchener, for many years the Organiser for the Society who was based in Invercargill but who also visited Gore. I had known Elsie in Invercargill before I went into camp in 1941 and when we were in Invercargill in the 1950s she and Millie became very good friends. The chairman of the Eastern Southland Sub-Branch was W P Devine, an Insurance Agent and Borough Councillor with a lot of drive and initiative. A former schoolmate of mine, though a few years younger, Sally Harper (nee Paterson) was an assistant for Elsie in Invercargill. For many years the Society operated a workshop in Oreti Street, off Charlton Road in Gore, where they manufactured timber products for gardens and farms. On a couple of occasions I bought trellis material from them.

The CCS parties were always a pleasure to attend. They were full of the fun of the simple interests of these children and we could enjoy sitting and watching. One or other of us would give a brief Christmas greeting and thank them for the invitation.

Inner Wheel Club - Siroptimist International.

In February 1980, The Mayoress received a letter from Nelson from the Regional Officer of Siroptimist International advising she had been instructed to investigate the formation of a Siroptimist Club in Gore. Siroptimist International was sponsored originally by Rotary and had the same classification system where they aimed to have one member from each profession or type of business. A meeting was being held on 4th March and Millie was invited to attend. It was decided to proceed and I think the first meeting was held about September. A Horse Chestnut tree was planted at the top of Bannerman Park to mark the occasion and I was invited to be present, the planting being carried out by the Dominion President. Betty Smyth was the Charter President and Anne Gover the first Secretary.

Twenty five years later, Anne Gover was invited to speak to the Rotary Club about Siroptimists and by coincidence I was rostered to thank the speaker that night. I reminded her that I was present at the planting of that tree just twenty-five years ago to the month. It was a strange set of circumstances. My daughter Susan was a member for a number of years but while she was studying for the ministry she found both the time and the cost too great a commitment and resigned.

National Roads Board.

In May 1980 Hon Bill Young, Minister of Works, included a visit to Gore during a three-day visit to Southland with Roads Board officials. The Deputy Chairman of the Roads Board expressed himself very impressed with the general appearance of Gore. 'It is one of the tidiest we have come across in the country.' As Mayor, I told the Board that the council was proud of Gore, which presented itself well. 'The Borough Engineer and the Superintendent of Parks and Reserves deserve much of the credit for the state of the town'. The Chairman of Works, W P Devine outlined the recent and planned programme of works under consideration.

East Gore Plunket Rooms

In June 1980 I was invited to officially open the new Plunket Rooms in East Gore. I commented on the development of East Gore in recent years and commended them for the fundraising they had achieved. The President of the branch was Janice Chittock, a former member of the Baptist Girls Bible Class. The key was turned by the Patroness of the Branch, Mrs K Grace. The existence of the rooms in East Gore would benefit young mothers in the newer lower cost housing recently built there. A new subdivision had been opened up by Bill Walker of Gore Construction and as his accountant I had some knowledge of it.

Southland Savings Bank Grants

Six Gore organisations received grants from the Southland Savings Bank in August 1980. In my scrap book is a picture of the Bank's Chairman of Trustees, Robin Archer, presenting cheques to myself for some municipal project, Mrs J Roughan for the YWCA, and John Speden for the Gore Branch of the IHC.

Netball.

The Mayoress had the privilege of presenting the shield for the First Grade competition to the East Gore netball team which had won it for four years in a row. She was wearing her Chain of Office.

Hockey Tournament.

This time I had the privilege of officially opening the secondary schools hockey tournament in late August 1980. This was carried out at St Peter's College. The Ensign report pictured me with the President of the combined Eastern-Northern Southland Womens' Hockey Association and Mrs Irene McGregor, Patroness. The tournament was held on the

grounds of St Peter's and Gore High School.

New Fire Station.

The opening of the new Fire Station in Hokonui Drive was the last major outside function which Millie and I attended as Mayoress and Mayor. The old station beside Gormack Wilkes Davidson had long outlived its usefulness. The Chief Fire Officer commented that he had first heard of the need for a new station about 20 years earlier. It was not until the establishment of the New Zealand Fire Services Commission some ten years later that more concrete progress was made.

The official opening was performed by Brian Talboys, Acting Prime Minister at the time and Member of Parliament for the Wallace electorate. He said that all brigade members and their families were entitled to a sense of pride in the service they provide. The people of New Zealand were fortunate because of the large number of men who gave up some part of their family life in order to protect the community in which they lived. He referred to the large part that one family had played in the Gore Volunteer Fire Brigade. This was the Wallis family - Fred Wallis had been one of the founding members of the brigade and for 92 consecutive years there had been a Wallis as a member. He said this notable family association with the brigade gave a sense of continuity, service and tradition which really was the hallmark of the fire service.

The Ensign report contained a special quote: "The Acting Prime Minister and MP for Wallace paid special tribute to the Mayor of Gore, Mr I G Elder at the official opening. Mr Talboys expressed warm admiration of Mr Elder, who is not seeking reelection on the Borough Council this year. Having known Mr Elder for thirty years, Mr Talboys congratulated him on his service to the town and wished him and his wife well for the future". Millie always said that she thought the news of my retirement caused Brian to think about his own position. Whether that is so or not, it was only a short time later that he also retired from public office.

Twelve Long Service Awards were presented to members of the brigade - Long Service equates to 14+ years. The men who received awards were, A Timmock (21 yrs), S Beatty (21 yrs), B Scammell (14 yrs), R Rhodes (28 yrs), G McKay (28 yrs), L Palmer (14 yrs), D MacKenzie (14 yrs), J Blackwood (28 yrs), W Greenfield (14 yrs), J Tutty (14 yrs), K Herbert (14 yrs) and N Kennedy (21 yrs).

Eastern Southland Sub-Branch of Red Cross Society.

Two days later Millie was presenting long service awards to three members of the Red Cross. These were to: Mrs Irene McGregor, 40 years, Mrs Evelyn Harvey, 20 years, and Mrs Ray Moulin, 20 years. Mrs Harvey was Joan Harvey's mother in law. Mrs Moulin had served a term on the Council.

Gore Croquet Club.

The same issue of The Ensign had a picture of the opening of the Croquet Club sea-

son with the Mayoress putting the first ball through the hoop and the Mayor looking on.

The End Of An Era.

The triennial local body elections were held in October 1980. Hallam Smith was elected unopposed to succeed me and was installed to office on 16th October. Hallam had served two terms on the Council, the second as Chairman of Finance, and had also been on the Council back in the 1950s. It is the privilege of the outgoing Mayor to enrobe the new Mayor and place the Chain of Office over his head and I was very happy to do this. The retiring Mayoress also placed the Mayoress' chain over the head of Jean Smith, the new Mayoress. Hallam had spent all his working life as a solicitor in the town and was very loyal to Gore. Perhaps he had reason to be as I am sure the town had been good to him. I had considerable respect for his clear thinking and leadership in the legal field. He was both a qualified Solicitor and a Chartered Accountant and this latter qualification added considerably to his effectiveness as a lawyer. It was also a useful sphere of knowledge in his council service. In handing over the reins of office I said, "I know that his experience in business, his own natural ability, his knowledge of the town and his experience on the council all fit him very well for the task ahead of him."

The Council also expressed appreciation for the service that my Mayoress and I had given the town. The Ensign stated, regarding the Mayor, "The careful attention to the responsibilities of these offices, the tact, discretion and wise counsel which he has displayed and given at all times, is highly commended as well as the manner in which he has acted as the representative of the citizens of Gore on all formal occasions."

I appreciated the other resolution which the Council passed: "The duties attached to the office of Mayoress have been carried out by her in a manner which has received universal approval and given pleasure to many people."

And so fifteen years of local body service came to an end.

I am sure I pulled my weight in my first seven years as a Councillor. As a member of the Town Planning Committee, I played my full share in dealing with the objections to the Scheme Plan in the first year. I think my para-legal knowledge arising from my studies enabled me to cope well with the complexities of Town Planning. There was always a slight problem when items came up from Gore Construction Ltd, when I had to 'declare an interest' and take no part in the discussion. After the first term, my accountancy knowledge and experience was the ideal preparation for the Finance Committee. Local Body finance was certainly different from other accountancy work but I was easily able to absorb the differences and understand the workings of the financial field.

I am sure, however, that it was in the role of Mayor and Mayoress that I and Millie entered into a new realm of experience. It was with great surprise that I found myself faced with the challenge of this. I little thought back in 1965 that joining the Council would end up with me at the top. It was no ambition of mine. In fact, I have an innate shyness that

tends to be a bit uncertain about putting myself forward. It has been more the case that, all through my life, when a challenge has been made, I have accepted it as long as I felt I could cope. I suppose this started away back in 1946 when I was elected Treasurer of the church, only to find myself elected chairman of the Deacons' Court during any vacancy in the pastorate. It is no doubt true that the small tasks done well lead on to the greater responsibilities.

Millie and I found that being leading citizens of Gore brought a very strong feeling of the people of the town being our extended family. In the first place, we were immediately given a new insight into the myriad organisations which existed in the town and which were all contributing to the varied interests and tastes of the people. Going from Plunket Society to Red Cross, from the formality of St John to opening a cricket tournament, from a Governor's visit to the High Commissioner from Canada, from kicking off in a Soccer tournament to opening a Clinical Services wing, from attending a Girls Brigade Award Ceremony, to speaking at a High School break up - all of these illustrated the wide variety of cultural, sporting, and social activities which keep a town going. From being largely unaware of the wider culture of the town we were plunged into such a great spread of activities and we gained a rather fatherly and motherly interest in the town. We felt as if this town of ours was in a sense our wider family.

There is no doubt that Millie contributed greatly to the Mayoralty. She was a very intelligent woman and was always very outgoing and popular with her many friends. She brought all her many attributes to the task of Mayoress and always had something worthwhile to say when she was asked to speak. As Jean Smith said so rightly in her book *The Mayoresses of Gore*, Millie lifted the status of Mayoress to another level. Past Mayoresses had been excellent hostesses and supports to their husbands but Millie reached out to the community in a more positive way and became a person in her own right. I think it is true to say she was loved by the community.

Looking back at what I have said in the various speeches which have been recorded I am at this stage well satisfied with their content. There were some important moments, faced often with some trepidation but I think I acquitted myself well and represented the town well on all occasions.

I have been overwhelmed at the comments that have been made in commendation of our terms as Mayor and Mayoress. It was very wise to leave office at the stage we did - on the crest of the wave. In some ways we missed the contacts but we relished the freedom from appointments and the need to work so strictly to time. We even got more evening golf outings together in those first summers after quitting office.