

my life



Part 4

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.

The Practice in the 70s

During most of this decade my accountancy business was being interrupted by Mayoral duties and it was generally a pretty busy time. There were also interruptions arising from visits to Dunedin for meetings but this was good while the family were there at university.

Alan Chisholm had joined the team and proved to be a very good assistant and friend. He became the computer specialist and later in the decade oversaw the installation of new computer systems. In the meantime we were still working with manual accounting machines which were very effective but slow and cumbersome compared with computers. The practice was growing but not aggressively. This maybe was partly due to my involvement in local body affairs. At one stage Alan and George said that my absence was causing some embarrassment though I seldom received direct complaints, in stark contrast to the period when I was away in Invercargill and clients thought it was a backward move. I must say that Alan and George carried the burden very well. Two employees stand out over this period. Glenys Dickie came to me from school. She had typing ability but was mainly on clerical work in connection with the processing of farm accounts. This work had been in the hands of Alan and George but as they became increasingly involved with client interviews they needed to be relieved of a lot of the coding and drafting work. Glenys was so valuable that I more than once gave her a full year's increase in salary on the six-monthly review. Gwen Marsh worked along with Glenys on this work. Gwen originally came on to the staff on a temporary basis to assist with the backlog of typing. Not so very long afterwards it became obvious that extra staff was needed and I phoned her up to see if she was free. She seemed very pleased to have the opportunity of a fulltime job. These two were excellent workers and set a good example in the office. When Joe Davidson finally retired I employed Valda Barrett as receptionist and wages clerk and she also was a stabilising influence in the office. She was a good worker and was with me for some years. Finally she and her

husband decided to shift to Queenstown.

It was around the time of Ron's illness in Auckland that the dissolution of a major farming conglomerate took place. It had been in the wind for some time. They had talked with their stock firm manager about it and to the family solicitor and had got nowhere. I was aware of this and was waiting to see what would happen, knowing that it would be a complicated exercise. Finally, while talking to one of the boys, I suggested that I should undertake the sorting out of all the accounts and work out the dissolution. I said they would need to decide which property each would take, how many head of livestock each would take, and details of the machinery and plant each was taking. There were five brothers and I required five separate valuations of land, stock and plant to be taken by each. As I recall, the stock firm manager, relieved of the problem of sorting things out, got these valuations done very promptly and the ball was in my court.

The problem was complex. The units of the conglomerate included - a limited liability company with shares owned equally by the five boys and a fixed number of shares in the names of two sisters who were to be paid out - this company owned the original home farm, livestock and plant; a neighbouring block in the name of four Family Trusts and the youngest who was unmarried with no Trust in his name - this was farmed in conjunction with the home farm; a leased property some miles distant with its associated livestock and plant; a second limited liability company which had been formed to get around land aggregation legislation in order to buy an additional farm - this property was managed by one of the boys and was to be taken over by him; another farm over the main road from the homestead on which the youngest son, now married, was working - he was to take over this property.

The family had sorted out the details of the blocks of land, stock and plant each was taking over and I had been provided with the valuations. My part in the dissolution process was just starting when Ron's illness occurred in Auckland and became an added burden on top of the concern and time this episode took up. On the other hand, except when I was actually in Auckland, it meant that I had a quiet house in the evenings in which to work on the problem. I took the opportunity of consulting a prominent Dunedin accountant about the methodology. As I recall, I outlined the problem and the way I proposed to tackle it and he concurred. The discussion helped me to comprehend the whole picture and was well worth while. When I asked for his fee he dismissed any question of charge.

The pattern of my evenings during that month while I was at home was a phone call from Millie with an update on Ron followed by concentrated work on the dissolution, usually till midnight. I started at the peripheral units and worked everything back to the main central unit, finally finished up with thirty-two pages of accounts which balanced out to the cent at the very first try. That was extremely fortunate as finding an error would have been a very difficult task.

I presented the accounts to the five brothers, their wives, the stock firm manager and the solicitor, going through each stage carefully. It was so complete that there were

no queries. One of the brothers, however, criticised the time it had taken for me to tackle this job and reckoned that the fact that he was tied into the partnership had prevented him working towards bringing his family into the business. I was sad about this but in actual fact, from the time I undertook the dissolution to its completion was only a matter of a couple of months or so and there was no undue delay. I was extremely proud of the job I had done and of the fact that it had balanced first pop. The rest of the family appreciated the position and were very grateful to me for solving their very difficult problem. The dissenter took his business away from the office and after his outburst it was the best thing he could have done. The rest of the family remained very good clients and very good friends.

Later in the decade the Matrimonial Property Act came into force. This enabled farmers to bring their wives into partnership by the transfer of a share in the farm and farming assets without payment of gift duty. This was a wonderful opportunity for farmers to bring their wives into a 50/50 partnership in recognition of the part they played in the running of the farm. In earlier years this also had benefits in reducing the impact of death duties payable when the farmer owned all the assets. Death Duty was later abolished by a Labour Government but there were still tax advantages in most cases by dividing the farm income and attracting lower tax rates. In appropriate cases I would prepare a plan of operation to take advantage of this legislation so that the client and his wife could study it at home, come in and ask questions and then take my proposal to their solicitor to implement. This became quite a big part of my own work in the later years of my time in the business. The solicitors loved these memos as they set out all the processes as well as the tax advantages which were an accounting rather than a legal matter. Even today I get complimentary remarks from solicitors on the clear plan and programme I presented. I made it a point to offer to do this only where I was aware that there was a sound marital situation. In point of fact, however, it made little difference financially to the rights of a spouse to a share of the assets in the event of a divorce or legal separation. I strongly felt that the recognition of the wife's part in the farm operation made for good relations between a couple¹.

Increasingly in the later years, I became involved in estate planning to ensure the smooth transfer of assets from parents to the next generation. There was always a problem of equity between sons and daughters in cases where there was strong attachment to the ancestral land. For a son (or sons) to follow the traditional family occupation it was virtually necessary to favour the son financially in the eventual distribution of the estate in order to maintain the family connection to the land. I felt this was not quite so bad where the succession did in fact proceed on into the future. However, I came upon circumstances where, a few years after having been set up in the farm, the son got itchy feet, sold the farm and pocketed a large sum of money. I felt very much in such cases that the daughters had not been fairly treated.

Clients varied a great deal and sometimes gave us cause for mirth or despair. One client nipped in late one afternoon near five o'clock to discuss a minor matter. He had just bought a four-litre can of bright blue paint. Thoughtfully he left it on the landing at the top

1 It is interesting in the light of recent history to note that I did one of these memos for Jim and Elizabeth Young shortly before I retired.

of the stairs so as not to bring it into the office. On his way out he picked it up but it slipped from his grasp and fell to the floor, the lid popped off and the can rolled down the stairs splattering paint all the way. It was a colossal mess. When I left the office about half an hour later, there he was with a tin of turpentine and quantities of voluminous rags mopping up all the paint. Unfortunately I could not stop to help him as I had an appointment. I phoned his wife later to see if he had got on alright and asked if "Boy Blue" had arrived home. She drew a complete blank as he had not yet arrived home and she had not heard the story. He and I have joked about it ever since.

In the mid 1970s we were investigating the possibility of converting the processing of the work onto computer. Computers were very expensive and we learned of computer bureaux which would process data sent to them on punched paper tape. The nearest bureau we knew of was in Christchurch and their pitch was so attractive that we entered into an arrangement with them. I had to buy a punch machine to put the data on to the tape which was then sent to Christchurch for processing. The processing time was not very quick and the slightest mistake on the tape would result in an incorrect set of accounts. After finalising the accounts with the client, the adjustments had to be punched on tape again and sent off for the final accounts to be completed. Once again, if a mistake occurred the process had to be repeated. That year we got badly behind with our programme and finally resorted to our former manual system. However, it was evident that computers were going to be the way of the future and about 1978 I finally leased an in-house machine. The cost was about \$64,000, met by a monthly rental charge with right of purchase at the end of the term. I was overseas during the year this was bedding in and Alan Chisholm had a lot of strife getting it working correctly. The technician had many visits before it was going well. Things were behind when I returned but moved pretty well from then on. It certainly proved much more satisfactory having the control in the office instead of dealing with a processor so far away. I was fortunate that Mallochs in Invercargill were investigating computer systems and they bought the punch machine from me at almost the cost price. I don't think they ever actually used it as they ended up going in-house as well.

During this period one of my clients was a very successful farmer up Otama Valley named Harry White. Harry was a very committed Christian and was leader of the Bible Class at Riversdale Presbyterian Church. He also had a deep interest in Christian Missions, both overseas and within New Zealand. He heard of the idea of establishing a charitable trust, to acquire and distribute a share of the farm income in such a way as to be free of income tax and formed the Otama Trust for this purpose. About the same time he transferred his property into the J H White Family Trust, the beneficiaries of which were his family and the Otama Trust. He generated a very good income from his large property and it was not unusual for the J H White Trust to allocate up to \$50,000 to the Otama trust in a year. Harry, Lewis Mackay, and I were Trustees of the Otama Trust, and we would have a yearly meeting to discuss the distribution of the funds. I was able from time to time to introduce worthwhile ventures as beneficiaries. One of these in the early 1970s was the completion of the new Baptist Church Centre.

Harry White did a great deal of livestock dealing, attending the stock sales and buy-

ing in mobs of sheep or cattle. After grazing on the farm for a period they would be sent to the freezing works or sold on in some other way. Reconciling all these sales and purchases was a considerable task and Ray Eddington spent a lot of time with him in our office making sure that he was properly credited with all the sales of this moving stock. Together, they would match the stock purchases with the sales and ensure that all transactions were reconciled. This was quite time-consuming for Ray but he established a good relationship with Harry who did not mind paying the fee for this time. Ray was another employee who was aiming at his accountancy qualification and eventually came to the conclusion that he was never going to succeed. Too many other demands kept him from the concentrated study before examinations and he never managed to pass. He could not become a partner without the examination qualification and eventually he saw the writing on the wall and obtained a position as Bursar of Christ's College in Christchurch. He would have been well suited for that position. When Ray left the office Harry immediately took his business elsewhere as he well knew that I could not give the uninterrupted time he was able to have with Ray. I was sad to lose the connection but recognised that he was quite right.

Harry also was instrumental in setting up the Waidale Trust. This was formed by a number of Christian farmers in the Riversdale, Waikaia, Otama and Knapdale districts to raise funds for missionary purposes. The main beneficiary in the first instance was the Sudan Interior Mission for the support of a girl named Pearl Thomson but the Trust was so structured that it could support any missionary. The scheme was that the Waidale Trust would purchase weaner calves and share them round the members of the Trust, a few to each member. The members would then provide grazing for the calves for the season at the end of which the cattle would be sent to the freezing works with the proceeds being paid to the Trust. The name Waidale was a composite of Waikaka, and Riversdale and the scheme is still operating very successfully years after Harry's death.

I had another client - who shall remain nameless - who would call to see me when he was in town without making an appointment. I had no great objection to that although it could crowd into an afternoon when I might have a full appointment diary. The problem was that he would leave it till 5 o'clock or even later and he thought it was fine if he got in before I left the office - even if I was almost out the door. It might have been all right if he had been quick - like the 'paint' client - but he was very slow thinking and a small item of business would often take quite a while. He belonged to a family of good clients and I suppose I was a bit soft with him.

Another very promising employee I had was David Reid. He came in as a junior clerk and developed very well. He also gave due diligence to his accountancy studies and succeeded in completing the exams. George Wallace was working with him a lot giving instruction in the systems and interested him in coming to church. David committed himself to Christ. This had a repercussion later when he felt called to Christian service and enrolled in the Melbourne Bible College. Sadly from my point of view that left me with the loss of a very good future prospect in the office. Upon his graduation David became the minister of a Baptist Church in Melbourne and has remained in Australia since.

Another interesting client farmed at Wendonside. The story goes that in the 1930s near the end of the 'Great Slump' he was supported by the stock firm Wright Stephensons for his complete seasonal finance. He was a shrewd man and I presume the manager of the firm at the time could see this. He became very successful over time, acquired additional property and eventually his three sons were established in individual portions of the farm. He was prominent in Federated Farmers and was very enthusiastic about the establishment of another freezing works in the Eastern Southland area. He was chairman for some years for Mutual Farmers Freezing Co Ltd, which was investigating the project. However, a new works was established at Lorneville by the Alliance Freezing Company and the Southland Frozen Meat company enlarged the capacity of their works at Matura so the new company never got off the ground. With hindsight, it was a very good thing, as the influx of dairy farming over recent years has resulted in a downturn in the volume of lambs for the works. In place of the proposed new full-scale works, a small killing operation, Waitane Meats, has been established at Charlton to replace the old abattoir by the river and to cope with a certain amount of additional stock.

This farmer heeded the advice for a farmer to invest off-farm, and he built up a considerable portfolio of shares.. He retired to town, leaving the boys to take over the farms. One of his investments was a block of flats at St Clair in Dunedin and on one occasion we rented one of these units for a few days holiday when the children were small. His solicitor was Maurice Joel of Dunedin. Maurice was a very able solicitor but when he was handling this client's affairs following his death, he was uncertain about how to complete financial statements for the estate. I offered to complete estate accounts for him and this was quite a considerable exercise involving separation of income and capital items - it was a fresh challenge to my accountancy skills. The accounts were completed and both Maurice and the family were well satisfied².

The NZ Society of Accountants was to hold its Annual General Meeting in Invercargill. Each year the Society awards Fellowship status to members who have given outstanding service to the Society and to the community and that year were presenting twelve awards including one to me. I had been a member for thirty three years, had participated back in the 1950's as a commentator on a Research and Development Presentation in Invercargill proposing a new system for the treatment of livestock values in farm accounts, had been a member of the Public Accountants Practice Committee and had quite a record of public service. I considered it a great honour to be recognised in this way by my profession. The newspaper report read: "The classification of Fellow, accompanied by the letters FCA, is made in recognition of attainments in the profession and standing in the community. An Air Force pilot in the Second World War, Mr Elder worked with the Inland Revenue Department on his return to New Zealand ³ before entering into private accountancy practice in Gore about 25 years ago. Since being resident in Gore, he has been closely involved with many organisations. The Rotary Club is a service organisation which has benefited from

² Maurice and his wife had a holiday home at Frankton and I met up with him and his wife there. He played golf and had the peculiar quirk of using irons only. One year he played in the Closing Day at his Balmacewan club in Dunedin and won the competition with a score of 12 up. That is, he played no less than twelve under his handicap. This was a case of an experienced player who had been too busy to play regular golf during the year and his handicap had drifted out as a result. For one day, the odds fell in his favour, and he had a very good score. For that summer he was known in Queenstown as Mr Twelve-Up. I liked him very much but sadly both he and his wife died in their middle sixties.

³ They got the timing wrong here !

Mr Elder's leadership. He is a Past President and served as District Governor Representative from July 1968 to July 1969. Another important post held by Mr Elder has been that of Chairman of the Gore High School Board of Governors and he has been Vice-President of the High School Parent Teacher Association and president of the Gore Main Primary School Parent Teacher Association. Mr Elder is a prominent member of the Baptist church of which he was Treasurer for 15 years and in 1970 he served as Chairman of the Otago and Southland Baptist Association. He is also a Board member of the Bible Society of Otago and Southland. In the accountancy field, Mr Elder has been the Gore representative on the Otago-Southland Public Accountants Practice Committee. It was eight years ago when Mr Elder became a member of the Gore Borough Council. He was chairman of the council's finance committee, Deputy Mayor and chairman of the James Cumming Trust Investigation Committee before being elected Mayor on the death of Mr J C McLeod last year. Since taking over as Mayor, Mr Elder has played an increasingly important part in the developing community in Gore and is at present closely involved with the setting up of an elderly citizens' centre among other things. Golf is a sport with which Mr Elder is keenly involved and he is a member of the Gore Golf Club."

As we approached the end of the seventies, two things happened. At the council elections in 1977 I had indicated that I would be entering my last term as Mayor. As 1980 approached I confirmed that decision. It was also evident to me that Millie, though fulfilling her engagements very well indeed, was beginning to feel the strain of this very public life. We had also decided that it was more than time that we had paid a visit to Millie's mother in England and in 1978 we put that plan into effect.

University Years

From the mid-1960s we had family members heading out of Gore to University. David had completed High School very successfully. He was blessed with a high capacity for concentration and could work and study in the living room and be completely absorbed in what he was doing with other members of the family doing family things. He waltzed through high school with no problems but he had a rival for top honours in the person of Elizabeth McKenzie, the daughter and only child of Colin and Margaret McKenzie¹. David worked hard in his seventh form year and was rewarded with the Dux Prize of Gore High School. He went on to Otago University where he entered the Medical School.

A couple of years later Ron completed High School and went on to University. In his seventh form year Ron kept telling us not to expect him to be Dux as he was not as clever as David or as clever as Robert Mackay from Edendale. Ron also had a high IQ but did not have the ability to concentrate as closely as David. He was much more a people's boy and had a lot of his Mum's sense of fun and ability to entertain. In the final grades he was only a fraction of a mark behind the joint Duxes and was awarded the accolade of Proxime Accessit.

At the end of his third year David took a year out from his medical course to do a year for the degree of Bachelor of Medical Science in Pathology. This was the same year as Ron was finishing his Honours degree in English Literature. Millie and I were delighted to be able to attend a dual graduation in May 1970 before we left for overseas - in fact, the graduation delayed our departure and placed our time away later in the office season than I would have preferred. It was a great occasion and we as parents of these bright boys were very proud. Neither of us had been able to take University degrees largely due to lack of

¹ Colin was from a well known Waikoikoi family. His father had befriended us many years earlier when my father had an accident at Waikoikoi and our car was disabled. Colin was a pilot in the Air Force during the war and came through unhurt. Like Wilfred Colin had been a bit older when he joined up and my observation was that a good percentage of these older pilots came through successfully. I think they were a little less reckless and survived to fight another day. After the war Colin went into the Presbyterian ministry and later settled in a small farm near Gold Creek on the road into Gore from our home farm.

finance in our families. I had enrolled at Victoria in 1940 for a Bachelor of Commerce after completing my Accountants Professional exams which were not university qualifications at that time. However, the acceptance of the job in Invercargill nipped that effort in the bud. So it was really nice for us to see our boys succeeding so well. David resumed his medical course after his recess year and duly graduated MB, ChB. I can well recall the colourful march of the graduands to the Dunedin Town Hall with David walking alongside his friend Murray Jamieson. We watched them one by one cross the stage and receive their diplomas.

Throughout this period we continued our association with the Bible Society. Millie had first been involved in Gore and had revitalised the system and recruited collectors. Each year a letter drop was made to all homes in the town and a collector would call later for the donations. There was a mixed response and collectors soon got to know their area and which homes to cross off the lists. However, many people responded generously and the Gore collection totals went up year by year. Millie's success very soon came to the attention of the Bible Society regional organiser in Dunedin and he became well known to us. At the time the Otago area was a branch of the National Bible Society of Scotland while other parts of New Zealand had been associated with the British and Foreign Bible Society. Later it became obvious that the Bible society organisation should be rationalised throughout New Zealand and we became a part of the Bible Society in New Zealand.

When we moved to Invercargill the Otago-Southland organiser quickly alerted the local branch there of Millie's coming and she was soon elected Branch Secretary. The family will well remember the annual task of folding letters into envelopes ready for delivery and in some areas being sent off on a Sunday to make deliveries to letter boxes. Millie also did a lot of work preparing the Collector's books and eventually delivering them to volunteers all over the city. On our return to Gore in 1960 she was again roped in back there. As a result of her efforts the southern area attracted some attention in the local board of the Society in Dunedin - they suggested that the area should have a representative on the Board and I was elected. Perhaps this was a bit unfair because Millie was the driving force, though I was very much in support. At one stage I was asked if I would stand for the Vice-Presidency of the Head Office of The Bible Society situated in Wellington with a view of going on to be President but I declined. I think at the time I was Mayor and the time commitment would have been too great even though it would have been an honour.

About the same time there was formed The Otago and Southland Public Accountants Committee with two representatives from Southland. One of these was from Invercargill and I was appointed from the Eastern Southland area. Both of these appointments were advantageous as they gave us reasons to go to Dunedin and we always made contact with our student family members and had a meal with them before returning home. It also gave Millie the opportunity of looking round Dunedin shops and meeting up with one or other of the children while I was at meetings. I welcomed the appointment to the Public Accountants committee. I have made the point earlier that sole practice was a lonely life without a partner to talk over problems with and this committee position introduced me to some of the leading practitioners from Otago and Southland. I found the contact with these men very valuable in familiarising me with some of the problems facing the profes-

sion. Occasionally would I travel to Dunedin with the Invercargill member but he usually flew up and back to save the three hour journey each way by car.

During the 1960s I attended a seminar of accountants in Palmerston North where presentations were made about developments in farm accounting systems. The topics ranged through traditional manual cash books, collecting progressive information regularly through the year to processing through accounting machines. They also referred to possible changes in the treatment of livestock values along the lines of the system I had been asked to comment on back in the 1950s. It was very interesting and informative. I realised that for some years already we had been implementing In our office some of the methods outlined at the conference. As an accountant in practice on my own I found the papers and discussions very helpful and informative².

I had flown up from Invercargill. It was student vacation period and the conference used the facilities of Massey University where we were accommodated in student halls of residence. My flight home was routed through Dunedin where we were advised that Invercargill airport was closed by fog and that onward passengers would be taken by coach. Our coach made a slow and tedious journey through thick fog as far as Gore where I was to be dropped off. Ron was home on vacation and we had arranged for him to meet me at Invercargill airport. I had phoned Gore about the delay and that I would be delivered to Gore but he had already left. Having discovered that the passengers were coming through by coach he set off on the return trip to Gore only to spot the plane from Dunedin arriving only a little behind schedule - without passengers as it turned out. Shortly after we had left Momona they learned that the fog had lifted and the plane took off for Invercargill where it was to be required for the scheduled outward flight in the morning. Ron was back in Gore just in time to meet me off the coach.

Susan duly followed her brothers to Dunedin and got accommodation in the newly opened University College. Most of our children spent a year or so in a hall of residence before joining with a group to rent a student house. Susan had two years in Unicol and Dawn was at Salmond Hall but Ron went straight into a flatting situation. David's first year was in a small hostel in Park Street where he roomed with Ken Allott, an old friend from Southland Boys High School days. Mention of student flats brings to mind some of the places they lived in. David was in Toad Hall in Pitt St above Knox Church with a commanding view over the city and harbour and over the shopping area of George Street with the massive hospital building in Great King St. Later he lodged with some friends in Littlebourne Rd and in another house off Eglinton Rd out Caversham way. Ron spent his first two years in Simpson House which had been given to Hanover St Baptist Church for student accommodation and was supervised by the church. Trustees and friends from the church took an interest in the welfare of the residents and they received gifts of goodies from time to time. Susan flatbed in a house in Cumberland Street with the Bond twins, children of Neville and Shirley Bond of Georgetown days. After her two years in Salmond Hall by Knox College Dawn had a year in one of the Salmond Flats with Alison Taylor³, Margaret and Judy Dodds and Kay

² One of the accountants presenting was from Putaruru where among his client was a Salvation Army farm trust property. He was also accountant for my Air Force friend, Colin Wood, who later retired to Hamilton where we visited him and his wife Dorothy in later years.

³ Much later Millie and I were to come to know and respect Alison's parents, Alex and Dorothy Taylor at Frankton.

Simmonds. Her later flats were in George Street, Highgate and in High Street. Many of her flatmates have remained friends over the years.

Ron and Susan went on to secondary teacher training in Christchurch and we were not in such close contact during their respective years there. In 1971 David spent a year in Rotorua Hospital as a house surgeon before returning to Dunedin. He was then a Registrar and Assistant Lecturer at the Medical School from 1972 till 1975 when he completed a Diploma in Clinical Pathology. At this stage he was seconded by his Head of Department to Royal Prince Alfred Hospital in Sydney for a couple of years under a renowned specialist pathologist called Vincent McGovern. Sadly Vincent McGovern was killed in a road accident only a few years later - his death was a big loss to pathology. During the first year David was Senior Registrar rising the next year to Staff Specialist in Pathology. His chief there introduced him to Dr Wally Clark of Temple University in Philadelphia and David joined him as research Assistant Professor of Pathology. When Dr Clark transferred to the University of Pennsylvania across town David went with him. He has progressed to a full professorship there and is a world-renowned specialist in Melanoma and gives lectures on this subject all over the States and the rest of the world. Following the death of Dr Lever he became the Editor-in-Chief of the revision of 'Levers Histopathology of the Skin,' one of the most authoritative textbooks in the United States on the pathology of skin diseases. In recent years David has relinquished the administrative functions of his position as head of department to focus on his research and clinical work.

Ron taught for a year at The Taieri High School in 1970 and then went back to university to complete a degree in Mathematics. The following year he completed secondary teacher training in Christchurch and spent the next year teaching at Rosehill College south of Auckland. He then felt urged to take ministerial training at the Baptist Theological College in Auckland. This appeared to indicate that he was changing course for the Christian ministry though we became aware later that it was not with the intention of filling a pastoral ministry. In his last year at Baptist College, during a vacation which he was spending in his college accommodation, he developed a streptococcal throat infection. It failed to respond to normal medication and care and the College doctor was called. He did not like the symptoms and sent him into Auckland hospital by ambulance. The first we heard of this was over a weekend when we were at our Frankton cottage. I recall phoning the hospital and speaking to the house surgeon who requested permission to operate to inspect his kidneys - in the circumstances there was no option but to agree. They found that the kidneys themselves were not the problem but by this time they had ceased to function and he was transferred to the Critical Care Unit. There he was placed in an induced coma fed by intravenous fluids - he had kidney dialysis four or five times a week and was placed on life-support. As blood tests were returned it was determined that he had developed a streptococcal septicaemia. We were kept informed by the hospital and by the Principal of the College, Dr Bob Thompson and his wife Shirley. Ron was so ill that I asked Millie if she would go up there to be on the spot. Bob and Shirley offered her accommodation with them in the College visitors' flat. Millie was dismayed at the thought of tackling this on her own. It was something entirely outside her experience - what a responsibility! But she flew up and I was on standby to join her if required. Shirley and Millie got on very well together

and Mille found her a great support. They shared much prayer together.

Ron was kept in critical care treatment for what seemed like week after week - in the end it was about five weeks, I think. The news spread very widely through the Auckland churches and special prayer was made each Sunday. The students, back from vacation, met for prayer regularly and at a crucial point staged an all-night prayer vigil in the College Chapel on a roster system with at least one student present for each half-hour period. There is a touching story about one of the women students called Faith McMurtrie. Along with the other students she was very concerned about Ron. One day she was praying alone and was much exercised in spirit about all this prayer being answered. She had her bible near and it opened at James 5:14 - "And the prayer of FAITH will save the sick." She was reassured that Ron would come out of this sickness. However, at the time Ron was not really improving and at one stage consideration was given to a white cell transfusion from other members of the family. Susan, Dawn and I flew up to Auckland but when we got there they had decided not to go ahead with this procedure. I stayed on for a week or more. There was so much concern in the Auckland Baptist churches about this sick student that I resorted to sending a circular to the ministers on a Thursday so that they would have accurate information to pass on during the Sunday service.

The minister of Remuera Church who was a lecturer at the College requested permission to have an anointing and laying-on of hands for healing. I discussed this with Dr Bob. We explored the matter openly and freely but he was non-committal about making any recommendation. My feeling eventually was that many people were already praying urgently for Ron's recovery and that an anointing might be interpreted as lack of faith in their prayers. Specialists in the hospital had worked hard to contain the infection and to maintain life while it was being overcome and we understood that they were succeeding. A claim that Ron had been healed by divine intervention might mean that their efforts would not be valued as they should be. David had talked with Murray Jamieson who was working at Auckland Hospital at the time - he had gained access to the case history and was advising David that Ron's medical problems would be reversible. This was encouraging to us. We decided not to have an anointing. I suppose after that decision we were truly grateful when things eventually came right.

We visited Ron regularly. The Critical Care Unit was a bizarre place where ten or a dozen critically-ill patients were lying till their bodies threw off whatever infection or injury had laid them low. Ron's beard had been shaved off in the interests of preventing infection and we saw him again as we had seen him as he was growing up. The highly-qualified nurses worked one-on-one with these patients and would talk across the room at the tops of their voices - it seemed odd after having it ingrained in us for a life time of the need for quiet in the presence of the sick - of course the patients were all unconscious. One day some urine flowed from this particular unconscious young man. His nurse shouted to all, 'Hurray, Ron's wet the bed!' With his kidneys functioning again, normal life started to flow through his body. Dialysis was discontinued and gradually his sedation was lifted. Ron said later that one of his first recollections was of seeing my face by the side of the bed and thinking 'I must be really crook if Dad is here.' Well we were glad to see him back again even

if he was shocked to see us. For breathing purposes they had performed a tracheostomy and he could not speak but on that first day or two he obviously had something on his mind. The unit was equipped with a large alphabet board for just this situation. I went through the alphabet stopping at the letter he indicated with a nod and gradually I found that he had paid a deposit of \$50 for a trip to Sydney. He was obviously not fit to travel. I was able to contact the Students' Union and get a refund - students were not very financial and \$50 was not to be wasted. His reading of this letter board sounds a simple operation but he told me afterwards that he was troubled with double vision and had great difficulty making out which letter I was pointing to.

It was all a very severe test for Millie despite the very close link she forged with Shirley Thomson. It was very tough visiting this uncommunicative patient day after day. Our friend Keith Broadbent, who was manager of Nissan Motor Corporation NZ, loaned her a car for the duration free of charge. At the very end she dented a door and she was in tears over it but she was told by the company not to worry - it was a staff car and they got these little dents all the time. Millie was so glad to get home and resume a normal life again. It had taken a great nervous toll on her. We were not counting the cost but airfares and toll calls had mounted up to a considerable sum.

Ron, poor fellow, had lost a lot of weight. He had fairly high fevers in the early stages of the illness and this had taken its toll. His muscles had been unused for five or six weeks and had wasted away to next to nothing. He found walking very painful at the start. I understood perfectly how he was feeling as I had been in a similar state 36 years before after my serious typhoid illness in a hospital building only a few wards away. He came home about Labour weekend and set about building up his strength. He was booked to officiate at his friend Alastair Mackenzie's wedding in January and he very specially wanted to be able to do this. While on holiday at Frankton, he decided that a round of golf every day would give him all-round exercise and we did this together for several days. It reached the stage that he was more keen to go out the next day than I was, fond as I am of golf. He certainly achieved his aim and although he was not completely fit at the time of the wedding he was able to do the job.

Ron's illness came at an unfortunate time in his academic year. He was graduating that year, and during the last term outgoing students were being matched up with churches which had vacancies. He was in a very uncertain availability situation. Eventually he was invited to go to the Hastings church as assistant to Ken McCormick and spent two years there. He marked his return to physical health by completing the Rotorua Marathon in 1978 before being called to the Newlands Church in the northern suburbs of Wellington where he spent the next four years. His outgoing personality suited him well for this ministerial role and he was much appreciated. We were able to go to Wellington and stay with him at Newlands at the time of his induction. It is indicative of the change in attitudes to Sunday observance that after lunch he competed in the Wellington Duathlon starting the run from Freyberg Pool and finishing with a swim in Oriental Bay. What a tiger for punishment. Ron did not continue in pastoral ministry after the Newlands appointment but returned to his teaching career. He was ordained as an Anglican priest in 2006 and served

in a non-stipendiary capacity in Gisborne where he now lives.

Susan's progress was relatively peaceful through her earlier years after completing her degree in Home Science in 1973. She went to Christchurch for secondary teacher training in 1974, coming back to teach in Home Economics at Gore High School the next year. She taught at Gore High until 1979 when she was granted a scholarship to undertake a Masters course at Kansas State University in the USA. This was an amazing year for her. David and Peggy were married on 5th August 1979 just a month too early for Susan to be able to be there. She also missed them when they came to New Zealand on their honeymoon in early September but she was able to see them in Philadelphia later in her scholarship year. On her course she met up with other foreign nationals as well as with American students. She related a couple of interesting stories. She was demonstrating the making of a Pavlova with the help of another student. The mixer was connected to the wall by an extension cord which came asunder as she was mixing. She lifted the beater from the mixture just as her assistant noted the power failure and squeezed the plugs together again. The mixer started rotating and flung a dollop of pavlova mixture onto the floor. What a mess. She did two budget tourist trips around different parts of the States. At the Grand Canyon in Colorado she chanced to meet her second cousin Janet Orr (nee Gardyne) and husband Hugh from Northern Ireland on the track. While she was in the States her friendship with Roger developed further and they were married on 4th October 1980 following her return. During her teaching career she wrote a textbook on Home Economics and was appointed the national examiner for School Certificate in her subject. She established quite a name for herself in Home Economics. This involved visits to Education Department in Wellington. Her textbook was published in her own name and she received royalties over a few years from this source. Susan later changed direction into the Presbyterian ministry and I propose to deal with this in later chapters where it is connected with other events. She is currently the Minister of St Andrews on the Terrace Presbyterian Church in Wellington

Dawn went to University in 1974, qualifying through her High School Bursary grades for preferential entry to Medical School. For her first year at University she was able to take Music, Anthropology, Psychology and Maths instead of the Sciences required for the Medical Preliminary examination. She enjoyed these subjects and Music has remained a major interest in her life. In the year that Ron was so severely ill in Auckland her later months of study were affected by time away in Auckland and the general trauma of the situation. She missed in one subject and was scheduled to re-sit the paper in January. I think her mother was unpopular that summer as she monitored Dawn's revision very diligently and kept her 'nose to the grindstone'. Either that, or her own reappraisal of the situation was successful and she passed. She graduated MB ChB in 1980. After a year as House Officer in Dunedin Hospital she spent a year doing locum jobs in England, returning to Dunedin for a couple of years before returning to England again. There she had Paediatric appointments in West Middlesex Hospital in South London and in Rosie Maternity Hospital in Cambridge. After time back in New Zealand she spent two years in Perth, WA at the Princess Margaret Hospital gaining experience in Paediatrics and Neonatal Medicine and returned later for two years as Senior Registrar in Neonatal Medicine at the King Edward Memorial Hospital. She completed her Fellowship for the Royal Australasian College of

Physicians in Paediatrics in 1992. She is currently Professor and HOD of Paediatrics and Child Health at the Wellington School of Medicine and a consultant Paediatrician with the Capital Coast District Health Board. Apart from her specialty in Paediatrics she has done research in Sudden Infant Death Syndrome and is a consultant for the police in child sexual abuse cases. She has been in Wellington since 1995 and lived for quite a time in a delightful two-storeyed Edwardian house in Newtown about 12 minutes walk from work. Her current house in Kandallah has a spectacular view across the harbour to the airport and Cook Strait beyond.

Our children were very fortunate in the amount of work available for vacation jobs. David and Ron worked briefly for shearing gangs. They both worked more than one summer as labourers for Archer Building Contractors. Once Ron was involved in the demolition of a chimney at Gore High School when a change was being made to the heating system. The inside of the chimney was well coated with soot from the diesel burner and it was anything but a pleasant job. He needed a long bath each night to restore himself to some measure of cleanliness - the bath needed a good clean afterwards too. David learned welding on the water tower for the Southland Frozen Meat Co's staff quarters at Mataura. David may be sad to learn that the hostel went out of use some years later. Susan spent one summer as assistant cook at a private hotel in Queenstown. Dawn found a job with the Gore Borough Reserves Department and this resulted in a continuing love for gardening. Seedlings of trees came home with her and a copper beech went to our home at Kelvin Heights from this source - we had to leave it there. All four of our tribe applied for and obtained Southland Savings Bank Scholarships - these were substantial enough at the time to make student life considerably more comfortable.

In general this is the story of the family's university years though the start and finish of these stories were really somewhat blurred with the previous and following decades.

Overseas 1978

Leaving family and the office for two to three months took some advance planning and organisation. Millie's mother was to be ninety-seven on 12th April 1978 and we began to lay our plans to be there for this great birthday. At the same time, we felt it would not be good to arrive just in time for the birthday and give the frail nonagenarian two big events to deal with in quick succession. We therefore started planning to leave home in mid-March and arrive in England nearly a month before the birthday. Susan had made a quick decision to pay a Christmas visit to the English family and found her Grandma able to communicate but somewhat confused and forgetful. It was lovely for Susan to enjoy an English Christmas with all the frills and style that Millie had described to our family so often. I think Susan was often able to predict just what would happen next. Her English relations were not just names to her but real persons through all that Millie had passed on and also from their visits to New Zealand. Millie and I were delighted that Susan made this trip and it seemed even more significant after her Grandma had died. After Susan returned home in January, Emma's health deteriorated rapidly and her awareness of life became less and less real.

I should explain that Emma Haigh had lived for many years with her two single daughters, Winnie and Marjorie. The girls had first lived with their parents in their home in Eccleston Road. Some time after their father Bert's death in 1955 the girls took the opportunity of purchasing a very nice house in Waterloo Road which was nearer to town and had more space and garden. The property was bought in their names with the proceeds from the sale of the Eccleston Road house going towards it. By that time they were handling all the costs of running the home. Emma had her state pension for her pocket money and personal expenses but Winnie and Marjorie were managing the increasing burden of her day-to-day care. In earlier times Winnie would have come home for lunch which Emma would have prepared for the two of them. She would then retire from duty and the girls would make the evening meal. As both Winnie and Marjorie reached retiring age they took

over the complete range of work in the home. Jessie lived in her own home a few blocks away and she came regularly on a Thursday to look after their mother and give the others a break to go shopping or enjoy a brief outing. Emma looked forward very much to this change of routine and to seeing Jessie - her pleasure in Jessie's visits rather miffed the other girls as they carried most of the responsibility and were seldom thanked for it.

Emma's health failed rather more quickly than anyone had foreseen. She went into a coma and died on 6 February 1978. We considered whether we could advance our departure in order to be present for the funeral but found this was not practicable as some of our documentation was not yet complete. An earlier departure date would also not have given me time to organise the office situation, especially as we would still be away for our planned two-month visit. Although the original purpose of the trip to see Millie's mother could not be fulfilled, we knew that it would be good for Millie to be in England so soon after her death and to have time with her sisters. We planned to leave on 14th March after the tax deadline in the office but before the flood of information that would be coming in from about the beginning of April. The rush of finalising accounts with clients would then start to follow from mid May onwards.

We flew from Momona to Auckland and were booked into the Airport Inn there overnight. Mother's niece Ida Nichol with her daughter Joyce and Anderson Allan came to see us and we had a lovely couple of hours with them. Upon checking in the next morning we were given an invitation to the VIP lounge per favour of Peter Gordon, our local MP. That day we flew through Sydney to Hong Kong for a two-day stopover in the Miramar Hotel in Kowloon. Our two days there were crammed full. We first joined a local tour which took us to various places in Kowloon and through the tunnel under the bay to Hong Kong Island where we noticed a shop called 'Millie's'. The next day we took a trip on the very efficient Star Ferry which crosses the Strait continuously. The ferry is always crowded but loading and unloading for the trip is very fast indeed via very wide gangways – one for boarding passengers and another for those disembarking. Everywhere we went we were constantly amazed at the throngs of people.

The second day we took a trip out to Tuen Moon, a satellite city being established in The New Territories in a kind of buffer zone between Hong Kong proper and mainland China. We met up with Janet McKinlay, a Presbyterian missionary who taught in a school there. The new city was expected to rise in population to a quarter of a million. There were new multi-storey concrete buildings which looked quite spartan to our eyes but which represented a great improvement to those fortunate enough to be able to live in them. The families had only concrete floors in their apartments but of course the climate did not require carpets as cold is not a problem - the temperature in Hong Kong varies little all year round, averaging about 27° Celsius. High-rise accommodation blocks would have the ground floor solely given over to supermarkets and other shops to serve the people in the building. A sharp contrast was found in the yet-to-be-developed areas where sewage flowed through open drains between very ramshackle homes. Janet took us to a Dim Sum restaurant in one of the tower blocks. We were the only Europeans in the place and the food was naturally Chinese only. Trolleys came round regularly and the customers selected

the dishes they wanted - at the end of the meal the empty dishes were counted and the customer charged accordingly.

We left Hong Kong for London by British Airways on 17th March, St. Patrick's Day. Shortly after we had boarded I noticed that the plane had been returned to the gate. The Captain called 'Doors to Manual' and I heard one of the crew repeat the command in a questioning tone as she complied. Then there came a further command: 'All passengers vacate the aircraft immediately through the front door. Hurry along please. Take only handbags. We have a possible bomb scare!' What speed was achieved in getting three hundred passengers back into the airport terminal without all the cabin baggage that passengers are usually lumbered with. It was a couple of hours later before we were able to reboard. Once we were well in the air the Captain advised that the scare applied to another flight but he had decided that he would not take off without a thorough check of the aircraft. Why did this happen in Hong Kong and why was it taken so seriously? First, it was St. Patrick's Day. Second, it was a British aircraft. And third the IRA were at the height of their activity in Northern Ireland and in Britain. As we left the plane in London I heard a crew member express his amazement that all these people should re-enter the plane so calmly after such a scare. We had wonderful views on the way from Muscat to London including the Gulf of Arabia, the Euphrates River delta, snow-covered peaks in Turkey south of the Black Sea, the Bosphorus and Istanbul and finally a lovely view of England and London as we came in over Norfolk and circled London to land.

Jean Springett and her toddler Emma met us at the airport where we were to pick up a rental car. We loaded it up and launched ourselves into the Heathrow traffic. We had arranged a rendezvous with Jean and soon found her Peugeot 504 Estate and followed her through the Uxbridge and Watford areas to the M1. There she stopped and we talked with her for a half hour or so before entering the motorway for our long journey up to Blackpool. For the last twenty miles or so we were watching the petrol gauge very anxiously but we made it just before 7pm. What excitement! I made sure to fill up down the street the next morning before attempting to go any distance further.

The first week or so was generally cold and wet but the time went by quickly with family calling on us and visits out to the wider family and catching up on the news of Emma's last days. We were also arranging three trips. These were a week-long package tour to each of Greece and Italy and a visit to David in Philadelphia. We visited Ron and Vera Haigh in Bolton and were shown round their Methodist Church which had been adapted for multi-purpose functions, and Ron's paper mill which was closed for the Easter break. We watched the Oxford Cambridge Boat Race which ended in disaster for Cambridge when their boat was swamped in the rough water and sank under the crew. When we arrived at church on the Sunday we were accosted and told, 'You are to go to the choir.' Taken by surprise we obliged. This was familiar to Millie but at that stage I had not done any choir work. However, I enjoyed it and was able to renew a friendship with Tommy Bateman, the other bass, which has continued over the years. We went to Horn's Cottage for lunch and then went up Beacon Fell and toured round Clitheroe, Grindleton, Bradford and Downham, finishing up at Edisford Bridge Hotel for high tea. The trip home through Longridge and Broughton

ended a lovely day for Millie, viewing many of her favourite haunts of earlier days.

We paid a short visit to the Lake District, travelling by a very round-about route through well-known villages and by well-known lakes to Borrowdale where the Rosthwaite Royal Oak Hotel had been recommended to us by Millie's former teacher friend, Margaret Wallwork (nee Snape). Margaret and her husband Tom had done much walking in the Lake District. From there we walked over the hill to Watendlath, enjoying the grand and fascinating views from the highest point. We had 'tea and scones' in an old beamed room with a massive wood fire newly-laid in a large fireplace. Watendlath is well-known in the writings of Wordsworth and his sister Dorothy. On the way home we again meandered through many well loved other places from earlier years.

Mention of the wood fire reminds me of the conditions we experienced on this early visit to England. When we played golf on Blackpool Park Golf course we found it was compulsory to tee up every shot on the fairway because of the wetness of the ground. Temperatures were generally colder than we were used to on visits to England. Nevertheless we had a picnic with Margaret and Giles at Nicky Nook and then walked up by the reservoir and right up over Black Crag and back to the road near Scorton. Marjorie and I walked back along the road to get the cars while the rest walked into Scorton where we all enjoyed ice creams. Millie and I visited York and admired the Minster, the Railway Museum, the Roman Wall and the Shambles where we had tea. We returned through Harrogate passing by the Majestic Hotel where I had attended a course during the war. We spent a night in Skipton in the Red Lion and woke in the morning to see the weekly market being set up across the street.

Early in April we headed south and found the Greyhound Inn at Chalfont St Peter which we used as headquarters for a day or two in London. On the 12th of April - which happened to be Emma's birthday - I sent flowers from Sandra's, Greenford to Sandra's, Gore for my mother's birthday which was to be on 16th April. We got seats in The Haymarket Theatre for 'Waters on the Moon' starring Ingrid Bergman, Wendy Hiller and Doris Hare. It was very good. After the show we dashed for the station, not sure when the Underground stopped for the night. We took a train to Greenford, rescued our car from the station car park and let ourselves in at The Greyhound about midnight.

On the 15th of April we were up at 5am for Jean and John to take us to the Underground for Victoria and Gatwick where our package trip to Italy was to begin on Ryanair. There was confusion about the serviceability of the aircraft and the flight was delayed for at least an hour. However, we were called for boarding earlier than expected and one of our party missed the departure - she caught up with us three days later. We landed at Pisa in full view of the leaning tower and caught a coach over the Appenines for three days in Venice, driving through snow showers and past a train wreck which had occurred that morning. We read later that 50 people had died when two trains had collided due to a washout after heavy rain.

Our three days in Venice were spent partly with guides and partly on our own. My

travel diary recorded visits to Scuolae, various churches and palaces, St Marks Cathedral, Murano and Burano Islands (for lace and glass), canals, gondolas and bridges. I noted glorious paintings, decorations and magnificent buildings: 'In the Scuola de San Rocco the ground floor had a series of large canvases including "Annunciation", "Magis worshipping the Child", "Escape to Egypt", "Assumption of the Virgin" and a total of twenty-five paintings by Tortecelli. The attendant gave us a mirror which enabled us to see with ease the richly gilded ceiling with one very large central canvas, two smaller ones at each end and ten others smaller still. The view was tremendous'.

At the end of our time in Venice we returned over the mountains again to Florence where we were stunned by gallery after gallery of wonderful paintings by the old masters, as well as Michael Angelo's sculptures - including his statue of David - and the great Duomo or Basilica with its vast proportions. On our free day Millie and I had a nice meal near the Cathedral, topped off with a luscious strawberries and cream dessert. This cost us 3000 lira each as I remember with the total cost of the otherwise light meal coming to 10,950 lira. Our time in Florence included a long day-trip through the hill town of Gimignano with its many towers and on to Sienna in Tuscany. This is the place where the twice-yearly Palio horse race occurs round the central piazza which is in the shape of a shell. Horses are entered representing the different districts or provinces in the Tuscany area. There was a very lovely Cathedral which displayed a mixture of Byzantine, Gothic and Roman styles. We were highly entertained watching a bunch of school students who would 'tail' on to an individual walking across the piazza, making a long chain behind them. When the victim discovered they were being followed the chain would break up and the 'links' would scatter.

On our final day we travelled by coach to Pisa, viewing along the way some of the WW2 German defences at strategic points among the hills. Then it was a flight to Gatwick, a train journey to Victoria Station and then an Underground ride to meet Jean and John who took us to Broxbourne and tea. Leaving them about 7pm we took the A1 to Doncaster and the M62 across the Pennines and eventually to Blackpool. We obviously had more energy in those days!

A few days later we went across to Durham for Roger and Pam's wedding. Roger is the older son of Margaret and Eric Culpin. This was the opportunity both to see something of Durham County and the attractive northern city of the same name. It was also an opportunity to see the whole family en masse and was a very happy occasion. A snag I remember was leaving the car's petrol cap at a service station - I bought a replacement in Blackpool at the Ford Agency but it was a different colour and showed out like a sore thumb. The speech by the Best Man at Roger and Pam's wedding was a peach. He likened the acquisition of a wife to the buying of a car. At first it is carefully looked after and fussed over. Then as time goes by it gets the occasional wash and the attention becomes more casual. It gets to need the occasional repair job and when it gets a old and worn it is traded for a later model. It was a highly hilarious speech.

On 5th May we flew to Athens and immediately set out on a week's tour. Among the sights we saw in those seven days were the very deep cut of the Corinth Canal, the open air

amphitheatre at Epidauros, the ancient Corinth of Bible days, Olympia and the site of the original Olympic games, Delphi of the Oracle, Mt Olympus, the old fortress of Mycenae, the Acropolis in Athens, the islands of Agina, Poros and Hydra on a one-day cruise, the Greek Museum, the site of the modern Olympics, the temple of Zeus and much more. I left a favourite white cardigan behind on the boat and Millie lost a marcasite watch from our hotel bedroom - we claimed insurance for both of them. This time on our return we had more sense and stayed on with Jean and John to have two or three days in London, staying at the Central Park Hotel in Croydon and paying a visit to Bertha and Mac Davies at West Wickham. On Sunday we went to Guildford Baptist Church to hear Rev David Pawson. It was a very interesting service led by an Elder. There was a youth choir singing modern songs, a more traditional choir, an orchestral piece and finally the sermon from David Pawson. After the service we met up with Bing Lucas, a very well-known member of Barry Hibbert's Tawa Baptist Church. We also visited Frank and Dot Elder at Chislehurst. We found a golf course called Sunningdale Ladies Golf Club whose former Captains included the Lady Erskine, the Countess of Athlone and HRH the Duchess of York, then the Queen Mother. It was a short course with no par fives which had patches of heather in the rough and was not easy for a stranger. But we were made very welcome in the Clubhouse.

The next day we parked our car in the Long-Term Parking at Heathrow and flew to Philadelphia on a short visit to David. We found him in a condominium off Gypsy Lane. David was working during the week so we took the condominium bus into town to shop and see the sights, coming home or meeting up with David at the end of the day. When he heard we were from New Zealand the bus driver remembered that about a year before there had been a 'nice young lady' from New Zealand. We told him this was our daughter but I am not sure if he quite believed us. We were very impressed with the preservation of the historical sites relating to the first years of the republic - Philadelphia was the seat of government for the first eleven years of the United States. David took us to Washington DC for the weekend and conducted us round a number of the historical sites there, including memorials to the famous early Presidents and a glimpse of the White House and the Capitol. We looked through the famous Smithsonian science and transport museum. He brought us back through Annapolis, across the Chesapeake Bay bridge and up to Philadelphia through some open country used for arable cropping. It was a lovely weekend.

We had come to the States on a one-way discount ticket and hoped for a cheap stand-by return. There were no such seats on our flight. After considering alternatives we eventually decided to pay full fare so as not to interrupt our schedule. At Heathrow we found our car covered with a film of black diesel soot from spending a week under the flight path of many planes. We soon found a carwash which fixed that problem. We also needed petrol as we had left it with a low tank so a petrol thief would not get much, though it was pretty safe in the secure car park.

We had a three-day trip to Scotland to visit Renee Mackenzie and had lovely days with her around the north of Glasgow. I had a round of golf at Windy Hill Golf Club and was proud of my 85-13-72 score. I was invited to play with a couple of locals, one of whom had a local handicap of four and a 'National Handicap' of two. He was very helpful in describing

the layout of the course on holes where there was a poor view from the tee or the fairway. After a few more days at Blackpool we headed back to New Zealand with a two-day stopover in Singapore, arriving home on the 9th June 1978.

Towards Retirement

The end of my time on the Borough Council sent me back to my office fulltime. I can well recall my pleasure in being able to concentrate totally on my own business without the distractions of fitting in official appointments of one kind or another. I was able to focus again on my core business and play my full part in progressing the work of the office. My work in the office had gradually developed into a greater role in estate planning and the formation of trusts and matrimonial agreements. There was still a considerable amount of standard annual accounting work with clients but other aspects were developing. I have mentioned the preparation of family schemes of one kind and another and I think I had a very good reputation among the legal fraternity for the planning memoranda I supplied for my clients. It was around this time that my sister Vera and her husband Jock Pearce mentioned to me that they did not quite know how to go about bringing their family into the farm business. I'm not quite sure how it actually came about but I think I offered to formulate a plan, albeit rather diffident about getting into their private affairs. I discussed their hopes and intentions with them and produced a fairly detailed plan to achieve these objectives. When they took this to their stock firm manager in Invercargill, he told them it was the best draft plan he had seen. I never sent a fee for it. One way and another, my first uninterrupted year back full time was a very pleasant time for me.

Another aspect of being in practice on one's own was the problem of succession. How was I to get value out of the practice when it came time to retire or in the event of my death while active in the business. Millie had wondered about this latter problem and I had no ready solution except the protection of a reasonable life insurance. I was healthy and well and did not feel it was an imminent problem. I simply said she should seek the help of my solicitor at the time, Hallam Smith. Hallam was a very shrewd operator and I think would have been able to salvage something out of the practice in that event. At the same time, I was aware that the sudden death of a sole practitioner had on occasions resulted

in a practice just melting away to nothing. This had largely happened to R S Green, the Farrys' previous accountant, and to a lesser extent with Dick English when he moved away to Christchurch, though I don't think he had very much to sell. Still, the meltdown of the practice was a possibility except that in later years it had grown in size with capable staff who would be able to keep the goodwill together for a negotiable time.

On the other hand, I had been making plans over the years to obtain some value out of the practice. Back in the days of D M Malloch & Co I had visions of Alan Dunn, who worked in Invercargill on the Gore files, joining me in taking over the Gore business. He was qualified, a very good worker, a lovely chap and we respected each other a great deal. Alan and his wife Joanna had built a house in North Invercargill and joined the Waverley Presbyterian Church. He had quite a spiritual experience there and felt called to the ministry. He applied for training at Knox College and resigned from the firm. I gather that they lived a very spartan life during his training, using up the proceeds of their house and a small monthly allowance which Murray Malloch paid to them during that time. The upshot was that Alan was taken out of my equation. I had employed Ray Eddington who was studying accountancy and who I hoped would one day qualify as a partner and therefore a purchaser of a share in the goodwill. He failed to qualify in spite of making a last-ditch crash-cram of study each year. I took on George Wallace who also failed to complete the qualification. At that time it was not possible to practice as a Chartered Accountant with unqualified partners. Possibly some kind of profit-sharing scheme could have been arranged, but that would not have overcome the lack of value for the goodwill.

Finally I advertised in the Accountants' Journal and received two enquiries. One was from a member of Ron's church in Newlands but after some to-and-fro communication he decided to take his chances in Wellington. (It is almost incredible but only three months before the time of writing, I attended the Wellington Central Baptist Church and found myself sitting beside this same man some thirty-five years later.) The other enquiry was from Alan Chisholm of Roslyn, Dunedin who came down for an interview. In conversation we mentioned names we found were mutual and eventually I discovered he and his wife were members of the Roslyn Baptist Church. At that time I was offering a salaried position with eventual prospect of a partnership and he accepted.

With the office work expanding and Ray Eddington leaving I employed a lad called David Reid who was also studying accountancy. David was just out of school and therefore a junior but under George's tutelage and assistance he became a very useful member of the staff. I have already mentioned that he too felt a call to ministry and he also was lost as an eventual junior partner.

In due course I offered Alan Chisholm a three tenths share in the practice, and I G Elder & Co came into being. This was a step along the way but did not completely solve the problem. Some outside qualified person would still have to be found to work with and support Alan and replace my work load in the office.

Late in 1981 a partner in the Invercargill firm of Barr, Burgess and Stewart, Brian Carter,

phoned and asked if he could come and see me. His firm was a nation-wide organisation with branches in many of the main centres. His purpose was to enquire if I was thinking of retiring some time in the near future as his firm would be interested in acquiring the practice. I discussed this with Alan and found to my surprise that he was not anxious to take on a senior role and if some multi-partner firm came in, would not want to join them in partnership. This left me free to negotiate with Barr, Burgess and Stewart.

We entered into discussions and I submitted an eleven-point paper of terms and conditions surrounding a proposed sale. They offered us a goodwill figure of 50% of Gross Annual Fees, which I was glad to accept - this figure was higher than I think I was expecting and I did not bargain any further. I was entering into uncharted waters here, as I really had no experience of arms-length bargaining on the question of goodwill. Negotiations proceeded. The initial intention was for them to take over at 1 April 1982 but as time went by without any confirmations I phoned Brian on two or three occasions. The reply each time was that they were expecting to reach finality any day soon. The problem seemed to centre round the question of a suitable partner or manager to come to Gore to lead the practice. On the strength of the original arrangement, Millie and I had booked an overseas trip as a kind of retirement celebration and to continue the intent of Millie seeing as much of her family and friends in England as possible. Millie was at that time in a rather nervous state and I did not want to disappoint her.

About a month after the first approach by Brian Carter, I had been at the annual meeting of the Southland branch of the Society of Accountants. During the tea interval, Cliff Broad, of Broad, Christie and Partners sat beside me and asked me almost the same question as Brian Carter had asked in my office about a month before. Rather sadly I told him that I was already in negotiation with another party and did not see that I could discuss a deal with him. So early in March when Barr, Burgess and Stewart were not closing the deal, I asked them for a stay of negotiation and came back to Cliff Broad. He came to see me with Maurice Christie who was the firm's chairman of partners. I knew Maurice slightly and found him very good to work with. We quite quickly came to a firm agreement on basically the same terms as discussed with the other firm. However, in view of the late date they did not see their way clear to meet the 1982 deadline and requested a delay until the following April. Alan and I were very pleased with the discussions and agreed to the delay. Our keenness to make the deal was strengthened by a suggestion from Brian Carter that they would consider amalgamating our practice with O'Connor Richmond which would bring in that firm's partner experience to handle a combined practice. I could see a real problem here. The partners of O'Connor Richmond were all Roman Catholics and I could not see a harmonious relationship developing between them and Alan and George in my office. I think I had grown more tolerant and indeed more respectful of many Catholics though I think I would still have felt strange working alongside and with them. George and Alan were much less tolerant and I just could not see it working. The delay for a year was the better alternative and I am sure that my two men fully agreed even though they were going to have a heavy year. I had made it clear that Millie and I were still intent on making our trip overseas and that the practice would just have to carry on for that three months or so without me. On this basis, we went away.

About July I got a call in England from Alan Chisholm to say that rumours had somehow got started that I was retiring and clients were wondering what they should do. Somewhat reluctantly we decided that we should be open and frank, so a letter was sent out advising clients of the move that was afoot and assuring them that the practice would continue in complete form and that their interests would be looked after. This seemed to allay uncertainty and things carried on without any real upset.

When Millie and I came home the office schedule was behind. Alan had quite a lot of trouble getting the computer just right and this had impinged on his normal work. However, by the time I got back the flow was proceeding well. I took over as much of the interviewing as possible and we eventually started to catch up. We were in a tolerable position by the time the end of March came round. Broad Christie were very accommodating at this stage and compensated us for the value of work in progress and uncompleted on 11th April which had been set as the actual take-over date. When the work was completed and the fee charged, the whole of it then went to them.

I was particularly satisfied with my own position. It was agreed that I would continue on working in Broad Christies' employ for up to three years on a descending scale of hours. The intention here was threefold. First to smooth the transfer of goodwill by having me available to anyone who wanted to see me.. Second, to be available to assist with my inside knowledge relating to any files being dealt with by the new manager. Third, to enable me to tidy up any family arrangements already in process and with the final closing down of companies, trusts and other arrangements that had served their purpose. It was a great advantage to me as it saved me from finishing up a busy life one day and having nothing to do the next morning. Readers will enjoy this incident. The evening before my first morning following the take over, Millie asked me what time I was going to work next day. I had really not thought about it and I suppose that 8.30am would have been the automatic response in my mind. I thought quickly and said, "9 o'clock." Good question - good answer.

I immediately moved into one of the back offices where David Reid had been working, well out of sight of reception. Appointments were being sent out in the names of the new manager Alan Macdonald and Alan Chisholm or George Wallace - clients rapidly adapted to the new setup. There were quite a few dead companies whose purpose had been fulfilled and these required winding up. In the normal course of events I had done very little in the way of winding up companies and so I found it interesting work to ensure I followed the right procedure. I duly rendered a fee for these jobs and I was paid by Broad Christie 60% of the charge-out rate. About eighteen months into the new arrangements the firm increased the charge-out rate for its seniors which included my rate. The next month they paid me on the basis of the old rate but quickly corrected it when I pointed out the error.

I had a very interesting set of circumstances relating to one particular client. The client had a long- standing trust which was complicated by the fact that two of the beneficiaries had died. A further complication lay in the fact that he and his wife had separated and later completed a divorce. My client had a new relationship and married his new lady.

As marriage cancels any current will he needed to make a new one. His situation was a very complicated one and I was involved in deep discussions with him and his solicitor, who actually wrote to a QC in Wellington for advice on the terms of the new will. Aware of the tragedies which had already occurred in his family, he wanted every possible eventuality covered, even to the point that if his children and new wife all predeceased him, his former wife would be a residuary beneficiary. The chances of this occurring were so remote that it might just as well not have been considered - it was almost a certainty that she would never get anything. However, he felt that although the marriage was certainly over, in the event of last resort he should acknowledge that she had come through the lean years with him and should be included rather than have everything go to a complete outsider. Perhaps he made the mistake of mentioning this to his new wife who was greatly distressed that he might still be in love with the former wife. Knowing the two women, I had no doubts where his fancy lay at this stage. She came in to see me in great distress and in tears and I did my best to reassure her. I pointed out the legal reasons for the provision and assured her that it would never come to pass other than in an extremely dire situation. I think she was somewhat mollified. I lost touch with them shortly after but I met them again quite recently and the marriage seems to be still on a very firm footing.

Another very delicate set of circumstances which occurred from time to time was the first visit to me of the widow of a client who had died. In all too many cases she did not have much idea of the financial workings of the business and I would have to explain them to her. I was a co-trustee with one of these widows whose youngest child, her only son, was only about 10 years old. With the aid of managers we kept the property going and the four sisters, each happily married, were very glad to see young brother duly established on the farm. It was surprising the way I felt that these children had become a kind of foster family. The boy has done well and is now married. I am sure his mother would be glad to see that her protection of the farm was paying off so well.

These kinds of situations and the solving of many other problems left me with a very warm sense of satisfaction as my career was winding down. Sadly there were some situations which did not work out nearly so well and these left a feeling of sadness.

My arrangement with Broad Christie was for a period of three years. However, the change-over went very smoothly - the transfer of clients was very good indeed and the kind of work I was doing was coming to an end. So I suggested that I could wind up for good and they were happy with that. I finished on 30th November 1985 after about two and a half years with them. I did not realise that I had come to that office in Jubilee House on 1st February 1946 and had worked in it, or travelled to it from Invercargill, for thirty nine years and ten months - only two months short of forty years.

Mentioning Jubilee House reminds me of the life of the business in that building. Initially Murray Malloch leased half of the first floor of the building and divided it off into offices. About a third of our section was a one-room suite occupied by the solicitor George Salmond. Both my parents and I had been clients of his for our little bits of legal work. About fourteen years later when the Smith Barton and Co offices were renovated after one

of the disastrous fire-bug blazes, George took a new office there and his suite became available for our growing practice. I used his room for the rest of my working life. Over the years the other half of the first floor became available - we opened up doorways and eventually used the whole of the floor.

A decade or so into the lease Jim Laverty, a pharmacist with a shop opposite the old post office, approached me with the proposal that we buy the building in half shares. Jubilee House Ltd (half-owned by me) became my landlord. Jim's interest in the building was the need to enlarge his premises and he knew that the Jubilee House site would have a better pedestrian count. Leases were reasonably long term but provided for three-yearly reviews of rental and the viability steadily improved. Jim later got the opportunity of taking over the shop next to his existing premises and no longer wanted the share of Jubilee House. We negotiated the purchase of his shares and did so in Millie's name. The company produced an income and Millie was delighted to receive a dividend on her shares. About the time of the sale of the practice, I was approached by Murray Heenan who had some clients wishing to invest in real estate. There was a bit of a surge in property values and he offered a price which was well beyond my expectations. We sold at a very good profit and the freeing up of this capital was very welcome.

The change-over date was fixed at 11th April. Alan and I would be faced with tax on depreciation recovered on the sale of plant and sundries and this date brought that tax into the following financial year. It was also the end of the fortnightly pay period and this made the transfer of employees very simple. My notes of the sale show that only five clients declined to be transferred to Broad Christies. One of these flatly refused to have anything to do with the new owners due to some experience with the firm or some member of it in the past. Another family of two brothers took the opportunity to change to a local firm of accountants with whom they were friends. One left to shift his accountancy work to Balclutha and another who lived in Alexandra changed to a local firm. The agreement was that we were not paid goodwill for any client who left within the first two years other than by natural attrition for reasons such as death, sale or removal from the district. All in all the transfer was very smooth indeed and we lost very little goodwill from clients who defected.

An afternoon function was held for some fifty fellow accountants, solicitors, stock firm chiefs and others with financial interests in the town. We also had a sit-down dinner at Croydon Lodge for partners and staff and representatives from Broad Christie. I had a deep feeling of regret that no function was held for clients. In the end it seemed sad to me that I did not get the opportunity to say farewell to clients of many years standing and the second and third generation of clients of earlier years. I think I was too sensitive to suggest such a gathering as it might appear I was looking for a presentation and it did not seem to occur to Alan or the Broad Christies to initiate anything. I felt I had missed out on the opportunity to say thank you in public to my very loyal clients. The feeling was intensified as we moved straight away to Kelvin Heights.

At the end of November 1985 I came to the end of my full-time working life. Things were about to change. It was the end of another era.

USA and UK 1982

With negotiations for the sale of the practice all tied up and finalised, we set off for the trip which had been planned as a retirement treat. Leaving thoughts of accountancy and other things behind us, we set out on 29th May for Dunedin airport for our flight to Wellington. Susan and Roger were with us and were to take charge of our car. We stopped over in Wellington to have some time with Ron who was minister of the Newlands Baptist Church. He met us at the airport and took us over Mt Victoria to see the magnificent view of the city and for a nostalgic drive past my first lodging in Wellington in 1938 at 23 Bidwell Street. The day was, of course Ron's birthday and we took him out for dinner to a restaurant in Courtney Place in the city. Interestingly, the Maitre d' for the night was Arthur Barnett who used to work in H & J Smith's in Gore. Ron and Millie shared a spectacular 'Pancake Flambé'. We stayed over the weekend and attended the morning service which featured two baptisms, communion and the receiving of two new members into membership. However, the people were sad as Ron had just announced his resignation the week before.

We also had a couple of nights in Auckland where we made contact with Bob and Shirley Thomson at Baptist College at their new Principal's residence on the College grounds, had lunch at Parnell Village and then visited Ida Nichol in her Retirement home at Papakura. Her daughter Frances called in while we were there.

Our departure was messed up by fog at Auckland airport. Our plane finally arrived from Los Angeles very late but had to complete its flight to Sydney and back before we could be taken aboard. So we took off about five and a half hours late. Some of this time was regained on the flight to LA but we were still behind schedule. We were very efficiently met by our travel agents London Shoppe but they took over half an hour to contact their bus driver who was waiting in the bus park with his cell phone switched off! It was therefore quite late when we got to Holiday Inn at Anaheim where we were to spend the night

for our visit to Disneyland the next day. Fortunately we were quickly checked into a room and were able to get some supper without doodling too much in the Doodles Coffee Shop.

Millie had a poor sleep as jet-lag was catching up and eventually took a sleeping pill. She was still sleeping at nearly 10 am. I had heard that coaches left for Disneyland on the half-hour. I phoned reception to ask if there was one at 11.30 and was told that 10.30 was the last morning trip. I had to wake Millie and we were just in time for the coach.

Our first impression of Disneyland was a vast expanse of the car park which was only about a third full on this weekday. Our coach took us to the main entrance and our adventure into fantasyland began. We took rides on the overhead gondolas with views of the whole park, rode the steam train, took the Jungle Cruise, trembled (not) through the Haunted House, cruised on the Mark Twain Steam Boat, travelled the Monorail and visited the Shooting Gallery, A Small Small World and America the Beautiful. On our way out we called at Great Moments With Abe Lincoln, which gave a brief glimpse of his origins and an animation of one of his speeches. The day was sunny with a light cooling breeze and we enjoyed it immensely. We left for our hotel and had a very good meal of beef in the Supper-time Restaurant. The following morning we were scheduled for a coach tour of Los Angeles with a slightly more relaxed 11.30 start. In my diary I have listed places of interest that we saw: the Queen Mary which was now a waterfront hotel, downtown LA, Little Tokyo, the Administration and Law Courts Centre, the Hollywood Bowl, Sunset Boulevard with the famous Sunset Strip between Hollywood and Beverley Hills City, Beverley Hills, homes of the stars, TV and Film Studios. We had lunch at the Farmers Market.

We had an early flight the next morning so we were booked into the very new Amfac Hotel on the fringe of the airport - a long walk down an endless corridor to our room, traffic noise from an intersection under our window and a huge American-style sandwich sent up to our room. Next morning we had an uneventful flight - over cloud with little to see - to Philadelphia where David, Peggy and Kate met us at the airport. Kate was a mixture of friendliness, shyness and show-off but confirmed David's description of a lovely, happy friendly little girl. She was about 22 months old. She soon got to know us and we were able to enjoy our first grandchild. David and Peggy were then living at 2946 West Cambridge Street. In Philadelphia the north-south streets are all numbered while the east-west streets are named. #2946 means they were number 46 in the block between 29th Street and 30th Street - they were in fact one vacant lot away from the corner. Some considerable time later they were able to buy this lot and develop off-street parking and a garden. Peggy's mother Ruth was not happy for them to have chosen to live in this inner-city neighbourhood but it was handy to David's work and the house lent itself to upgrading and improvement.

On Saturday David and Peggy took us out to Peggy's mother's home at Rydal, about forty minutes to the northeast. The house was three-storeyed with servants' bedrooms in the top floor. It had lovely grounds which Ruth was keeping very nicely with the aid of a gardener once a week. She also had a swimming pool with a poolhouse alongside. Ruth had lost her husband some ten years or more earlier and had married again to Alex Joseph. I liked Alex, who had a very high opinion of David and was a very good companion to Ruth.

We had dinner and the six of us sat talking over the meal table until about 11 pm. The bed in the guestroom had a bed that could be adjusted to suit people with back-pain with sections that could be raised under the small of the back and under the knees - we just remembered it as very hard and it took us a while to get to sleep. The next day was Sunday and David and Ruth took us to the Bryn Athen Cathedral for the service. This cathedral had been built mainly with money from the Pitcairn family which had interests in pharmaceuticals and helicopters. The mansions of the four or five members of the family were scattered in the landscaped and extensive wooded grounds. The Bryn Athen connections seemed to be with northern Europe, maybe Swedish and Lutheran. The service featured a liturgical style with a very warm atmosphere and the sermon had references to the relationships in marriage between husbands and wives very like the Brethren.

Later in the day Ruth took us to New Hope on the Delaware River, a charming little old-world style town with an area called 'Peddlars Village'. It took us about an hour's drive through beautiful countryside. Dinner back at Ruth's home was a barbecue meal at the poolhouse with additional guests including Peggy's brother Tom and his wife Kathy and their children and some friends of Ruth's. The next day Ruth took us on a trip to Atlantic City with its casinos and the long Boardwalk on the sea front. We went into a casino for the experience. Ruth watched a girl putting quarter after quarter into a particular slot machine until she ran out of money - Ruth then went to the same machine, put in one quarter and collected about twenty-five dollars. Millie was amused to overhear an attendant in the Ladies' toilet say to another, 'I don't know what has happened to the toilet paper. I put out twenty-seven rolls this morning and they are nearly all gone.' The next day the Hays from next door took us to Rydal Country Club where we enjoyed some golf on the little nine hole course. We hurried away afterwards as Alex had fallen and broken his leg and we wanted to show our concern. The following day Ruth took us to Winterthur, a former home of the du Pont family. It is extremely large and is now a museum of American period furniture and memorabilia from the period 1720-1820. It is surrounded by acres of very extensive and beautiful gardens. Back at David and Peggy's I took Kate in her stroller to the Zoo which was about ten minutes walk away. She was very excited with the animals - her favourite was the turtle because she seemed to find the sound of the word intriguing.

On the 12th of June I got a cable from Susan to say that the Birthday Honours had been announced and they included an award of the Queen's Service Order to me. I had known this was coming, having been asked for my consent to the award some two months previously but had been bound to secrecy. I assumed that the new Mayor Hallam Smith and the Town Clerk had something to do with this. My service as mayor and as chairman of the Flood Relief Committee would have featured considerably in the award. It was a pity to be receiving the news so far away as I missed out on a lot of the personal enjoyment of the event. It is always a shame that these awards so seldom take into account the work of the recipient's wife in the joint effort that goes into the service, particularly in relation to the Mayoress' job. Ruth's husband Alex was very impressed. He was an interesting man who had been editor of an American Radio Listener magazine for some years. After retirement he had been head-hunted by a venture in Toronto, Canada where he spent two years launching a similar magazine. Canada also has a Queen's Honours system and he fully

recognised the significance of the award.

The next day David and Peggy and little Kate took us on a four-day trip into upstate Pennsylvania, Maryland, West Virginia, Virginia and Delaware. We travelled through Amish country to Gettysburg near the site of the famous battle which virtually ended the Civil War, visiting the museum in the house in which Lincoln stayed before his famous speech at the dedication of the Gettysburg War Cemetery. Then on to the very spectacular Luray Caverns along the 100-mile Skyline Drive on the Blue Ridge mountain range with their magnificent views of the Shenandoah Valley, to Yorktown where the British finally surrendered at the end of the War of Independence. We visited Williamsburg, the original capital in pre-Independence days and now restored to its former colonial style, crossed the Chesapeake Bay Bridge to the Delaware peninsula and back up to Philadelphia. We spent the last night in Cape May which like Arrowtown has been maintained in an early colonial style and is a most attractive city. It was exceedingly hot and we spent some time on the beach. It was Kate's first time on the sand and she loved it. However the sun was so strong that we had to keep her under the beach umbrella as much as possible. David and Peggy indulged in a swim. There is so much detail about this trip which Mille recorded in her scrap book of this overseas holiday.

By the 24th of June we were on our way to England. Dawn had rung to say that there was an Underground strike and that she and Jean would meet us at Heathrow. Jean took Millie and our luggage to her home in Broxbourne while Dawn and I waited an hour and a half for a bus to Paddington Station, and walked in drizzle to the Ford agency to pick up our rental car. We had a lovely lunch with Jean and then set out for Blackpool. We struck a traffic jam near York so we took a detour and finally got to Blackpool after 9 pm. It was midnight before we got to bed.

After a few days later we set out for a week in the Lake District. Millie and Dawn and I checked in to a flat at Ambleside - part of a quite large house converted into four flats and set in lovely grounds. We then returned to Lancaster where we joined a mystery family trip on the Lancaster-Wigan canal to celebrate Jessie's 70th birthday. The venue for the meal had been kept secret from her and all the way to Lancaster she had been speculating about which familiar eating house they were taking her to for dinner - only to arrive outside a canalboat. The meal was served on the boat during a leisurely two-hour cruise. There were 31 in the party, a pretty complete gathering of the family plus a few friends. It was interesting to see how easily Dawn fitted into the quartette of Springett girls. It was quite clear they were related and had become very good friends. We spent the rest of the week walking touring, shopping, picnicking and generally enjoying this region that we liked so much. Pat and Phil Fougere were in England at the time and we had arranged for them to come up from London for a couple of nights. Sadly, there was a rail strike and they could not be certain of getting back in time for another engagement so the visit fell through.

We then went on to Glasgow to stay a night or two with Millie's friend Renee Mackenzie. We took her with us on a trip to Skye. Renee had booked accommodation for us

and we were able to do a circuit of the island, sighting some of the famous spots like Flora Macdonald's cottage and grave, the home of Clan McLeod at Dunvegan Castle, and the central Cuillam Hills. Millie bought a new Scottish tartan skirt at Portree and it looked very good on her.

Dawn caught a long-distance coach to take her back to work and we set off south, diverting through Ayrshire to take in a day at the British Open Golf Championship at Troon. We watched several of the well-known players at different sections of the course. Tom Watson turned out the winner the next day. We were able to watch Bob Charles play the short 8th hole, called the Postage Stamp as the green is so small. He found a bunker but splashed out very well and got his par. We found accommodation near Turnberry where I had been stationed during the war intending to head back to Blackpool the next morning. Staying at the same place was the chauffeur of a limousine allocated to Arnold Palmer for the Championship period. That morning the chauffeur had taken Mrs Palmer and a couple of other golfers' wives to Prestwick Airport to fly in Arnold's private jet to Austria for a day's shopping! On our way home we went down the coast to Stranraer, then inland through Dumfriesshire and Annan to the M6 and M55. We paused for lunch at Glen Cottage Hotel in Penrith and reached Blackpool for tea and church in the evening. We were able to watch the last few holes of the Open on TV. During the next week or so we explored around Millie's old familiar haunts and paid a visit to Ron and Vera Haigh in Bolton. Ron took us to some interesting places like Angelzarke Reservoir, a Tudor mansion called Smithall's Hall, the renovated downtown area of Bolton and on to Hole i'the Wood, another smaller Tudor house where Compton had developed the spinning wheel which started the Industrial Revolution. We took Arthur Brammer to Stanley Park to see a one-day match involving the Lancashire Cricket Team - he had been a keen cricketer in his younger days. We also had a glorious day with Eric and Margaret Culpin down to Knutsford where we had lunch and spent time exploring the quaint little town. From there Eric took us to Gawsorth Hall, a very old Manor House where we had tea and scones in the Manor Café. On our way home, we went along over Atherley Edge. This is a remarkable outcrop on the relatively flat land south of Manchester which has a very sharp drop of some hundred feet on the north side. There were long-abandoned caves from which copper had been mined many years ago.

A few days later we drifted down to London, visiting Woburn Abbey again and spending a night in Woburn and then in Windsor. On the way we spent nearly two hours with Judy and Brian Bayley in Little Chalfont. We were out early from Ye Harte and Garter in Windsor to Heathrow for our flight to Italy. We parked the car and phoned the location details to Dawn who was to pick it up and use it while we were away. We had only just arrived in our hotel in Venice when there was a telephone call from Ross Beadle, our minister back in Gore, to ask me if I would accept the Church Secretaryship. I have not recorded my reply but am sure it was in the negative. It was a position I had been interested in earlier but I felt I could not do justice to it at that time along with the Mayoralty. I think I felt now in 1982 that the time had passed me by and with the projected sale of the practice and all associated adjustments it would be unwise to take it on. We had also begun to have thoughts of retiring to Queenstown.

We had a delightful few days re-exploring the fascinating city of Venice, with its beautiful art galleries, magnificent buildings and wonderful paintings by the great Masters. We visited the island of Murano where we saw a glass-blowing demonstration and were guided into the saleroom. We bought a couple of glass trees, a parrakeet, a piece of burgundy-coloured glass, a ruby bottle and a little pink dish was added as a bonus. These were to be posted and we paid by credit card. As a last thought I photographed them standing on a little table thinking it was a good safeguard to ensure that the right items were actually posted as we would not be seeing them again for some while.

We then travelled on by train back over the Appenine Range to Florence and renewed our acquaintance with this city so noted for its art and sculpture. Our time there included a trip to Perugia and Assisi. It was a very hot August day and virtually midsummer. We found Perugia an interesting Italian hilltop city with very narrow streets and with walkways over the street at first or second floor level. It had a lovely piazza in front of an old but impressive cathedral church. Assisi was fascinating. First was The Hermitage, built around the site of the original caves in which St Francis had prayed with his four friends and founded the Franciscan Order. The tour of the site led us by tortuous steps and narrow passages with very low entrances. I had a feeling of prying into a very private place but found it fascinating nonetheless. Back in the town there was the Church of San Chiara, dedicated to the founder of the Poor Clares order which has as its main purpose the welfare of poor women. The church contains the tomb of St Clare. Then we went on to the Basilica of St Francis, built to house the saint's tomb. He was originally buried in a secret location but when this was discovered the Basilica was built in his honour. The Basilica is in three levels - the crypt with the tomb of St Francis and his four friends, the ground floor with relatively low ceiling which was the original tomb and the magnificent church above with a very lofty roof. It was a hot day. When we got into the coach to go home the temperature inside was 40°C but the air-conditioning brought it down to a more comfortable 31°C once we were on the move.

In the next day or two we visited the Uffizzi Gallery, the Pitti Palace across the river Arno, the Duomo or Basilica, the Piazzale di Michelangelo and a leather factory where I bought two business satchels for Alan and George in the office at home. Crossing the Ponte Vecchio over the River Arno, we encountered a jewellery stall and I bought Millie a very pretty sapphire necklace which she treasured very highly - it was passed on to Kate after her death. It became a very special memento of a most intriguing city. Our return to England was uneventful with some time in Pisa where we could see the Leaning Tower, Leaning Baptistry and Leaning Cathedral. We were to spend the Sunday night at the Russell Hotel overlooking Russell Square and set off to attend the evening service at Bloomsbury Central Baptist Church. Afterwards I was approached by an attractive young lady who introduced herself as Janet Sewell from our church in Gore. She and her new husband had just arrived in London that day for his three year working stint with Shell Oil.

We then had three days in London with the aid of our 'Go-As-You-Please' London Underground and Bus tickets. We got some snippets of New Zealand news at NZ House, visited galleries and the British Museum, spending time with the Elgin marbles from Greece

and re-visiting the Sutton Hoo Treasures which we found beautifully displayed. The first evening we walked over the footbridge at Charing Cross to the Festival for the performance of *Le Sylphides*. The production was nearing the end of its run and received a most enthusiastic reception. The next day we took the Thames river trip up to Hampton Court and then saw 'The Mousetrap' at St Martins. The play was in its 30th year after over 12,000 performances, by far the longest period for any play. We thoroughly enjoyed it but had a long wait for a bus to get back to our hotel.

The next day we went to Knightsbridge and spent a couple of hours in Harrods. I recall Millie bought a very nice blouse as a souvenir before we did an unusual thing and separated. Millie strolled up Regent Street and Oxford Street to Selfridges for shopping (or 'just looking') while I went East on the Tube to St Pauls station and walked along part of the old city wall to the Barbican Music Centre. This is a magnificent complex with internal accesses, auditoria for concerts, schools of music, lecture rooms, reflecting pools, waterfalls, fountains and a dining terrace. I was very impressed with the concept. At the time there was an ongoing exhibition of Cecil Beaton photography. I met up with Millie in Selfridges and we had a late lunch in their 'Coffee on 2' shop. In the evening we went to Piccadilly, found the Lyric Theatre and saw Glenda Jackson as Eva Braun and Georgina Hale as Clara Petacci in a rather peculiar play called 'Summit Conference.'

The 12th of August was an epic day. Dawn had collected our car while we were in Italy and had driven down to Pembroke to join the Springett family and Jessie who were on summer holiday in a small village called Angle. We were to join them after our time in Italy and London. We had carefully booked with reserve seats on the Intercity 125 train from Paddington to Swansea where we were to change to a 'local' train to Pembroke. We had a leisurely morning packing, vacating our room and relaxing in the lounge until it was time for a taxi to Paddington. Our train was 35 minutes late coming in. We could not find Car D in which we were reserved but a porter told us it was not the regular train and to take any seat we could find - that was no problem. Alas, it was not posh new The Intercity 125 but a made-up train of old-style carriages. I'm sure the train did its best and seemed to be going very fast judging by the quality of the ride. But it was steadily losing time and we arrived at Swansea nearly half an hour after our connection to Pembroke. I checked the timetables and found another train leaving in about half an hour's time. We caught it but found at Carmarthen that it was going north instead of south to Pembroke. Along with many others in the same predicament we were directed to a city bus. We had quite a hike from the station, dragging our bags with us and then found that the bus had no room for baggage - I had to nurse our smaller bag on my knee and place our large case in the aisle. We started off down the main road but every few miles had to duckoff it to a railway station to drop a passenger before heading back to the main road. It was a slow journey. We eventually arrived at Pembroke Halt - just a shelter shed rather than a proper station - to find that Dawn was not there to meet us. She had met the scheduled train two hours or so earlier only to find no Mum and Dad. We did not know the address of the cottage. We did have a telephone number for the owners but a call produced no reply. We finally called a taxi and told the driver our predicament. He said he knew Angle well as his fiancée lived there. Finally as we drove slowly into the village I recognised John's car at the same time as

Millie spotted Jessie looking out of a window. We were of course very late for dinner but they had kept meals of Welsh lamb chops for us. They were lovely and I can still recall the pleasure and relief with which we enjoyed that meal.

I had a fairly big party for my birthday the next morning. Dawn brought tea to us in bed and breakfast was punctuated with the opening of parcels and cards. Then we had an interesting day out with the family, exploring Pembroke Castle ruins and some of the Pembrokeshire shore – very rugged and rocky. A very interesting spot was St Govan's Chapel, a tiny stone chapel built in a small rocky ravine in the cliff face. There were 76 steps down to it with very impressive rock formations on either side of the ravine. Frank Elder's wife Dot came from this area and used to talk of her 'beloved Pembrokeshire'.

The next day was departure day as we had arrived just at the end of their holiday. Jean and John were headed back to London with their yacht in tow and we headed north with Dawn up through south-central Wales to Brecon and then on to Hay-on-Wye. The town is famous for its secondhand bookshops and we spent quite a time browsing through them. The shop that took the prize for me was an old cinema. All the seating had been gutted and a mezzanine floor built in. It was crammed with bookshelves with very narrow walkways between them. Millie bought an autobiography Margot Fonteyn and found it was personally autographed by her, as were three other volumes on the shelf - obviously she had pre-signed books which had not sold at retail. The next day we headed over some of the east Wales hill country through Staffordshire to Matlock and Bakewell in Derbyshire. Here Millie investigated Doulton chinaware in a very well-known china shop. We spent the night there, did the walking tour of the town sites and paid a visit to Chatsworth House and then drove on back to Blackpool.

Some days were spent around the Blackpool area, including a family picnic meal at Margaret Culpin's holiday cottage in Arnside at the southern end of the Lake District. The cottage had been left to Margaret by her Aunt Dora Brammer who was always spoken of with great affection by Margaret and the Haigh girls. This was rather a fun trip and made a very enjoyable outing. Dawn was still with us and she and others had prepared different parts of the meal. Before the meal we all went for a walk up the hill behind the cottage and some of the party went out picking blackberries.

In the midst of this time we decided to take Dawn down to Jean and John's as she had a fair amount of luggage. On the way Millie visited an antique shop in Hatfield and bought an old sampler from a Susan Jones in St Andrew Street - an interesting coincidence of names as we were living in our St Andrew Street house at the time. After delivering Dawn we went on to Rugby where we booked into a B&B run by an English woman and her Indian husband. She recommended a restaurant to us but we found it was an Indian one and did not feel like Indian food that night. We went instead to an old English whitewashed Inn, complete with arched motor entrance to car parks in a cobbled former stable yard. It looked so authentically English until we read the menu and found it was run by A Singh and S Singh! However, the meal was good standard English pub fare. We then called on Philip Solari, father of our local acquaintance Mike Solari, at Beckbury quite near the Cosford

Hospital in which I had spent so much time during the war. He showed us over his farm with his very modern computerised piggery of about 3000 pigs. Breeding was very highly organised with groups of sows all farrowing in the same week. The piglets were raised for six weeks on carefully formulated feed until each batch was ready for the abattoirs at the same time. He and his sons also grew arable crops in strict rotation on about 800 acres.

During the last two weeks or so of our stay, I tackled a big job in Winnie and Marjorie's back yard. It used to get badly flooded whenever there was heavy rain and the water took some days to subside. I excavated a hole for a large black polythene rubbish bin sunk into the ground as a sump for the flood water. I opened up ditches round the edge of the lawn in which to lay perforated pipes to drain water into the bin. I placed a submersible water pump in the bin to pump the water away into the washhouse drain. The pump would switch itself on and off as the water level rose and fell in the bin. With repeated emptying of the sump the flood could be cleared in a day or so. The girls were delighted with it. The pump could be disconnected and stored until next required. I noted recently that when Marjorie was selling the house years later she activated the pump before it was opened to prospective buyers.

During these final days Millie spent some time wandering round some of her favourite youth-time haunts and going on outings with other members of the family. Station Road Church held a social evening after church to say farewell. Millie recited 'Cheering up an Invalid' and I told the wartime story of the specially-ordered wedding cake with Doric and Ionic pillars - when asked where it was to be delivered to, the customer said, 'I could eat it here, couldn't I?' It was a kind of Shaggy Dog Story and arose from wartime when wedding cakes were virtually impossible to get.

So our visit to England came to an end. We drove down the motorway right to its end where it entered London. We found the Regency Hotel overlooking Piccadilly and delivered our car back to the Ford depot off Oxford Street. Next morning there were delays on the Underground so we hired a taxi to take us to Heathrow. On arrival I noticed that my camera was missing – it was on the small parcel shelf in the car. I phoned Ford who found it and put it on another taxi to Heathrow. I met the taxi as it drew up, paid him his fare and retrieved the camera which contained a number of precious photos.

Our trip home was through Hong Kong where the interesting feature was a day-trip across the 70-mile wide mouth of the River Pearl to Macau and from there into China. The trip across the river was by fast Jet Hydrofoil and took only about an hour and a quarter. Upon entry we had to list all cameras and jewellery and these were checked as we left at the end of the day. Macau was a very interesting independent Portuguese enclave. Gambling was legal there but not in Hong Kong or China and this was a big industry. There was also an international motor race each year which brought in a lot of money. It looked a prosperous place - only about two and a half square miles in area with a population of about 350,000 people. In China a very fascinating trip took us through rice paddy fields and open country to a town where we visited a kindergarten - the children sang their songs to us. We

had lunch at an up-market hot springs tourist complex financed by Hong Kong interests¹. There were no private cars on the road but hundreds of bicycles, some with trailers. The population in an area about the size of New Zealand was about 58 million people we were told and a lot of development was taking place..

We spent the next three days sight-seeing in Hong Kong, leaving on the third evening for New Zealand. After our over-night flight we arrived at about 10.30 am to find as we emerged from Customs and Immigration that dear old John Burns had come out to meet us and take us across to the Domestic Terminal. It was some time till our flight south so we had lunch at the café before duly departing for Dunedin and Susan and Roger. They brought dinner round to us and we talked till late. I woke at about 8 am after a good sleep but Millie slept till about midday, making up some of her lost sleep. My diary says, 'So ends a very lovely trip.'

1 After a number of years, the property reverts to the Chinese, and the financiers walk out with nothing from the asset. They plan to recoup their investment from the profits during the term of the lease.

Retirement

We were living in the two-storeyed house in Albany Street all through my time in business and in Local Government. Gradually the nest had emptied as one by one the children left high school and went off to Dunedin to University. At this stage Millie and I began rattling round in the space but it was good to have the space available when our student children came back on vacation or for weekend visits.

For instance, we had a lovely family time on 27th June 1977 which was our 30th wedding anniversary. Susan was living in Gore and David and Dawn were in Dunedin so we planned for them to come home for an anniversary party. Ron was in Auckland 'between jobs' at the time and not possessed with a lot of money. Susan and I had the idea about the same time of bringing Ron down as a surprise. We shared the cost. When David and Dawn arrived from Dunedin, Millie was upstairs getting ready and came down delighted to welcome them. All this was took place in the kitchen and after some fuss had been made, a voice came from behind the door, 'Are you not going to welcome me too?' She turned around and there was Ron. It was a complete surprise to Millie. It was a lovely weekend and was the occasion I gave Millie a three stone diamond ring to mark the anniversary. In some respects this was in place of the engagement ring she had lost many years before in Invercargill.

We had some great High School graduation year parties. Millie was extremely good at ideas for a lively party and produced some good programmes. One of these was when Ron was Head Boy. Ron was also very good at keeping the fun going in such a situation, and between them they organised a hilarious evening - without alcohol. Kathleen Bowmar, wife of Erskine Bowmar who was chairman of Southland County for many years, said to Millie a few days later, 'Whatever did you do at that party? Ruth came home declaring it was the best she had ever been to.'

Towards the end of the seventies we had begun thinking that a move to a single-story house might be to our advantage. Millie was having indications of arthritis in her knees and a single-floor place would be much easier. We allowed this thought to simmer for some time and in 1981 became more serious. Late in the year we were shown a house at St Andrews Street, a cul-de-sac off Elizabeth Street in West Gore. The house was at the end of a short right of way. The vendor was an officer of the ANZ Bank who had been transferred to Christchurch and had been commuting to Gore at weekends for some months. They were asking about \$70,000 so we made an offer of \$65,000 which was accepted. We had not yet sold our place in Albany Street so we arranged a temporary overdraft and went ahead with the purchase, putting Albany Street on the market. This was against all the precepts of real estate, not to clinch a purchase until a sale had been made. As it happened, it was not long till a buyer came along but he did not want to settle and take possession for another six weeks. We sold for \$72,000 which did not sound too bad against the purchase cost of \$10,900 - however, that had been 22 years earlier. We were taking possession at St Andrew Street before Christmas time so we had about six weeks overlap. We did all our individual packing ourselves and made the move by trailer the short distance to the new home - a very large Jones and Cooper trailer borrowed from Roger reduced the number of trips. We employed the long-time Gore carrier firm of Starks for the bulky furniture which they took in their moderate-sized covered truck in a couple of loads. When the account came they had charged for only one trip. I confessed there had been two loads as it did not seem fair to them - even at twice the price for the heavy stuff it was a very cheap move at about \$126.

The new house was lovely. There was a three-bedroom wing on the west side and a kitchen facing south, a living room and lounge both facing north and a sewing room/office opening off the lounge. The outlook to the south was over the High School playing fields and there was a very good vegetable patch and a drying green which caught the breeze. It was very private and we loved the house. We had only been living there for about four months when we took our 1982 trip to USA and the UK.

During that winter there was a very cold spell with severe frosts. A new telephone directory had been delivered to the letter box and our neighbour Monica Devine thought she should put this under the eaves out of the weather. As she was doing so she heard a trickling noise and discovered water flowing out under the back door. She contacted Susan and Roger. Water pipes to the various utilities were routed above the ceiling insulation. With no heating on in the house the water had frozen and burst the pipes and then had cascaded into the house after the thaw. Roger and Susan did a big clean up and rescue act and then got the damage repaired through Jones & Cooper under insurance so all was OK when we arrived home. At a later stage the south bedroom showed signs of damp under the carpet just through the wall from the shower box. I got Tom Bredin to come and investigate. He eventually found that the waste pipe from the shower floor fitting had been incorrectly installed - the problem was soon fixed. I did quite a lot of work on this house, completely redecorating it inside. The north boundary had some very attractive Golden Elms which had grown much too big and were shading the lawn and even the terrace outside the living room in mid winter. We did a major thinning of the main branches and this reduced the

dampness of the house in the winter. There was also a problem during heavy rain. Storm water would back up because of the the very shallow fall to the street connection and our back yard would become flooded. Fortunately the water level soon dropped when the rain stopped. There was a golden conifer outside our bedroom window. With hindsight I am sure it shaded a lot of sun off the room and left it feeling cold and damp. When I suggested removing the tree Millie objected very strongly so it got left. The weekend we were finally settled, Susan and Roger were with us when we had a sudden thunder shower which caused a second conifer just outside the front door to disgorge dozens of snails. Roger and I had quite a task ensuring that they never did that again - I used quite a bit of snail bait but it is very hard to get the last one.

We enjoyed the house. In 1983 Renee Mackenzie decided to come to New Zealand to see her 'Auld Pal' Millie. From time to time there had been contact between the Blackpool sisters and Renee and when Marjorie heard of Renee's visit, she decided to come with her. Marjorie was a poor traveller and was airsick all the way which was pretty unpleasant for Renee but as soon as she arrived Marjorie was fine. This really was a lovely visit and Millie enjoyed it very much. We spent time at the crib in Frankton and saw all the sights around the district there. I think at the time I was driving a Ford Cortina 1.3 manual which had comfortable room for four people. Millie took Marjorie to the chemist and got her some travel pills. These cured her car sickness but often put her to sleep and she missed some of the views. They gradually reduced the dosage until Marjorie was only getting drowsy which enabled us all to enjoy the trips so much more.

I think it was in 1980 that we drove up to Rotorua for the Municipal Conference. This was a lovely place for the conference, particularly for the ladies as they enjoyed several outings of great interest. I remember delegates were taken to see the very sophisticated new sewage treatment station which had only just been opened. The treated sewage eventually flowed into Lake Rotorua so it had to be of very high quality. Lake Rotorua had an extreme problem with sewage discharge and with the nutrient run-off from the surrounding country side so sewage treatment was very important.

After conference we went north as far as Bay of Islands, spending a night with John and Carol Burns in Auckland on the way through. We took a day-trip by coach to Cape Reinga and found the whole Northland area very interesting. On the way south we came back through the Bay of Plenty and had a night in Katikati with Joyce Allan. At the time Joyce was being courted by a widower named Jack Ingram - she did later marry him and went to live in Welcome Bay, Tauranga.

We went round East Cape from Opotiki to Gisborne in a day. This was a mistake as it is too far and the journey was made worse as the automatic transmission would not click into top gear from second until we were doing about 60 kph. This was difficult for a lot of the distance as the road was very winding. It was a wonderful and beautiful journey rather spoilt in the later stages as we were getting very tired. We stayed in a small motel one block back from Waikanae Beach. In Hastings we met up with Dawn who was doing a Trainee Intern elective stint there and again had a motel stopover.

Time went on. In 1983 the practice had been sold and our retirement future was coming closer. During the Mayoralty I had withdrawn from the Deacon's court but later in the decade Millie had been elected a deacon. There were two things emerging in the church with which she was not very happy. Some were trying to introduce a much more charismatic atmosphere in the service but lacked the musical skills to make a good job of it. In any case Millie had found our church lacked a great deal of the atmosphere she had been accustomed to in her home church. There was also controversy over membership of the Baptist denomination in the World Council of Churches and there were two or three on the Diaconate who believed this association was the work of Satan. The church had a visit from the General Secretary of the Baptist Union whose message was hailed with approval by these same people. However, their attitude to the Union and their distrust were not assuaged. Millie was very distressed at the lack of harmony in the Deacons' Court and the direction the worship was taking. It seemed like an indication that we should re-visit the long treasured hope of retiring to the Queenstown area.

We had the holiday crib at Frankton but this was not suitable for permanent occupation and could not realistically be extended for that purpose. However, we would be able to sell the cottage at Frankton as well as the Gore house in order to buy a retirement home. We went searching around the Queenstown area for a home early in 1982 when negotiations for selling the practice were under way. Nothing the agents showed us seemed to come near what we were looking for and we gave up for the day. After the agent had gone, we drove round for a second look at some of the properties we had been shown and found an area right out at the end of Peninsula Road where there was a billboard advertising a mortgagee sale of sections in the Reid Subdivision. The developer John Reid had run out of money and the Bank were selling up to get their money back. One of the spots was well sheltered, sloped to the north, looked out onto the golf course and it appealed to us greatly. The price of the section was \$20,000 reduced by 10% for cash. However the cash was not payable until title could be given so we paid \$18,000 with the major part not due for some months.

We soon learned that the practice would continue for another year and set in train plans for a house to be built on the site. We went to the architect Alan Mollison, who I had dealt with for the James Cumming Wing, armed with our own ideas of the layout we would like. He did a good job for us and we had agreed plans before we went overseas. He recommended that we not call tenders but ask three builders to submit prices. We liked the firms he mentioned, including a client of mine called Alan Kennedy for whom I had great respect. His price came in while we were overseas and we accepted it. Alan had explained that he was working on his own and the job could take up to a year to complete. In view of the delay in the takeover by Broad Christie this was no problem. In any case we still had the cottage at Frankton. While we were overseas the government presented its Budget, introducing Rob Muldoon's famous Price Freeze - this was to operate in our favour but to what precise extent I was never able to determine.

The money from Broad Christie came in by instalments and basically kept up with the contract payments for the house which totalled something over \$100,000. On our

return from overseas we made frequently trips to Frankton and kept in touch with the progress of the building. Alan Kennedy suggested a number of small changes, one of which gave us much more basement space than the plans had provided. I appreciated this extra space later for storage of firewood and cones and our trailer. Alan Mollison had much faith in the Alan Kennedy's integrity and suggested that we could dispense with the architect's normal regular supervision of the job, thereby reducing the cost of his fees. We were happy with this and I am sure it suited him well also as he did not have the tedium of supervising a slow-moving construction job a long way from his base in Invercargill. Very early in the process the basement was excavated by a front end loader. Because of the fall from rear to the front of the section, I instructed that the excavation material not be removed from the site but used to build up the terrace at the front of the house for landscaping. The Kelvin Heights Peninsula was part of a moraine from an ancient glacier and the soil hid a good number of glaciated boulders. The ones from the excavation were used to make a wall along the driveway and to shore up the soil on the terrace.

In the planning of the house, Millie was very insistent that it should not present large garage doors to view on the normal approach. We therefore made the entrance to the garage from the west under a narrow balcony from the second bedroom. This achieved the first objective. However, it made for a long driveway with a hairpin turn to gain entry and a fairly difficult reversing manoeuvre when leaving. I was also keen to remove a Pitto-sporum on the bend to make more turning room but Millie was insistent on keeping as much vegetation as possible. There was always a problem of parking when we had more than one visiting car at a time. I believe now that we should have moved the house a few feet further west and had the garage entrance to the east, set back under the east balcony, where it would not have been too obvious. Hindsight is a wonderful thing but not very useful before the event.

It is fitting to put on record some of the features of the house. It had a wide terrace to the north and to the east which was to be laid with local stone. There was a problem getting a local stone mason and Alan asked if we would mind if he did it himself. We were happy to agree and he made a splendid job of it. Much later I used smaller pieces of this local stone in the concrete steps I built from the driveway up to the front door. The front door was reached up a footpath from the start of the drive and opened directly into the dining area of the open-plan dining-living room. At the far end of this fairly long room was the fireplace faced with Queenstown-style slate stone. It looked very impressive. On the left of the fireplace was a set of irregularly-spaced shelves with divisions placed at random intervals. The shelves were filled with a mixture of books, ornaments and other artefacts. On the other side was a single solid wooden shelf. French doors opened directly from the lounge to a rebated section of the front terrace and these were often left open all day in the summertime. We found the terrace very useful indeed. In the winter when the sun was low, the whole terrace was bathed in sunshine and the sunlight extended inside as far as the far wall of the lounge. In the summertime the sun was high in the sky and reached only half way across to the terrace, giving a choice of sitting in or out of the shade.

.The kitchen led off to the left of the front door and had a wide window over the

sink bench to the east, overlooking the vegetable garden. Another window over a side bench looked on to the east terrace and had a sliding window through which food could be passed for al fresco meals. We had a small table in the kitchen for breakfasts and light meals. A small terrace outside the back wall of the kitchen opened into an angle of the passage and to a laundry. Along the south wall of the central passage there were separate toilet, shower and bathroom which proved a very useful arrangement when the family were around. Straight ahead at the end of the passage was the guest twin bedroom. Its main window faced west up the lake with a good view of Walter Peak. It also had an external door along a narrow balcony leading to the front terrace and protected by a wrought-iron rail. The master bedroom lay to the right off the passage around the head of the stairwell. This had a large picture window along most of the north wall with a tremendous view of Frankton Arm and Queenstown Hill. It also had a narrow door leading directly to the terrace. Both bedrooms had roomy wardrobes. The stairwell led down the north side of the passage area to the basement garage and to the games room which became a twin bedroom. I had insisted that the stairs have a rise of only six inches in view of Millie's arthritis and this proved to be very good. Dawn seemed to quite enjoy this lower room which was always cooler in summer. It got very little sun and only in the afternoon, through smallish windows looking out on to the drive. It always had an electric heater for the colder periods. I enjoyed the extensive basement garage which had very good space for storing our trailer and stocks of dry firewood. I recall that we did not instal a grate in the fireplace - we laid the fire directly on the floor of the fireplace. Our fuel was all wood and it burned more slowly without a grate and seemed to give out very good heat.

We found it a lovely house in which to live. We never knew whether Alan Kennedy came out of the job with a profit or a loss. We were very pleased with his work and three or four months after it was completed we invited him and his wife Jan to dinner and gave them a gift of \$400. Something Jan said to me later led me to believe that the money was very timely for them just at that point.

We eventually had three teething problems with the house. The basement had a door access to the underfloor area of the rest of the top floor. Soon after we were moved in there seemed a lot of dampness coming from under the bathroom. We got the plumber along and he found the bath outlet had not been fitted properly into the drain. Most of the water did happen to go into the open end of the drain but quite a bit spilled over. He crawled into the narrow space and fixed it - without charge. Later during landscaping outside the back porch I hit a rock with my pick which was not unusual. Trying to find the edge of the rock to lever it out I struck harder with the pick. The sound did not seem quite right and when I looked carefully I found that I had pierced the sewer. Again I called the plumber who spent an hour or more cutting the pipe cleanly on each side and fitting a sleeve securely glued over the joint and all was well. Or was it? In actual fact the sewer line should have been 18 inches below ground level and was only about nine inches down. He claimed there was a rock barring the way and he that could not sink the line any deeper. I accepted this at the time but later I put in a draincoil pipe to drain surface water away from the foundations and I had no trouble getting down the full 18 inches.

In a later incident we had an extremely heavy thunder shower which taxed the gutters and downpipes to full and overflowing. Some time afterwards I walked into the basement bedroom and found the carpet almost floating in water. We suspected the back wall which was below ground level but there was no major seepage there. I noticed spots of water on the window and investigated up above the ceiling but could find no leak. Eventually I phoned Alan Kennedy. It took us both some time but when he looked carefully into the gutter he found a three-cornered hole high on the rear wall. Normal water levels did not reach this high but the very heavy rain had caused the water to flow freely out of this hole through the concrete blocks and down the inside of the window into the room. He patched it with a small piece of metal and strong glue. The carpet was an old piece of shagpile, and was extremely heavy when soaked. I bucketed much of the water out, squeezing it out of the carpet and then lifted the carpet up on saw stools and dried it out with an electric heater. I contacted the roofing contractors but due to the lapse of time they refused to consider any compensation. Our only expense was the drying of the carpet.

We were delighted with the terrace and looked forward each day to morning coffee in the sun on the east side outside the front door. However, when winter came we found that there was always a light easterly breeze even on a bright sunny morning and often it was too chilly. Roger came up with the idea of enclosing the terrace to make a conservatory and did so through Abell Aluminium. I think we made a profit on the installation as Roger and Susan came up for a weekend and he fitted it himself with some labouring assistance from me. We found it filled the bill very well indeed and we enjoyed it immensely. It had good ventilation and in summer the doors could be opened on either side to let air flow through.

Completion of the house fairly neatly coincided with my resignation from Broad Christie. We put our house in Gore on the market and after one or two enquiries, a lady came who fell in love with it straight away. Her husband was in hospital with a bad back so the deal was made on her opinion alone. They had made an offer of \$80,000 which we were about to accept when Millie suddenly said, 'Let's reduce it by \$1000 as the stove is rather old.' So the sale price became \$79,000 which was \$14,000 more than we had paid about three years before but of course I had put a lot of work into it.

Again we had a very cheap moving. I had a steel trailer and each time we went up for the weekend we took a trailer full of stuff. We even took the lounge suite on the trailer. I had tried to find a cover for this trip but in the end protected the suite from dust with two single red bedspreads. The weather was fine but unexpectedly about Fairplace we suddenly had a very brief thunder shower. Millie was worried about the colour coming out of the bedspreads on to the suite. However, the rain shower was very brief and the colour did not run. The day was so balmy that the wind flow over the covers dried them out almost immediately. We bought an antique table and chairs in Dunedin and I think they were sent up by carrier. At the time I had a white 2L Cortina automatic which had enough grunt to carry these loads without any trouble. In fact it was a lot of fun and it was with real expectation that we moved to Kelvin Heights at the end of November 1983.

The sale of the crib was interesting. I was not there when the agent brought a potential buyer who was a young entrepreneur planning to redevelop the site. Millie said that while the agent and the buyer were looking round the father was walking round the cottage with his hands behind his back and kept saying, 'This is a nice little property. This is a nice little property'. At any rate, the section attracted the buyer and he agreed to the price of \$66,500. The sale and purchase agreement was interesting as the occupation of the purchaser was given as 'fisherman'. I enquired from the agent about this and was told that he had made money scallop-fishing off the north-west coast of Australia. He was not interested in the 'nice little cottage' and planned to shift it on to another empty section. He found later, though, that the minimum floor area for homes had been increased and the cottage did not comply. He obtained approval to move it temporarily onto the neighbour's spare section and was able to proceed with his development. Here again he ran into trouble as he found the site was just too small for the four units he was planning. Once again he had to compromise and eventually built two double storey units. This was a great disappointment to Morrie and Enid Wilson our neighbours behind, whose view was substantially blocked out. Their house was also double-storeyed so they did retain a view from upstairs but the outlook from their living room view was considerably restricted.

At some stage the Birse Street neighbour onto whose property the cottage had been shifted bought it for the sum of \$5000. He then had some extra floor space added to comply with the new regulations and rented it out. As far as I know that is still the position. Colin Robertson farmed at Wendonside and has since retired to Riversdale. It is interesting that his wife became a part time District Nurse and attended to Millie during her illness as a weekend reliever.

The cottage at Frankton had served us very well for over 22 years. It was our escape from the bustle of daily life and was the scene of many happy summer holidays. It was adequate for our purposes as such and was fairly easy to operate without too much housekeeping. It was great to go up there on a Friday night however late and wake up in the morning without having to make an early start from Gore. There was one occasion on a day trip to the cottage when I borrowed Uncle George's mower, picking it up from Ron Wilkins farm at Pyramid on our way to Frankton. Ron was not about the house when I arrived but his wife Joy let me take the mower. I cut the grass and called in to leave the mower on the way back. This time Ron was at home and asked in a meaningful way how I had got on. 'Very well,' I replied, 'Why?' 'Last time I tried to use it, I couldn't get it started,' he said. Beginner's Luck!

I have wondered what happened to a rather attractive shrub Millie saw in the nursery one day. She was a little surprised at the price of this four- or five-foot shrub but liked it and paid the \$34.95 price quite happily. We carefully selected a site near the front south corner of the section where it would not interfere with a possible future building and liked the look of it very much. We carefully kept it watered until the root system was established. One day we were in the Queenstown Gardens and noticed a huge tree about 120 feet high called an Atlantic Cedar. Our 'shrub' was an Atlantic Cedar! I must have a look some time I am in the district to see if it is still there and how big it has grown.

By means of our property transactions we succeeded in dividing our retirement investments into our separate names. Our house in Albany Street was a joint family home and this was transferred into a joint home in St Andrew Street. The crib was in Millie's own name right from the start so the proceeds from the sale in 1983 were her own property and were invested in her name. The section and home at Kelvin Heights were in our joint names but the cost of the house was paid out of the goodwill from the practice. When St Andrew Street was sold half of the proceeds was invested in each of our names. This gave Millie a lot of satisfaction as for years the main family asset had been the business which was in my personal name.

During the couple of years while the Kelvin Heights house was being completed we would go up to Queenstown fairly often, sometimes for a long weekend. As I was not involved in the regular work of the practice I could put a line through my appointment book and take off at will. In these two years we were going to the new house at Kelvin Heights and there was always work to be done on the landscaping or inside the house preparing for our eventual permanent move. For that period we had two full homes, as our base in Gore was still at St Andrews Street.

During our final year in Gore our 40th wedding anniversary came along. Suggestions were made as to how we should celebrate it. Millie's arthritis had flared up earlier in the year and she was generally feeling like not bothering. As the date came nearer, Susan and Roger came up with a plan which would give Millie the least possible hassle. They would host a special dinner in our own house at St Andrew Street inviting Wilfred and Clarice, Ernie and Dawn Gardyne, Elsie Black and the four of us. The lounge was well capable of taking a long table for the purpose. It turned out to be a very pleasant evening and I think Millie enjoyed it and looked back with pleasure knowing that something had been done to mark the event. It was of necessity over-balanced with folk from my side of the family but they were very good friends as well as relatives. The family gave us money for a rose and Dorothy Marshall recommended Precious Platinum as being a very good variety about the right ruby shade. We planted it in the rose garden at Kelvin Heights and it did very well for a number of years.

There is a story to Precious Platinum and this seems a good time to mention it. The plant flourished at Kelvin Heights. We moved back to Gore in November nine years later. The roses were not yet in bud but I dug out Precious and replanted her by the front step in Devon Street. Two months later it flowered pink instead of ruby - I had selected the wrong rose! We bought another Precious Platinum and put it right under our bedroom window. During Millie's illness it was flowering profusely and many blooms were visible from her bed. I think that was it's best year and thought how lovely it was that Millie could enjoy it from her bed where she was spending a lot of her time. It got left at 9 Devon Street when I sold the house. When I moved to Eccles Street I could hardly ask Joyce and Vern if I could take it away three years later, so I purchased another plant and set it in the bed outside the conservatory. So I still have a souvenir of our Ruby Wedding.

We had another souvenir of our Ruby Wedding. It arrived from Dawn in England

right on the day. It was a copy of the London Times for 27th June 1945, the very day of our wedding in Blackpool. The Times had been committing their archived editions to microfilm and had made their stored paper copies available for sale to the public. Dawn saw the advertisement and bought the copy for our wedding day. To have it arrive on the anniversary day itself was the icing on the cake.

Four Sisters

Since Millie had arrived in New Zealand in 1946 the four sisters had frequently been together but always on our visits to England. 1985 was to see a remarkable event in that all four were to be together in New Zealand for about five or six weeks. Winnie had visited for a year in 1953-4; Jessie came out in 1966 at the time of Margaret's visit; and Marjorie had come in 1983 with Renee Mackenzie. All had thoroughly enjoyed their visits and in 1985 they conjured up the idea of all coming together. We were delighted, especially as I had disposed of the practice and was working only part-time. My time at the office was very flexible as I was in no way connected with the flow of the seasonal work.. This meant that I was very free to take time off for sightseeing with them and for general enjoyment of their visit.

Marjorie was well aware of her tendency to travel sickness. Millie had worked out with her a quarter-tablet of a motion-sickness medication which had worked very well while she was here and she had used it with a lot of success on the return journey. Before the trip out with Winnie and Jessie she went to the local chemist in Waterloo Road to get a supply to bring with her but the pharmacist did not know the item by the name she quoted. Sadly she assumed they were not available and decided she would just have to manage without them. She did not tell him what they were for and no doubt he could have offered her something equivalent. Marjorie again had a very miserable trip but kept saying to her sisters, 'I'll be alright when I see Millie'. They arrived at Queenstown airport and sure enough she was fine 'when she saw Millie'. Apart from Marjorie's sickness they had travelled very well.

The first pictures in our album of that visit are of the four girls in the bright Central Otago sunshine with the aircraft on the tarmac in the background. Their ages at the time ranged from 66 to 72 so perhaps calling them 'girls' is not quite accurate. Another very nice

picture of them together was taken on the terrace of the Chapman's home in Cedar Drive on the rise behind our house.

Our Kelvin Heights house had been completed some 18 months at this time and we were dividing our time between the two houses. Winnie and Marjorie, who had shared a room for many years at Waterloo Road, shared the guest room with its two single beds and Jessie used the downstairs room. They arrived in February and were able to enjoy some of our best summer weather. The lower room was always cooler than the main floor of the house and this suited Jessie very well as she wilted a bit in the heat. The new home was lovely for hosting them and a great many reminiscences were enjoyed. The terrace proved a great attraction and they greatly enjoyed the beautiful outlook. I was still involved in the later stages of the initial section landscaping so I had plenty to occupy myself with as the gossip went on inside or out on the terrace. The golf course was handy enough for me to get away for a few holes at the end of the day.

A funny incident occurred one day. Marjorie suddenly rushed out from her bedroom and said to the others, 'There's a man coming round the back of the house! A man with a yellow hat!' The laugh was on her as the 'man' was only me. She must have just caught sight of me but not sufficiently to recognise me.

The days were not all spent at the home. We had our close group of friends who were very interested to meet the sisters of one of their favourite people. Phyllis and Ian Gardiner had already met them – indeed had been at our Silver Wedding in England – and others had met one or other of them on various occasions. The Don Smiths, the Jim Chapmans, the Robin Sims, the Alex Taylors, the Lin Turners, the Ernie Gardynes and others in the church fellowship gave them a great welcome.

We visited the sights around Queenstown. The Deer Park Heights were at their best at the time - we all had great fun feeding deer, thar and goats on the top of Peninsula Hill and enjoying the magnificent vistas from the top. The countryside was showing that rich golden colour which was so typical of Central Otago as it dried out under the hot summer sun. At the time we were stocking up on firewood from the driftwood that had washed up along the lake shore and Jessie was very tickled to be helping us one day with this chore. She often commented in later years about how we got 'free' wood off the beach. We took them round Queenstown's public gardens, up the Gondola to the Skyline restaurant and along the lake road to Glenorchy. We made the trip by steamer across the lake to Cecil Peak Station. At that time they had a tourist venture with a sheep-shearing demonstration similar to that which now operates at Walter Peak.

It was a little unfortunate that we had traded in our white Ford Cortina auto for a 1.3L Ford Laser. The Cortina was a lovely car and it had served us well while we were ferrying our goods and chattels from Gore to Queenstown. We had decided to down-size to a more economical model and had traded it for the new Laser. We were not thinking at the time of the three sisters who would be arriving on our doorstep and needing a car to take five people. I suggested to Millie before they came that perhaps we should try to get a larger car

for the six weeks or so but she vetoed the idea. The result was that we were very cramped on our longer trips. This was particularly unfortunate for Millie. Because of her size Jessie could only go in the front seat. Marjorie and Winnie were both taller than Millie so as the shorter person she found herself sitting in the middle of the back seat. She paid dearly for not considering some sort of lease or short-term hire for a larger car.

We made a trip to Mt Cook and showed them all of the interesting country on the way over the Lindis Pass and through Omarama and Twizel to Tekapo. We stayed a couple of nights at Mt Cook where the weather and views were gorgeous. Members of the party were not very good walkers but we did go across to the Tasman Valley from the Hermitage, and found the short walk to a viewpoint across the lower Tasman Glacier manageable. Although it was listed as a short walk it was no smooth concrete or paved path. Winnie moved on up ahead in a slow and stately fashion and negotiated the tricky rocky outcrops with ease. Jessie's balance was not so good and I had to help her over the rocky bits. Marjorie's arthritis made these spots difficult for her also so I would go back to give her a hand. Millie's arthritis was not so severe at that time but her balance was not good either so I was helping her as well. I must have covered the distance about three times going forward and back to help this one and then that one. The view from the top was splendid and very rewarding in return for the challenge of the climb. We looked across the lower width of the glacier where it was beginning to melt and where holes were appearing as the ice eroded from below. These 'sink-holes' were of different sizes and were very interesting - I remember Winnie in particular being very intrigued with them. To our left the glacier stretched some twenty miles or so up to its source in the Southern Alps. We made the trip down again but it was no easier descending than climbing up. About an hour-and-a-half later, Marjorie draped herself wearily over a sign which read, 'Tasman Glacier 20 mins.'

The Clyde Dam was under construction at the time and a visit to the Lookout was also fascinating. The lake had not been formed yet so we drove along the old road which ran alongside the river. Much of the new road had been completed to replace the old one when it became submerged. I pointed out the mixing of two different-coloured waters at the Cromwell junction of the Kawarau and Clutha rivers which was going to disappear when the lake was filled.

Back at Kelvin Heights we explored the Arrowtown area where we had an afternoon's fun in Waterfall Park a couple of miles or so before reaching the town. It was an unexpectedly lovely spot - a little gulch in the side of a hill where the Mill Stream had worn a deep cleft over the years, making an attractive waterfall.. They had picnic places, a souvenir shop and café and play equipment for children. Quite out of context there was a set of stocks which is something one would expect in an old English village. We had our photos taken 'in the stocks.'

When we came to the St Andrews Street house in Gore each of the sisters had a room to herself. Jessie was in the back room with Winnie in the guest room beside the garage and Marjorie in the little room that opened off the lounge. We thought we had done very well for them. On the way down to Gore we saw the Kingston Flyer vintage

steam train and called at one of the smallest Post Offices in New Zealand at Parawa. I am fairly sure that Jessie posted some letters here but it was closed very soon afterwards and is no more. With such a small car we were short of space so I used my small trailer to carry the baggage. Jessie used to refer to it as 'the truck'.¹ In Gore they met up with people like the Alex Marshalls, Mattie Hamilton, Jean Smith and Wilfred and Clarice among others. We have a picture in our album taken outside the Gore Baptist Church in which can be seen Jessie, Ivan, Millie, Marjorie, Susan, Winnie and half of Ron - I'm sure the other half was there also as would have been Roger who was the photographer.

Marjorie had a very strict code of honesty and fairness. When we were on our trips away we each paid for our own accommodation but we shared the incidental expenses equally. I would pay in the first instance and at the end of the day we would have a square-up in which Marjorie was meticulous to the cent. If she had ordered something extra in a meal this had to be taken into account.

Eventually the sisters' visit came to an end and they flew off back to England where we were to visit them on three further occasions. I think we both looked back on the sisters' visit as a very special time.

However, delightful as it was the visit came at a severe cost to Millie. She had endured the discomfort of the cramped middle seat in the back of the Laser. She had also catered for a full house. Certainly she had help from everyone concerned but she had borne the brunt of the work and all of the responsibility. She said later that when she managed to find a few minutes to take a break on her own one of the sisters would appear with a remark like, 'Oh, good, I've got you on my own. I never seem to have a chance to talk to you by yourself.' When this happened in triplicate it ate into the little breaks she had hoped for.

We returned to Gore where I needed to catch up on work which had been in abeyance at the office. Millie suffered a severe bout of inflammation in her knees. She delayed going to the doctor about it, hoping it would go away - I believe now that the inflammation could have been relieved much earlier. Millie spent quite a bit of time in bed in the room overshadowed by the conifer outside the window. I think with hindsight that the shade of the tree caused the room to be damp and I feel this exacerbated the arthritis. I remember I kept urging her to see the doctor but she was very reluctant to do so, I think for fear of possible side effects. Perhaps I should have rung for an appointment and just taken her but it is easy to know this in hindsight. Susan will recall her reluctance to have a celebration of our Ruby Wedding about three months later. It had to be low key but thanks to Susan and Roger it was a happy occasion.

¹ The 'truck' did not last very long. I had bought it cheaply and had used it for two or three years when a warrant was refused because of wear in the wheel bearings. I considered it not worth repairing, advertised it for sale and got an offer of \$200 with which I was very satisfied.

Kelvin Heights

I think Kelvin Heights was a surprise to both of us. We had discovered the site almost by accident. However, the idea of building our own home seemed to take hold of us quite quickly. We had bought the property early in 1982 and settlement was made in June of that year so that all was sorted before our trip overseas at the end of May. We had our building plans completed and approved before our departure. We moved in at the end of November 1983 and surrendered possession of the Frankton cottage. We left one item of furniture for the purchasers – the dining table and chairs made for the crib in 1964 by Derek Galletly in his joinery factory on River Road in East Gore.

The site was a scrubby area on the moraine of the original glacier in the Wakatipu valley back somewhere in an ice age. At the west end of the section there were some Oregon and Eucalyptus trees, the latter standing over the boundary in the neighbour's property. They provided very good shelter from the prevailing westerlies. We had all sorts of bright ideas of retaining an area of native scrub at the west end of the property but when the house was in place with its driveway leading to the west-facing garage it was difficult to realise this aim.

The section looked like a bomb site. There had been a substantial excavation for the garage. The debris consisted of a grey, gritty kind of soil with a substantial number of moraine rocks. The larger of these were set aside and eventually used to line the driveway along the front of the section. They made a retaining wall about four feet high which supported a garden plot along the length of a narrow lawn in front of the house. We were greatly impressed with the skill of the loader driver as he manoeuvred these rocks within inches of where Millie wanted them placed.

With the house in our possession it was now up to me to get the landscaping done.

This could be divided up into four main areas - below the front terrace, beside the path up to the front door, the vegetable garden outside the kitchen window and the driveway and entrance to the garage at the west end.

There was a drop of about three steps from the terrace to the narrow lawn. I built a stone wall to hold a narrow flower bed just off the terrace using moderate-sized stones from the rubble, small enough to be man-handled into place. The lawn area was levelled out with the front edge marked by a line of smaller rocks. From here there was a steep slope down to the top of the larger rocks lining the drive. This sloping area was planted with a variety of flowers and small shrubs, such as Gazanias for colour, Cotoneasters, Shasta daisies and Ericas. For each plant a hole was dug, filled with fresh soil, and the plant put into the soil. At the west end there were some original pittosporums with an apricot tree and a lemon.

Beside the path up to the front door we made a rose garden with about 20 roses including our Precious Platinum. There were two or three more roses in a small corner on the other side of the path.

The vegetable garden was in two sections on slightly different levels edged on the low side by stone walls. There was a small square of lawn off the back terrace. The heavy motor mower we had used for some years was much more than was required for two very small areas of lawn. Access to the lawns would also have been very difficult for a big mower so I traded it in for a hand mower and received \$128 change - one of the best deals of my life! We brought the hand mower with us to Devon Street and it followed me next-door although Elizabeth had a motor mower of her own. It looked after the lawns at Eccles Street for a while until I traded it for an electric model from Cash Converters in Dunedin. They surprised me by offering \$30 for the old push mower which I was glad to accept.

Around the driveway and the west end of the section we added a few more flowers and three or four rhododendrons, including the one presented to us in 1980 on our retirement from the Mayoralty. This was carefully transplanted from St Andrew Street where it had been taken there after a one-year sojourn at 35 Albany Street - so it was now in its third location. When we moved back to Gore I tried very hard to dig it out but it beat the means I had available and was left at Kelvin Heights. It had prospered very well and seemed to like the situation.

We ordered two truck loads of good soil from a carrying firm and these were dumped on the empty section behind us which had access from Cedar Drive. I was offered the help of a labourer for a couple of days at a cost of \$160 and had a good deal of the soil barrowed down to provide topsoil for the lawns and a deeper soil-bed for the vegetable patch. I used the remaining soil to put into each hole for the new plantings.

The initial landscaping work was carried out while we were commuting to and from St Andrew Street and during the summer vacation of January 1984. When we finally sold the Gore house in November 1985 there was still a lot of work to do on the section.

Making a hole in the rubble for a planting meant using a heavy pick. Mine had been bought for \$9 with the landscaping job in mind from the secondhand shop in the former Band Hall on Main Street. When I came to use it I noticed that three letters were engraved on the iron pick head - they were 'GBC' which probably stood for Gore Borough Council. Alan Grace had probably bought it and other tools from the estate of a former Borough worker who had appropriated it to his own use, perhaps on his retirement. Rather curious that it should have passed into the hands of a former Mayor. It was a very good tool.

If it struck a rock I would not know at first if it was the size of my hand, the size of my head or the size of my body. If it was the latter it stayed where it was and we worked round it. All of the smaller ones came out and were used to build the little walls I have spoken of. There was one very huge moraine boulder on the back corner of the section. This was quite impossible to move but was fortunately in a position where it did not prevent any of the serious landscaping. In fact, we left it as a feature where it was. I developed a path from the trees on the west flank along the back of the house to the back door. It proved very useful. At the turn of the drive we planted a copper beech from Gore. This was a seedling which Dawn had brought home from her vacation job in the Reserves Dept in Gore. We had to leave it there as it was getting big to move and we did not have a suitable place to put it in Gore. It will eventually be too large for that site.

So the place developed¹. Most of the plants came from the Frankton Nursery down towards the Shotover River but some were given to us by our friends. I think both Rachel Sim and Dorothy Taylor gave me *Gazania* plants and they prospered very well on the sunny bank.

We had some very friendly neighbours there. David Alderton and his wife Rita lived over the back corner of our section. David was a well known farmer from Greenvale near Waikaka who had retired just before us. He had been closely involved with a West Otago forestry group and had extensive plantations on his farm. He had been awarded the MBE for his work in forestry and farming organisations. They were both very friendly though we did not have close association with them. David was very active in the Kelvin Heights Community Society and was very zealous in maintaining the walking tracks - he would kill the gorse and thin the trees along the track and around picnic spots. I joined in these working bees and they generated a lot of fellowship.

Beside us on the East we had Doug and Barbara Thomson. They were in the main house of the originally planned village concept of John Reid of Christchurch. He had conceived the idea of developing a kind of Swiss mountain village on the virtually uninhabited end of the peninsula. This larger house was to have been the central attraction as the venue for an afternoon outing with a swimming pool and refreshments served in the house. All homes erected on the subdivision were to be of a Swiss chalet design which had to be approved by the developer. Sadly for him the peninsula opened up more rapidly than he

¹ Roger would say later that the landscaping proceeded thus - Millie would say where she would like things to go, Ivan would sweat and strain in the hot sun and then Millie would come out and say 'That's lovely Ivan!' The phrase has passed into the family lore. (Ed)

expected and it became more of a residential district than a site for an afternoon outing. The requirement for approval of plans had lapsed with the mortgagee takeover. Water-skiing and boating became popular on the beach and the golf course was developed on the extreme end of the peninsula but the catering idea fell through. Doug and Barbara built an extra wing on to the house making it even larger and quite imposing. He found out just how big it was when he took on the job of painting it. In earlier years their teenage children used the pool with their friends. However, legislature about fencing off swimming pools forced him to fence the whole property after which the pool was seldom even filled. Doug was one of the prime movers in the formation of the Probus Club and I later had association with him as President and Secretary.

Ian and Phyllis Gardiner were quite close back in Cedar Drive behind us. Perhaps we did not see just as much of them as we might have expected as they had built up a very close circle of friends during the ten years or so they had already spent in the Queenstown area. Other neighbours were acquaintances rather than close friends but we were on good terms with them all.

We were very early members of the Probus Club. It was started as a men-only club but very soon it was resolved to open the membership. It prospered very well indeed and reached a membership of about 200. With my neighbour a prime mover in its establishment, I was soon elected to the committee and I think I was about the fourth or fifth President. We had many enjoyable times with the club. One trip that sticks in mind was a coach trip to Borland Lodge and then on through the Borland Road to the South Arm of Lake Manapouri. After lunch there we were taken by boat to Pearl Harbour at Manapouri where we were picked up by a second coach which had carried the other half of our group who were doing the same trip in the opposite direction. It was a privilege to be able to see this magnificent part of Fiordland National Park. Another trip took us down through Mossburn into the Mavora Lakes and then on to Mount Nicholas Station. From there we returned home by boat along the lake while the driver took the empty coach home. We made a visit to a garden belonging to the wife of Owen Johnston at Wendonside. This was typical of many farm gardens where the wife was a keen gardener. The outside fence had been moved further into the nearby field two or three times to increase the space - on this occasion she said it was going no further. We went drove on to Waikaia where we visited the museum and the Bottle House which is a very interesting structure built completely with bottles. We had lunch there. We moved on down to Wendon where Jocelyn McKee had developed a lovely park-like garden. Jocelyn was a daughter of Doug Watson, a fellow Rotarian who was active in the Blind Foundation. Another place we visited was Waikaia Plains Station belonging to Sir Erskine Bowmar. Erskine was a long-time Chairman of the Southland County Council and later the Regional Council and had kept Southland very much to the forefront through his lobbying in Wellington. The large house was set on an imposing site with an attractive garden.

Our main circle of friends centred round the church. We were already acquainted with many of these folk because of our visits to the Frankton crib visits and we were soon melded into a warm friendly circle. We liked the Rev. David Bourne who was a diligent

friendly minister with whom we got on well. He once visited us and told me that the Session wished to nominate me as an Elder. It was with a little regret that I had to decline as it would have meant a regular night out leaving Millie alone in the house out in a relatively lonely area. She had had enough nights at home when I was out on Mayoral duties. We got involved in a fortnightly study group which rotated around several homes and we found these very helpful and very good fellowship. They were supervised by Robin Sim who seemed to find very good study books and the leadership of each study would fall to the host for the evening. When it was our turn to host the parking of cars became a problem in our restricted drive. People in this group included Ian and Phyllis Gardiner, Pat and Phil Fougere, Ian and Gladys Begley, Robin and Rachel Sim, Les Currie and his wife Ailsa, Jack and Nessie Begg, Morris and Margaret Galt, Alex and Dorothy Taylor. Les Currie and Nessie Begg who eventually married after both had been widowed. Sadly, only a few of these are still alive at the time of writing.

At Christmas and Easter it was usual for a temporary choir to be formed to sing at the special services. The conductor Margaret Turner was very musical and a lovely person. Millie and I enjoyed time with her and her husband Lin. Lin had a full size billiard table and I enjoyed a number of games with him. Margaret was one of the church organists and another, Ruth Riddell, played for the choir. We both enjoyed these sessions. One year we undertook a performance of Stainer's Crucifixion with an augmented choir from all of the churches. It was great fun learning our parts in this great work and being part of the performance in the Queenstown church. David Alderton sang the tenor part in a light but very pure tenor voice. He was a nominal church member but he was a very secular fatalistic kind of man who believed in living at peace with the community and being of service to his fellow men. Shortly before his death he wrote a brief autobiography and stated this as his credo in one of the concluding chapters. I was sad that he did not really feel the truth of the words that he sang.

At a much later date we were combining with the Anglican church for some Christmas music when the acting vicar of St Peters in Queenstown turned up. Archdeacon Neville Sellwood and his wife were the couple photographed with Millie and me on the Lyttelton wharf on 13 January 1946 as Neville and I were meeting our war brides. We found them very lovely and even celebrated the meeting by giving them a ride to Invercargill and back to see his mother who was 99 years old - we were already committed to a day-visit to town for some reason so it wasn't a great imposition. We kept in contact with them and I keep in touch with them even now. Bette is now very crippled and they live very quietly in St Kilda. I thought it was a great pity we had not been in touch with them over the years as Bette and Millie got on together very well. It was a great pity too that they had not met up on the boat as they would have been good company. I sang the bass along with Bruce Johnston, a former client from Waikaka Valley, and we enjoyed each other's support².

We had realised that if someone built a two-storeyed house on the section below ours it could restrict our view. We learned that the property was owned by a good friend in

2 Sadly Bruce's wife Jo, a sister in law of Dawn Gardyne's brother, developed cancer and Bruce was widowed. He later lost his memory and the family had to take him to a Christchurch Rest Home near where one of the daughters lived. I later attended his funeral at Waikaka Valley.

the study fellowship and he agreed to sell it to us at the market value of \$25,000 saying he would put the money into another investment in Fernhill. When Ian and Phyllis Gardiner returned to Queenstown³ they asked if they could buy the section. We agreed subject to a condition that any house plan be submitted for our approval as to height. We sold it to them at a bedrock price then of \$65,000 - our mutual friend Don Smith commended me on our generosity. So it had proved a good investment, although it would have been an even better investment if we had been able to retain it until we came back to Gore. So our best friends became our nearest neighbours. There was no direct access between the two properties, however, as there was a fence along our right of way on their back boundary on which Ian was growing climbing plants and the ground dropped away very quickly. Their house was built from a kit-set - it was very attractive but had a steep staircase with about 10-inch rises for each step. Two or three years after they moved there Phyllis had a mild stroke and the family declared very firmly that the split-level was 'too dangerous for Mother.' At this time the Rotary Club was carrying out a build-a-house-in-a-day project for charity. They achieved this by very careful pre-planning and allocating individual rooms to separate firms of builders - the job was virtually completed within the 24 hours with only a few small jobs left to fix. Ian negotiated a private sale of the house below us and then was able to bid on the 'house-in-a-day.' He got it at a good price and they left us for the brand-new house which was all on one level. Ian had finished landscaping the section below us and now had to start on the new place in Balmoral Drive. He had also previously landscaped a house at Sunshine Bay and completed a very comprehensive plan at Cedar Drive. They were later to move to Stewart Street in Frankton where he totally reconstructed the landscaping again.

So we lost our very good friends as immediate neighbours. The new owners were Geoff and Allison Paterson. They were indeed good friends and neighbours also and we developed a closer and stronger friendship out of our previous more distant acquaintance. Geoff and Allison had entertained our student children in their homes in Dunedin and Mosgiel on various occasions. They moved away to Geraldine about the same time as we returned to Gore, and we once stayed a couple of nights with them there. By that time Geoff had developed Asbestosis and passed away about two years later.

Our fireplace had been designed for wood-burning and I became a wood gatherer. The working bees on tracks and the removal of trees frequently enabled me to obtain trailer-loads of firewood. The Brethren church had a holiday camp not far away and at one stage they cut down a good number of trees. The trunks were taken for milling leaving great heaps of branches and smaller logs to which the locals were invited to help themselves. I got several trailer-loads but it involved quite a lot of work to recover the useful firewood. One year there was a very heavy late fall of snow which broke off many branches around the golf course. One batch of these blocked the walkway up from the jetty to the clubhouse. The jetty was used by water taxis bringing overseas visitors across for a round of golf. I told the green keeper that I would clean up the mess of branches on that track and got many good blocks of wood for our fire. On another occasion the club had cleared an area for use as a practice fairway. This had involved the removal of a number of pine

3 Ian and Phyllis Gardiner had moved away to Wanganui to be close to Sheena at Turakina near Marton, and to Robert near New Plymouth. Ian never seemed to be well up there, getting various chest problems,

trees and there were many cones lying on the ground even after it had been sown in grass. I asked the green keeper one day if anyone was interested in collecting the cones. 'Yes,' he said, 'You are.' So I collected about three trailer-loads of lovely dry cones and stored them in a bin I had made in the basement.

Another source of firewood was the beach on the west side of the peninsula. Whenever there was heavy rain up in the headwaters of the lake, a lot of branches would come down the rivers into the head of the lake. A week or two later this floating wood was washed ashore around the peninsula area where it was free for the taking. After one such storm, the bay below Gardiner's house in Cedar Drive was chokka with timber. Ian spent a good deal of time collecting driftwood from along the shore and stacking it on the edge of the beach ready to be carried up to the house at his leisure. Overnight the wind changed bringing waves on to his beach and taking all his carefully rescued logs out into the lake again and all was lost. Of course the next change of wind brought it all back again and this time he stacked it higher up the beach.

The proximity of the golf course was a major advantage for me. Often after a day on landscaping or in the garden I would take my clubs and play a few holes, starting at the tee just below the house. It was also very handy for Saturday golf when I could walk up to the Clubhouse if Millie wanted the car. I had three holes in one on the Queenstown course while we were living at Frankton and Kelvin Heights, all on the short par three sixth hole. Strangely these were at six-year intervals - in 1978, 1984 and 1990. Sadly, I cannot take you to the scene of my triumphs as that hole has been eliminated and the extra length added to the adjacent holes. For some years Stan Clash had been organising a Seniors competition on the Frankton Golf course which was a very social event and very thoroughly enjoyed. He and his wife Margaret moved to Christchurch and I took it over for a couple of years or so. I took Geoff Bonney for a game there and played a round under my age. On the last hole I was in good position with my drive and needed a four to match my age. I put the second shot about eight feet from the hole and sank the putt for a birdie! I was 80 and I scored 79.

The pain in Millie's knees had been brought under a measure of control but it became evident that there had been some permanent joint damage. She was referred to John Matheson who was an orthopaedic surgeon in Dunedin. Eventually he decided that the time had come to take action and she was scheduled for a knee replacement. 'You'll be doing the right knee, won't you?' she asked. 'Oh, no, the left knee is the worst.' She explained that the right knee hurt more than the left. He showed her the X-rays which clearly showed there was much less cartilage in the left one. After making a full recovery she found that the right knee was much less painful once she started walking more naturally. The operation was carried out and I went with her to Dunedin in support. After the operation they fitted her leg into a contraption which automatically kept bending her knee to about 60 degrees constantly both day and night. This made it difficult for her to sleep and I think she just dozed from time to time during the next 24 hours. She had physio treatment to ensure that she was able to bend the artificial knee at least to a right angle - by the time she left hospital she was able to flex to more than 100 degrees. It was also important that the injured knee muscles made a good recovery without becoming 'seized up'. She spent

about a week in hospital and then continued to make a good recovery at home with very great relief from the pain she had been suffering previously. She took her new knee on at least one overseas trip and it served her extremely well.

The situation of our retirement home in the Queenstown area made it an attraction for our family to visit. They all loved the lake and mountains and found it equally good in winter or in summer. Winter provided the conditions for skiing and the summer for enjoying the sun and lazy days in wonderful surroundings. The dangers of sunbathing were then not so well known. We had many visits from the New Zealand members of the family.

In 1987 we had a full family gathering based on our lovely home. It was midwinter and the photos we have of the event show the rays of the sun were very slanted and not from overhead as in the summer. The terrace seemed to be much used, bathed in sunshine and evidently warm enough for all to be out. The American family was there - Kate was a little over seven years of age and Ken was 16 months old. Some time before the visit Millie had suggested that we stop and look round a retail furniture showroom as we passed through Washdyke north of Timaru. She spotted a cane-framed wicker rocking-horse which she thought would do for Ken and it found a place in our car on the journey home. It proved a hit and Ken found it a lot of fun. Ken is of an adventurous nature and this was showing up even at that age. He learnt to rock it very vigorously and experienced the inevitable result - he tipped right over forwards. However, an adventurer does not give up at the first hurdle. He continued to rock vigorously and would take it right to the point of balance - but he never went right over again. Just sitting on a rocking-horse is not fun enough, so he discovered how to continue rocking while standing on the seat - though not so strongly.

We were too many to fit in the one house so we arranged to rent the Shaw's crib on the western boundary. There was no fence so there was easy access and it provided the necessary beds for the extra bodies. Kate was wearing pigtails and looked a self-possessed little girl who enjoyed having special aunts and uncles to spoil her. It was a very wonderful occasion and proved to be even more special when not very long afterwards Millie was to head into health problems.

We also had a visit from Eric and Margaret Culpin. Eric was a cousin who had grown up with Millie, being just two years younger. His sister was some years older than he was so he spent a lot of time with Millie in those younger years. It was a great privilege to have them on their sole visit to this country. Margaret got quite fond of the view of Walter Peak from the guest room window and spoke of it in later years.

Another lovely pair of English visitors were Dot and Frank Elder. They chose to travel round New Zealand with Frank's first cousin, Stuart Elder from Greenlane in Auckland and his lady friend. We entertained them to dinner at the Skyline Restaurant and had a most enjoyable time. They stayed in a motel as they were too many for our limited accommodation. I was delighted to meet Stuart who was a second cousin like Frank. They were able to visit their grandfather's farm at Oaklands near Maheno. They were warmly entertained to afternoon tea by the then owners and invited in to see the house which had been built

by their grandfather James Robertson Elder, my grandfather's brother. Frank was born in Argentina where his father was a Baptist missionary and he was delighted to be following up his New Zealand heritage. Millie and I had a strong bond with Frank and Dot dating from the war years and they had been guests at our wedding.

Millie got involved with the Embroiderers' Guild. When she was elected President she and the Secretary revitalised the Guild and attracted a number of new members. By the time we left to come back to Gore it was in very good heart. Millie was also very much involved with the APW ladies group at the Frankton church. The main purpose of the APW is the fostering of fellowship among the ladies of the church, the support of missionaries and ministry students and supervising the social activities of the church. The Frankton group did catering for funerals and also for the annual Christmas dinner of the Queenstown RSA. This brought in more than \$1,000 for their charitable funds.

A moderate-sized Travel Club was formed about the time we went to Kelvin Heights. We joined and enjoyed many stories of 'travel by proxy'. I was elected to the committee and soon became President. We seemed to have no great problem getting speakers who were all enjoyed. The Club also led us into a fresh group of people though a number were also members of Probus. We met in a small conference room of the hotel at Frankton.

When we went to Kelvin Heights we thought we had gone there for good. We even went into the Council office and bought a plot in the Frankton cemetery. Our good friend Rachel Sim had died and was buried there and we just felt it would be nice to be laid amongst our friends when the time came. During our time in the district other friends were laid to rest there. However, after we moved back to Gore, [I am anticipating] and Millie had died and was buried at Charlton Park, it was obvious our 'plot' would not be needed, so I offered it back to the Council. When I went up later to Phyllis Gardiner's funeral, the funeral director, Russell McGrouther, asked if I noticed anything about her grave. It was the plot I had surrendered.

During 1993, Millie told me that she did not feel safe out in the garden. Access to various areas of the garden was by narrow paths and she felt that if she tripped and fell she might not be able to get up. She was beginning to feel less comfortable about being on her own. I was still very active in things like working bees and gathering firewood and playing golf and we were not wanting to restrict these activities. We started to look round at possible alternatives but were very restricted as we needed to negotiate a simultaneous sale and purchase. We found very few places offering with a sufficiently flat and safe section. While this was going on, Susan rang from Gore to say, 'Mum, that house you liked in Devon Street is on the market.' So off we went to Gore. There had been an open day which we had missed but the agent was very willing to show us round. As he was leading us from room to room, Millie said she was lagging behind saying to herself, 'I like it. I like it.' The property was in a deceased estate of a man who had been a neighbour of Wilfred's. In fact, when he moved to Riversdale, Wilfred had bought his East Chatton property. His daughter had evidently been left the house and we made her a couple of offers, the second of which was accepted. Once again we had bought a second house without selling the first - we thought

that there should be no problem in the Queenstown area! It so happened that Millie had an investment from the proceeds of the Frankton cottage maturing about that time and we used this to pay for the house.

We immediately put the Kelvin Heights house on the market. We were encouraged to set a price just under \$300,000 and the agents produced a very attractive brochure and held open homes. A number of buyers were very interested but were put off by this or that disadvantage - too much commitment in the garden and the narrow right of way were among the put-offs. Months went by and it had not sold. Millie was naturally a worrier but she carried through this period of tension very equably indeed. In point of fact we had struck a slight lull in the market and prices were a little subdued. Eventually a lady was brought by the agents and she just fell in love with it. That was on a Friday. She sent her husband and teenage daughter to view on the following Monday with the girl saying in advance that no way did she want to live way out there. She came back that night to tell her mother to 'make Dad buy that house!' They had a house at Fernhill to sell which was snapped up on Tuesday. Our sale went through about six months after going on the market at a price of \$260,000 - it had cost us about \$135,000. Six months or a year later we could have got at least another \$50,000 as the market lifted again but there is a time for everything.

Once again we were in the position of having a period of time to effect our removal. During the interim we had been getting extensive modernisation and renovations done in Gore and had been driving down regularly to arrange and supervise the work. On these various visits after the sale of the house, we always pulled the trailer full of goods with the car stuffed as well. I had a big stock of firewood in the basement and any spare space in the trailer was always filled with wood or cones.

News of our departure from the district caused some regret and even dismay among our friends in the Frankton church. Although we had gone to Queenstown on a permanent basis we made the decision to return to Gore feeling quite sure it was the right thing to do. We had no doubts and even the time taken to sell the Kelvin Heights house did not cause us to doubt our decision. After church on our final Sunday the good friends at Frankton had a morning tea for us. There were many farewell greetings with hugs and kisses, with one lady who we were not very close to surprising us both by kissing us on the lips! The next afternoon our heavy goods were loaded up and taken away by the removers. They were from Cromwell where they were planning to overnight before driving to Gore through Central the next day. We both were suffering from a nasty bout of flu-like symptoms. The final cleaning up was very tough going in this state and we didn't get away till about tea time. Millie was feeling really ill. I had a temperature and was not much better but we had to be in Gore to meet the removers the next morning. I think that late drive with a full trailer was the most difficult I have experienced. Millie, bless her, was able to relax and go to sleep. That left me with a headache and a temperature and no one to keep me awake. It took a very great deal of concentration but I was able to manage it with no untoward moments. We always thought afterwards that we picked up a bug from that lady who had kissed us on the lips! We were to spend the night with Susan and Roger and Susan had switched the

electric blankets on in our beds quite early. I can still recall the blissful feeling as I slid into a very cosy bed. With the aid of some Disprin I had a very good night's sleep and was able to cope with directing the unloading of our furniture into the new house. Millie took the rest of the week to come right again.

We had been there for ten years and had very much blended into the community. We had enjoyed the beauty of the district. We had greatly enjoyed living in the house we had planned and had built for us. I had enjoyed the challenge of the landscaping and this had proved a very good project for me after retiring from a pretty busy life. We had found pleasant neighbours and we had shared a lot of time with each other in a very different way than when I was constantly away to work - coffee together on the terrace about 10 am and perhaps again in the afternoon, picnicking somewhere on a lovely day, getting to know the Wakatipu Basin inside and out and all the joint social contacts had been very rewarding.

How then did we feel about leaving all this? Looking back I am surprised at how little we dwelt on the loss of these great pleasures. Many years later someone asked me if we missed Queenstown when we came back to Gore. As I pondered the question I was surprised to realise that we did not seem to have missed Queenstown as much as might have been expected. I wondered why. My answer to the question was that Queenstown was no longer our home. Gore had become our home and we were happy there - happy in the home Millie loved, happy in the church fellowship. All of that came together to make Gore our home and the place of our happiness. The circumstances of our lives had changed and the move had arisen naturally out of that situation. Gore was the right place for us to be. Susan and Roger were in Gore and it was nice to be near them, especially as Susan was about to go through a period of serious ill health. And as our own circumstances developed further, it was very fortuitous that we were nearer medical help of the right kind.

Overseas 1986

Having no constraints arising from seasonal office work flows we were able for once to choose our departure date to suit ourselves. We flew out of Christchurch on May 16 by Qantas and were able to have a restful overnight stay in Sydney before the longer flight the next day. We arrived in Singapore late in the evening and took a taxi to Raffles Hotel. We spent the next day popping in and out of air-conditioned shops and making the occasional purchase. I bought a very attractive short-sleeved shirt which I thought would be quite dressy. I had not seen anything like it back home but when we did return to Gore there was Wilfred wearing exactly the same style but in a different colour - so much for picking up the unusual on one's vacation trip! I wore my shirt only on fairly rare occasions but it is interesting that I wore it just the other day - no doubt that is why I am recalling the original purchase.

We had to be up and ready fairly early for the drive to the airport for our 10.15 flight the next morning. Our flight was to Manchester but the plane landed first at London where it disgorged the majority of its passengers so it was a sparsely-occupied cabin on the short final hop to Manchester. We arrived about 9 am and were met by Eric and Margaret who delivered us to Waterloo Road. The motorways and connections around Manchester and the airport are very complex and Eric got lost at one stage before getting reoriented onto the M6.

As in 1982 there was no Emma Haigh to greet us this time and we stayed initially with Winnie and Margaret. As we were planning to be in England for about three months I had transferred NZ\$10,000 with the idea of buying a car. I enlisted Eric's local knowledge and interest in cars to help me locate a suitable vehicle. Car sales people were prepared to sell on a buy-back basis but the trade-in price was going to be nearly equal to a rental charge. On top of that we would have MOT, licencing and insurance costs. If we bought

independently we would be soft sellers needing to sell the car quite quickly at the end of our visit. Eric introduced me to a low-cost rental firm in a Blackpool North industrial street and we hired an Opel Kadet at £60 per week. It had about 60,000 miles on the clock and was in very good order - it used a bit of oil so we had to watch that but it performed well.

Our first outing about a week later was to Coniston Water in the Lake District for a family party. That year was the Silver Wedding for John and Jean and they had taken two cottages side by side on a farm called Atkinson Ground. The cottages were top quality and Winnie and Marjorie and Millie and I found ourselves on our own in a beautifully furnished home. All six of the Springetts together with Jessie and our Dawn were in the other unit which was also used for communal meals. On Sunday morning the older ones went to the Anglican parish church in Hawkshead where they were marking the 400th Anniversary of the founding of the Baptist churches in England. After the service we walked up the lane with many of the congregation to see the original Hawkshead Baptist Chapel which had been much enlarged and improved over the years.

The Silver Anniversary party and celebration took place that evening. Jessie proclaimed herself the Matriarch of the family and proposed the toast to the Bride and Groom. A most hilarious time followed with so many lively people in the group. We stayed for about a week in this lovely place and enjoyed the lakeland beauty around us. One afternoon Millie and I were in a well known woollen and souvenir shop in Hawkshead when I noticed a man who looked familiar. I recognised him as Alan Archer who had been an exchange French teacher at Gore High School in the 1960s and had lived opposite us for a year in Albany Street. At the same time Millie was eying a lady trying on some shoes and recognised his wife Freda. So an impromptu reunion was held for the next half hour. Later on I came back for a second look at a shirt to find someone else inspecting it. Fortunately he left it on the rack and I lost no further time in clinching the deal. It is still in my wardrobe. It got quite a lot of use in earlier years but the collar never seemed to hang quite right and it is brought out rarely now. Another favourite shop of Millie's was Atkinson's in Ambleside where she bought a second padded jacket and matching hat to add to the one she had bought there on a previous visit. Millie got very good use out of these and she found them very practical indeed for cooler days. Dawn was with the party at Atkinson Ground and came with us on some of our meanderings round the lakes and places of interest. One venture was up a very steep road on Coniston Old Man and I think Dawn and I walked further on from the car-park while Millie waited. The extra height gave lovely views around Coniston Water. The weather was not the kindest over the week with some strong winds. John had towed his yacht up with him for some sailing. One day he and Jean were out sailing when the wind capsized the boat and they went in the water. It was quite shallow and they were easily able to right the boat and headed for a warmer place and dry clothes.

The following Sunday was Millie's birthday. We had breakfast at 241 Waterloo Road, lunch with Margaret and Geoff at Caldervale, toured the Bleasdale area and then had tea and supper at Poulton with Margaret and Eric. It was quite a day for Millie back in her familiar haunts and among her own family.

There was a golf tournament at St Annes Old Course one day and I went to watch some of the pros. I had played the course once on an earlier visit and was interested to see the way the pros tackled it. It was a second-tier tournament and I followed Jackie Nicklaus for a few holes - he was the son of the famous Jack Nicklaus. I was critical of his strategy on one hole where he tried to bite off more than he should have from a patch of very long rough. Instead of playing safely back onto the fairway in good position for the next shot he found himself still in deep rough. On another day we had a trip to Fleetwood Market followed by afternoon tea in our favourite Euston Hotel and a game of pitch and putt by the sea.

On 9th June we headed to London where we had four nights booked at the Royal Kensington Hotel. On the way down we diverted into Coventry to see the Cathedrals. The ruins of the old cathedral were very moving, especially because of the charred wooden cross erected very soon after the raid which had destroyed the beautiful old building. Underneath were the words - Father Forgive. The new Cathedral is very beautiful and impressive.

We had four days in London and did some of the sights. Millie bought a blouse in Harrods which she had for a number of years. We visited the Victoria and Albert Museum in Knightsbridge and sought out the original of Constable's 'Cottage in a Cornfield' complete with its donkey. It was from a Christmas card with this picture on the front that Millie had completed her first real venture into painting. We met Dawn one day in Fortnum and Masons for a snack and a browse around. Dawn was alert to what was going on in London and we were later to attend a concert there with her at which Charles and Diana were present.

We carried on from here to Tunbridge Wells where we stayed in the Calverley Hotel. We were running late for this booking and I tried to call the hotel from a roadside pay phone. It was a peculiar non-conversation where I could hear them but my voice was not coming through. The girl recalled the call when we eventually checked in but there was no problem about the room. It was an elegant hotel which had seen many years and we pictured the gentry coming down from London and staying in a hotel like this while they enjoyed the Spa and the other attractions of Tunbridge Wells. We visited the famous Pantiles and in one of the antique shops I bought a tiny silver boot as a Silver Wedding present for Millie. It is still on the sideboard here in Eccles Street. It cost twenty five pounds which was quite a lot of money at the time. It was treasured. In the same area we visited the Sissinghurst Gardens, developed by Vita Sackville-West and her husband Harold Nicholson who was a former Foreign Secretary. We travelled on northwards under the Thames River through the Blackwall Tunnel and then by M11 to Cambridge where Dawn was spending six months working in the renowned Addenbrooke Hospital. Dawn took us for a meal in the pub in Grantchester which had been frequented by Rupert Brooke and had found a room for us in Abingdon House. She took us through the Prem Unit at the Rosie Maternity Hospital where they were caring for the very early term babies, most of whom were really tiny. It intrigued me that medical procedures could be carried out on such tiny bodies. I believe that Dawn had a reputation for being able to find such small veins for blood tests or inserting IV lines.

From Cambridge we headed north through Ely where we visited the cathedral. We had lunch in a sunny back yard in Kings Lynn and then continued north over the Humber to Bridlington on the Yorkshire coast. We crossed the Humber over a high and fairly recently built suspension bridge. Lincolnshire is very flat and the high point of the bridge gave an extensive view of the countryside. We found a B&B but had to have our evening meal out. I had been stationed at Leconfield nearby for my first flying in England in 1942 and had attended the Baptist Church a few times. The next day we went further up the coast, following a coastline of spectacular cliffs through other resort towns like Filey and Scarborough before turning back west to York. In the Minster there was a Rose Window display. The window had been shattered during the war and they were assembling the many tiny pieces together again like a giant jigsaw. We went to the Shambles and had afternoon tea at 'Yates' and then carried on to Ripon where we found a B&B in an 18th century house. In the morning we visited the 14th century Minster where we miraculously found a park very close to the main door. Millie's arthritic knees made walking very painful and tiring - often I would bypass the parking lot and take her directly to the entrance. It was amazing how often we would find a park close by. We took in the Fountains Abbey ruins and Studley Gardens and then travelled back to Blackpool over the east Lancashire moors.

The next few days were spent with the Blackpool family and then David and Peggy and the kids came. We had two or three days around the beach, The Pleasure Beach and at Margaret and Geoff's before setting out for Port Appin on the west coast of Scotland north of Oban. David had a free cottage there for a week as part of the inducement for him to speak at a medical conference in Sheffield. The cottage was owned by Dr Mackay who was organising the conference, a very nice lady whom we met when we arrived. It was a lovely old stone cottage right on the seashore. We spent the week in the vicinity, taking the ferry across to Lismore Island in the loch and generally entertaining the seven-year-old girl and the sixteen-month-old boy who was not keen on going to sleep. I recall pushing him along the sea front road in a stroller with very silly small wheels trying to get him off to sleep in the evening. On one evening we baby-sat for David and Peggy who went out for luxury meal in the nearby Port Appin Hotel. At the end of the week Millie and I found ourselves doing the final cleaning up after the family had gone off and checking out with the owner who had come up from Glasgow to supervise the transition to the next guests.

We travelled down to Kendall where we had rented another self-catering cottage known as The Doll's House. It really was a lovely wee cottage which had been developed out of the stables and ostlers' quarters of a substantial house. It was pretty cramped for six people but two of the six were small so we managed fine. David and Peggy had travelled east from Port Appin across Scotland and then south west to Kendall, having lunch along the way in a country hotel somewhere in the Perthshire region. Dawn joined us the next day making one more for the cramped accommodation - I think she shared with Kate. From this base we explored the Lake District, including a ride on the steam train which does a short run to the south end of Lake Windermere. The week was marked by the Commonwealth Games opening and the Royal Wedding of Charles and Diana and there was much interchange of visits and time with other members of the family like Jessie, Eric and Margaret and the girls of 241 Waterloo Road.

We were booked to take an escorted tour of the byways of the Cotswolds. On the way down we took the opportunity of spending a night at The Feathers Inn in Ludlow. I think that Jessie and Harry had spent a night there on their honeymoon. At the time of our wedding it was discovered that Frank and Dot had honeymooned in the same hotel. The Feathers is a very old heavily-timbered hotel in the Tudor style and we chose it for its historical interest. We had a very nice room and next morning explored the attractive town with its narrow streets, castle ruins and many interesting shops. The Cotswolds tour was based in Cheltenham and was by mini coach driven and conducted by one Tony Furber, a local man who had grown up in the area. He forsook the main roads and took us by country lanes to remote villages which are seldom seen. In the party were an elderly couple with their son who was a horologist - his hobby was mending old clocks. He particularly wanted to see the unusual clock in the church at Castle Combe which had no face or hands - the only way it indicated the time was when it struck the hour. Our horologist was very keen to see the mechanism of the clock striking the hour and we had to wait about twenty minutes for this to happen. My birthday occurred during the week and Dawn came down from West Middlesex hospital for the occasion. The tour party were all lodged at Hannay's Guest House and they all joined in the birthday greetings - I was 68.

While we were in Cheltenham I noticed in The Telegraph that the exchange rate for the NZ dollar had risen to \$3.01 to the pound. I said to Millie that we should transfer the unused money we had brought to buy a car back to New Zealand. We went to Lloyds Bank situated in a building with a large marble-floored central foyer under a magnificent patterned glass dome. When we inquired if we could transfer the money the girl said she would have to check that day's rate for a sum of that size. She did so and came back with the figure of \$3.08. As we had bought the sterling at \$2.77 we made a profit of 31c on each of the three thousand pounds. This went quite a way towards covering the cost of renting the car. It has been my only experience of profiting from an exchange rate transaction.

At the end of our week we met Winnie and Marjorie at the railway station in Gloucester as they were to join us for a holiday in Somerset. We found a hotel in Norton Fitzwarren just out of Taunton and went for day expeditions around Somerset and into North Devon. One day we visited John and Dyls Allen where they were holidaying in Sidmouth on the south coast. It was a very pleasant visit on a lovely day with a walk along the clifftops above the beach. Dyls is a cousin of Millie's, daughter of her favourite Uncle David and sister of Ron Haigh, so it was in the nature of a reunion after many years. I had met them only once before when they had visited Jean and John's at Nazeing while we were there in 1970. They were both teachers and Dr John rose to become an area Director of Education. There are two interesting facts about these two. Their birthdays are on the same day and they are the same age - and they got married first and then told Uncle David and Auntie Nellie.

During this time we went through Honiton, the home of Honiton Lace. The village had specialised over many years in this product to which it had given its name. On our way down to Somerset we visited Slimbridge, the famous Wildfowl Refuge established by the very well known conservationist Peter Scott. Winnie was particularly thrilled with this visit as she very much enjoyed bird watching and identification. Slimbridge is situated

in low-lying land near the Severn River and features mainly water fowl. On our day trips from Norton Fitzwarren we visited a host of small towns and villages - Melverton, South Molton, Barnstaple, Bampton Church with its 500-year-old Yew trees, Bideford, the small port of Westward Ho, Littlehampton, Broad Hemsbury, Ottery St Mary, Minehead, Porlock Weir, Exmoor and Tarr Steps. On our way home at the end of the week we passed through Glastonbury, the site of an ancient monastery in the grounds of which there is a thorn bush reputed to have been originally grown from the crown of thorns - it is certainly very old and gnarled today. We spent a night in Bath where we booked into Tasburgh Bath B&B with dinner at the George Hotel. We visited the Assembly Rooms of Victorian times, Bath Cathedral with its noted flying buttresses and the Royal terrace. We came north over the Severn Bridge and up through Welsh Border country along the Wye Valley which is very lovely, through Monmouth where Charles Royce of Rolls Royce fame was born, from Leominster to Hereford to the Merton Hotel just out of town. It was not very smart or clean but the girls had a lovely room! Next day we again headed along the fringe of Wales and home to Blackpool.

We spent the next few days with the family around the Lancashire area visiting haunts much loved of old and preparing for our departure home on 22 September. We made last visits to friends, had a day out in Yorkshire with Eric and Margaret and had meals out with various groupings of family. I did some clean up jobs around the section for Winnie and Marjorie. We travelled from Blackpool by bus to Manchester airport to catch our homeward flight. We had booked once again into Raffles Hotel in Singapore where we had a lovely room. Millie had a thing for Raffles as she had stayed there overnight with the boys on her trip away back in 1950 - this was the old Raffles before the colossal upgrade which put its room-rate far out of our reach. After exploring the hotel we enjoyed ice cream in Palm Court. The next day we bought two pairs of slacks for me, a jacket for Ron and a watch for Millie and as well as other smaller items - this was the last watch that Millie ever owned. The following morning we were off to the airport and away home to New Zealand.

England & France 1989

My diary of this trip is labelled on the front of the exercise book I used:

Name	I G & M Elder
Class	Over 70
Subject	Our Trip
School	of Experience.

I was fully retired by this stage and we had greatly enjoyed visits from Renee Mackenzie and Marjorie, the three Haigh sisters, Eric and Margaret Culpin and Dot and Frank Elder. We were fully settled into our Kelvin Heights residence and had completed the landscaping. One of the later jobs was building concrete steps from the driveway up to the front door. I made a form for a step and made one step each day till the job was done. I inserted into each step a flat piece of Queenstown stone similar to the stone used on the terrace. I kept the rise of each step to just over four inches and this worked out well.

We got itchy feet again. We never knew when our last visit to England might take place because of age or ill-health and so planned to go again in 1989. I am reminded by the scrap book that we were invited to a farewell meal at the Ben Lomond restaurant and the Bon Voyage card circulated there for signature was signed by no fewer than thirty-six friends with eleven apologies¹. I believe that the farewell was organised by Pat Fougere and it was a delightful evening.

¹ I record these names here as they are a real indication of the friends we had at Kelvin Heights - Frankton: Phil & Pat Fougere, Doreen & Keith Broadbent (on a visit from Auckland), Lin & Margaret Turner, June & John Reid, Jessie and Cap Jardine, Margaret & Morris Galt, Alex & Dorothy Taylor, Nessie & Jack Beggs, Mavis & Geo Cochrane, Ian & Gladys Begley, Les & Nan McLean, Les & Ailsa Currie, Geoff & Alison Paterson, Phyl Smith, Bobs & Shirley Wilson, Lorna & Eric Wilks and apologies, Frank Smith, Margaret & Don Smith, Phyllis & Ian Gardiner, Nyra Marshall, Ruth & Ray Melhop, Robin Sim, and Bruce & Jo Johnston. Not many are still with us at the time of writing which tells us something about the age-group our friends were in

This was to be a fairly long trip. We varied our method of departure this time by taking a coach to Christchurch. Ian Gardiner collected us at about 8.30 am and took us into the depot in Queenstown. I wrote, 'We found it a very pleasant ride, and only dozed for short periods.' The route passed through the Lindis Pass, Tekapo and Geraldine to Christchurch Airport. We were booked in to The Commodore Hotel near the airport to be ready for an early start courtesy of British Airways because of the early check-in time. After dinner Graeme Botting called and took us to visit Auntie Eunice at Windermere Home - she was about 93 but was very alert and with it.

The next day was a long and tedious one. As a continental breakfast was to be served on the flight we did not take time for food at the hotel - this proved to be a mistake. Some time after checking in we were asked to go out to the tarmac to identify our bags which were being off-loaded onto the tarmac. The pile of bags eventually dwindled till only one or two were left. These belonged to a passenger travelling from Perth to Auckland who believed he was in Auckland already - was the aircraft not flying to Auckland? There was a language problem and I believe the passenger was left in Christchurch, no doubt to get his problems sorted later. We did get a sandwich and cup of tea from a kiosk in a corner of the departure lounge. We finally left about 11 am and were duly served a late breakfast.

We were travelling British Airways as they routed their flights through Perth where Dawn was currently working and we had planned to spend about twelve days there. This was a holiday in itself and a relaxation after the rush and bustle of getting away. In the latter part of our time in Perth Dawn drove us some 200 kms south from Perth into some very picturesque country and along some of West Australia's Indian Ocean beaches. In many places there was good surf and we could see swimmers surfing as we passed. South of Perth is quite a historical area and there were museums, old cheese factories and signs of the gold mining days. We visited a Wildlife Park where we wandered around in an enclosure among the kangaroos which simply ignored us. An Art and Craft Centre featured furniture, art, pottery, woodwork and numerous gift items. We diverted a little to see the tallest Jarrah tree in the world - the Jarrah is a hardwood and is used for outdoor furniture and decks in New Zealand. The tree was tall at about 110 feet high with a girth of about 33 feet. The rest of the time was spent on small expeditions round the city, out to Freemantle, viewing the Swan River basin from Lion Park and visiting the shopping area. Perth is a lovely city and we enjoyed coming to know it a little. The Swan River forms a large basin just off the city which provides a wonderful place for boating. Millie, of course, was recalling her previous visit to Perth on her troopship journey in 1946.

We arrived in London early in the morning, collected our rental car and drove west along the Oxford Road. As we were going through Buckinghamshire Millie spotted a large stand of bluebells under a wood. We had to stop, make a turn on a busy road and go back for a good look - bluebell woods are a feature of the English springtime not seen in New Zealand. We stopped over in Oxfordshire to walk nearly a mile down an access path to see the foundations of a Roman Villa. The place was closed but through a window we could see a very fine piece of mosaic pavement.

We eventually found the Fleece Hotel in Cirencester which we had booked in advance. Cirencester is an old Roman town on Watling Street which is now the A40 highway. The hotel's name comes from the sheep-farming history of the local area which is now perhaps better known for its cereal crops. The next morning we visited Gloucester Cathedral whose tower is estimated to weigh 6000 tons according to the guide book. We travelled north along the Welsh border by Monmouth and the Wye Valley to Ludlow. Just outside the town we found the substantial Georgian-style Sunnymede Guest House where we got a lovely twin room. Its en suite status had been achieved by installing a toilet and shower in part of a large bay window.

The next day we headed north to Shrewsbury and on to Baschurch where my Granny Gardyne had been brought up. We saw the more modern replacement for the Methodist Church which I had been given to understand she had attended. We then drove over to Petton Anglican Church. We explored a number of above-ground tombs and found that of Abigail Menlove, wife of Thomas Menlove who was Grannie's Grandad. Ron later found that Granny's mother Anne Menlove had died in childbirth and Abigail was her sister who later married Thomas. Abigail no doubt came to care for her sister's children and ended up marrying her brother-in-law. Thomas Menlove had been brought up on Wackley Farm nearby - we got directions to the farm and briefly talked to the present owner. It appeared to be well run and prosperous.

At 241 Waterloo Road in Blackpool we found the three Haigh girls waiting to welcome their long-lost little sister. They had a luscious tea ready which was followed by opening of parcels, viewing of pictures and an evening of catching up. Millie was home again. The next day, being Sunday, she went to Station Road Church where a new minister, Rev Laurence Jones was conducting his first service - a special youth service.

We spent the next few days sorting ourselves out, having various family get togethers and preparing for our booked week at Talkin Head near Brampton and Carlyle. Sadly, Winnie fell ill at this stage and was unfit to come. The doctor felt it was a sudden period of high pollen count which had stuffed up her bronchial tubes - he prescribed some rest and a course of antibiotics. The week at Talkin Head was to have included both Winnie and Marjorie, but Marjorie stayed at home with Winnie. After the weekend Winnie was much better and the two girls came up to Carlyle by train. Talkin Head was interesting. It was a farm and the cowbyre had been converted into a line of cottages which were named Long Byres - very appropriate as there were four or five in a row. They had been fitted out quite recently and were very fresh and convenient. They were unusual in that the bedrooms were on the ground floor with the kitchen and living areas upstairs where they had a very much nicer outlook over a rise in the ground in front of the cottages. I confess that even I found it a bit odd going 'downstairs' to bed. It reminds me of Ron Haigh's remark when it was suggested that he and Vera should shift to a bungalow in deference to their advancing years - 'I have always gone upstairs to bed and intend to still do so.' When he died Vera was left in the big house. The owner of the cottages, who lived nearby, had a sideline in providing meals and we had several evening meals brought in. They were generously portioned and I noted that one day we 'dined on the scraps left over from the previous day or two.'

Talkin Head was quite close to the famous Hadrian's Wall and we spent some time exploring various parts of it. We found it very interesting and admired the skill of the Roman masons. The size and extent of the fort buildings and the vastness of the concept of a continuous wall some 60 miles long and high enough to act as a barrier boggled the imagination. Yet it was done about 1850 years ago.

We visited Lanercost Priory near Brampton, part of which is still used as the parish church, and Hexham Abbey nearer the east end of the wall, where, quite by chance, we met George and Ethel Abercrombie of Auckland. George was a former member of Gore Rotary Club and Ethel a former President of Inner Wheel. We headed south out of town up onto the moors and enjoyed a lovely drive over the centre of this Northumberland area. We then negotiated our way by narrow lanes to the Gossipgate Art and Craft Gallery where Winnie bought a birthday present for Millie.

One day was rather special. This was the first visit to Isel Cottage for us as it was for Winnie and Marjorie as well. Jean and John had only just moved in. We took with us a game pie cooked by our landlady and also some cakes we had bought in Penrith. Margaret Boney and Jessie had come up also and we found Jean absolutely delighted with their new home and revelling in the clear air conditions. I can recall her saying on another occasion that it was just like breathing oxygen when she came to Isel. The stone-built house was so interesting with wide doors throughout to accommodate the crinoline dresses the ladies had worn at the time it was built. There was a whole cluster of outbuildings - the coach house which had become a double garage, the tackroom which was John's workshop, stables, potting shed, glasshouse, conservatory and the pig sty which was being used as a coal shed. It was a very exciting time for Jean as well as for her three aunties and her Mum to see her in such a lovely place. We returned to Long Byres by a very pretty route over Uldale Fell north of Skiddaw.

Our next adventure was a visit to France with Eric and Margaret Culpin. Alas, as we were packing I found I had lost my wallet. I searched through everything, even going through our already-packed bags. After cancelling our Visa card, informing the Police and phoning New Zealand regarding a new driver's licence, I went to bed with a prayer that the Lord would solve the problem. About 2.30 in the morning I recalled that I had made my last purchase in a photographic shop in Lytham Road - I resolved to check in the morning. There was no reply when I rang early in the morning. I noticed a private listing under the same name at the same address and called that number. No, he was no longer connected with the shop but he would give me the phone number of the current manager. I called that number and, yes, they had found a wallet just before closing. He said he would bring it to the house on his way to work and duly did so. We left about half an hour later than Eric's target departure time. What a relief - I would have needed the driver's licence at Dover or Millie would have had to do all the driving. She would drive from time to time while we were in England but the best combination was me as driver and her as navigator. She was fond of maps and was generally very good at planning a route. She would have been dismayed to have been required to do all the driving. We had reason to give thanks for that answer to my prayer.

It was a very great privilege to be travelling in Europe under escort by Eric and Margaret as they had covered much of France and Germany over the years. Eric had been stationed in Germany after the end of World War 2 as part of the army of occupation and had learned to speak German fluently. Both he and Margaret had a smattering of French but I was surprised they were not more fluent in view of the number of times they had been to France. However, they had no trouble in getting along and, of course, many in the tourism service sector spoke very good English. After the delayed start Eric pushed his foot down fairly hard and we sped down the M6 at over 70 mph, diverting round London and making good time to Dover. There was some excitement for us in boarding a channel ferry and crossing to France. It was an eyeopener to see the volume of shipping using the English Channel and one could appreciate the possible dangers. At one stage I counted no fewer than twenty-four ships in sight, most of them of appreciable size. We landed at Calais and were soon wending our way out of the dockyards driving on the 'wrong' side of the road in our right-hand drive car. Margaret insisted that she sit in the back seat throughout the trip but was still an excellent navigator from that situation. For much of the journey I was up front with Eric therefore nominally the map reader but Margaret was always up with the play and never let us go wrong. Once we got into a built-up area her local knowledge was very valuable. It became a joke that Margaret would say, 'Go left at the next intersection', and Eric would say 'Right' meaning 'correct'. Margaret would say, 'No, left!' and we would all laugh. From time to time I changed places with Millie and she was just as good a navigator as she had proved in England. We drove south from Calais along the coast where we could see the white cliffs of Dover across the waves. One could perhaps understand how the German 'Big Bertha' railway guns had been able to bombard the English coast from there during the World Wars. Eric had booked our rooms with M Bourdon at L'Escale Hotel in the village of Escale just below the prominent Cap Blanc Nez which is the landing point for channel swimmers - for us, Room 210 at 48 Francs each.

The next morning was 1st June and we found at breakfast that Margaret had been carrying birthday cards and presents from the family for Millie. So we had cards and gifts with our crusty French loaf. Millie bought a jar of marmalade. I noted that as we left Escale and passed Cap Griz Nez there were still many signs of shell holes from the war. We drove through the fishing village of Wissant and on through many towns² whose names rang a bell with us from being mentioned so often in the events of both wars and finally to Auberge de la Jalousie about 12 km southeast of Caen.

It was sobering to drive through Caen. In a documentary in the museum we saw the people of Caen cheering the Allied troops as they took possession of the city in 1944 after virtually destroying the town during the battle to drive the Germans out. It highlighted the severity of the five-year occupation by the Germans and showed the joy of the townsfolk at being liberated even with the degree of devastation. The destruction of the city had one good side effect in that it had been rebuilt with wider streets which are better able to cope with modern traffic conditions.

In Caen we visited the Bayeux Tapestry. We neatly timed our visit to see the audio-

2 Bologne, Montreuil, Abbeville, Blangy, Neufchatel, Rouen with a glimpse of the cathedral in the distance, Brionne, Lisieux

visual of the making of the tapestry and the events which it portrays. This was a very great pleasure for Millie who was an enthusiastic embroiderer. It was a tremendous concept, very skilfully worked and wonderfully preserved for 900 years. We went on to the Cathedral which had survived the war and which contains a fresco of the murder of Thomas a Beckett in Canterbury Cathedral. Next we visited the Musee de la Bataille de Normandie which featured an audio visual of the Normandy landings and the colossal scope of the planning and execution of this greatest sea-borne landing of all time. It featured the tremendous destruction of property and the great cost in casualties. Eric then took us to Arromanches, the site of one of the British landings, with the great concrete caissons which had been towed across the channel to provide docks now lying at drunken angles after so many Atlantic storms over the years since the war. One thought of the men who had faced such great danger to achieve the defeat of Germany and the liberation of Europe.. I thought of little Tommy Bateman of Station Road Church, driving an Army truck off the barges onto the docks and up off the beaches - forty years later I was singing bass with him in the choir at Station Road.

We were heading for Brittany, an area of France which had intrigued Millie for many years. It proved to be an area of great interest. Brittany is on the southern side of the Normandy peninsula which juts out towards England. Getting there took two whole days, much of which was travelled at speed. We became aware of the very substantial size of France. We were still even more days' travel away from the South of France. That was one of my first impressions - the vastness of France compared with New Zealand.

We had stopped overnight at Ville Dieu des Poeles which was full of copper shops - Poeles means copper. From there our target was Mont St Michel which is approached by a causeway across a marshy area sometimes covered at high tide. The parking area was a long way from the mount but Eric explained he had on board an arthritis sufferer - the warden told him to take her right up to the gate. Le Mont is built on a rock rising sharply from the beach and features a path leading steeply upward between two rows of shops. The Abbey at the pinnacle is impressive in itself, erected on the steep rock away above high water mark. St Michael's Mount in south-west England is similar but not such an impressive feature. Further on in our journey, we crossed the narrow entrance to a large estuary of the Rance River by a bridge which was called a 'barrage.' The very fast tidal bore is harnessed to provide electricity during both the incoming and the outgoing tides. On our way further south we diverted to pass through the town of Fougères with its castle. The town has been famous for shoe-making and in spite of foreign competition still produces three million shoes annually. We were interested to divert to this city because of the name of our friends of Invercargill and Queenstown days.

At the end of the day we arrived at Erdevan and our accommodations at Les Voyageurs. Before we booked in Eric took us to Carnac to see Les Alignements, the site of a neolithic druid monument where 1099 large stones or 'menhirs' are set out in twelve long rows. The stones are huge, ranging from 5 feet up to 10 feet in height. Their significance is unknown but some investigator came up with the conclusion that 'they are large stones.' The next day we visited the Quiberon Peninsula along a very narrow sandy isthmus. The

peninsula juts out into the Bay of Biscay. The point of interest is the west shore which is battered by gales sweeping straight into the Bay of Biscay from the Atlantic. The shore is extremely rocky and rough and is known as Côte Sauvage for obvious reasons. In contrast the other side of the peninsula has a gentler climate and boasts a number of popular holiday resorts. It faces the Golfe de Morbihan, a very large almost enclosed body of water which shelters the hundreds of holiday boats we saw in various marinas. One day our hotel was devoid of staff and was completely shut down. We had to make our own beds and go out to a neighbouring restaurant for dinner. We had a key to the residential section to get back to our rooms. I suppose this was one way to ensure the hotel staff had a day off.

We visited the fort at Concarneau which is completely surrounded by water and accessed only by a narrow bridge. The fort was erected on this little island at the entrance to the harbour and would have been a commanding defence for the port in earlier times - it now features a series of souvenir shops along the main thoroughfare. In a lace shop Millie had bought some handkerchief sachets, an apron, a lace traycloth and two small lace mats. Back at the car she was showing them to Eric and Margaret when she realised that the two little lace mats were missing. As it was quite a distance and Millie had had enough walking, I went back practicing my French as I went along. 'Nous n'avons pas deux petites.' The lady looked down at the counter where they were lying in a little white paper bag and apologised profusely. I was greatly relieved I did not have to enter into a longer explanation. I was paying the bill in a hotel a few days later and the proprietor asked me something in French. Millie sensed my confusion and asked what she wanted. In perfect English she said 'I was just asking Monsieur if he wanted to stay another night.' I felt quite annoyed that she had spoken to me in French and to Millie in English, as Millie could have had a conversation in French.

On our journey north we came to Roscavel where Paul Culpin and Allison were staying at her mother's holiday house. We delivered a stainless steel pan which Allison's mother had commissioned Eric and Margaret to carry and then had lunch with them at Camaret overlooking the Pointe de Penhir. While visiting the Pointe later we saw a memorial 'Aux Bretons des Francais Libres.' To the Bretons of the Free French. Many people from Brittany had escaped by sea to England during the war to join up with the Free French. This organisation under General Charles de Gaulle formed units which fought with the Allies for the liberation of France.

I commented in my diary on the lunches we enjoyed each day. These had been selected by Eric and Margaret over many years of motor touring experience. They consisted of biscuits and cheese, coke, small sealed apple pies, almond slice and half an apple for each day. These proved to be quite satisfying enough and we had a good meal at night. We were staying in 'Logis' or B&Bs which were listed in the Logi Book which the two Culplins would consult as we approached each town at which they wanted to stop. They were expert at selecting the most suitable option from the descriptions in the book and the menu displayed at the door - we never seemed to strike a dud. One Logi we stayed at for two nights had a spacious room with private facilities. It had a very good wardrobe but the toilet and wash-basin were in a cubicle along one wall which left barely enough room

to shut the door and the shower was in another cubicle about 30 inches square. Margaret described it as a very 'French' hotel and found 'Madame' very charming.

At one point we went down a narrow gully to Plage Bonaparte where there was a plaque commemorating the bravery of Breton fishermen during the war. In the 'the dark nights' of 1944 they had helped 135 allied airmen escape to England by embarking them from this cove. A tunnel had been cut through the left-hand ridge of rock to a steep track carved out of a rocky cliff face leading to the only sandy beach on a very rocky shore. The airmen were picked up by submarines. The bay was surrounded by very rocky coasts on both sides and the navigation of the submarines must have been very tricky.

Around this area we passed through extensive tracts of very good farming country with a considerable amount of cropping going on. I had been aware of Britain's struggle to maintain access for our NZ produce when they joined the European Community. experiencing the size of France and seeing the extent of the farm lands on this trip made me understand France's opposition to the import of our products. Of course, they are always very happy to have their automobiles and other industrial production exported to us.

On our second-last full day we were heading back to Lisieux. We found accommodation at La Terrasse on Rue de St. Therese - a little higher standard B&B than usual but still within our budget of 400F. Our purpose here was to visit the Basilica de St Therese which I described in my diary as 'a magnificent edifice with a dome 95m above ground level.' It was built in honour of St Therese who must have been a remarkable child. She is said to have been healed by a vision of the Virgin Mary and became a very devout woman. She died very young after a tragic illness and endured two days of agony. One of the side chapels dedicated to St Therese has some of her exhumed bones kept in reliquaries before which hundreds of candles have been lit to her memory. We also visited a charming little seaport town called Honfleur which has a tiny harbour surrounded on three sides by narrow four-storey buildings separately painted in strong colours. It is very picturesque and a favourite subject for painters, some of whom were working on the day of our visit. Apparently the harbour is above the level of low tide and they have lock gates which are closed to retain water for the fishing boats to remain afloat.

On our final day Eric took us northward to the Cote du Nord. We took the minor roads along the cliff tops which had magnificent views of the seascape and down into bays with sandy beaches. At various intervals along the coast we could see the remains of concrete gun emplacements built by the Germans to help defend the coasts. We took an evening walk to the end of the road where there were two German defence posts, a lovely piece of sandy beach with a strange rock formation appearing at low tide. There was a black mark just above the high tide mark left by the oil leakage from the wreck of the Tory Canyon oil tanker some ten years previously. The whole coast has walking tracks for some forty or fifty kms with time indications for each section. Next morning Millie paid the bill to Madame - 'a very charming little stout lady with quite a presence' - while I used cleaning fluid to clean my shirt and trousers of some gum I had picked up off the logs at our picnic place two days before. Another of our picnic spots was about a kilometre up a side road

leading to a rather sombre-looking chateau. It looked unoccupied except that there were some fresh bedding-out plants in one of the flower beds just inside the wrought iron gates. Maintenance of such a home must be an enormous burden unless the owners have a lot of money.

We spent another night with M Bourdon in Escalle. Eric's car had developed a rattle in the right front wheel. In the evening we took the wheel off and found a small stone in the brake band - we removed it and all was well. Next morning when we were paying the bill Millie said to M Bourdon, 'Its a very sad day,' meaning it was our last day. 'Because you have to pay?' he replied with a twinkle in his eye. On our way to Calais we passed the earthworks at the French entrance to the Channel tunnel. We also visited Eric and Margaret's favourite supermarket to buy some supplies of their preferred beer and cheeses which are appreciably cheaper than in England. I think their buying was restricted a little that trip with two extra bods and bags in the car. In Calais we were struck by the five-story Hotel de Ville and its striking clock with an attractive chime. In front there was a formal garden featuring the Rodin statue of the Burghers of Calais. Conditions on the ferry were very different from our outward crossing as visibility was restricted to two to three miles by a thick haze - we saw very few other ships. We duly arrived in Dover and our visit to Brittany was over. It had been most enjoyable and we had learned a great deal about this area of France.

We were soon off the ship and went to collect our car from Kennings. Yes, they had our car; yes, they had received my letter and had given us a four door; so, yes, all was well. I found that the car they had assigned us was a slightly bigger model than I had ordered so I went back and specially thanked the girl for it - it was a dark grey Austin Maestro with less than 2,000 miles on the clock. Our first visit was to a Wash'n'dry where we put two weeks 'accumulation of laundry into the machine - we were done in little over an hour. We then proceeded to Alverstone House on the London-Dover road which was owned by Anne and Roland Fairlie, a couple who had been to New Zealand and had come to know Phil and Pat Fougere. They were very friendly and we were able to hang out our clothes to finish drying. We made an appointment at Chaucer Hair Design for the next morning and then went to the George and Dragon at Fordwich just out of Canterbury for a very good meal. The day had been very hot so bed covers were reduced to a minimum - we found the noise of traffic on the main road very disturbing but it quietened down later.

We had scheduled Canterbury for the next day but ironing and the hair appointment came first. We found a two-hour park quite close to the Cathedral which I extended later for another hour. Canterbury is one of the great cathedrals of England and we had not visited it before as it is hidden away in a remote corner of the south. However, its position near the gateway to England from the continent gave it great importance back in mediaeval times. I wrote in my diary, 'We viewed the excellent audio visual first, then followed leisurely round the features of the cathedral, such as the site of Thomas a Beckett's martyrdom, the floor inscription behind the altar, the beautiful Bell Harry tower, the lovely stained glass windows around the East end, the cloisters with many crests and emblems in the ceiling and the very impressive colonnaded nave with its high vaulted ceiling. The building has quite an atmosphere and visitors respect this. One got the feeling that this cathedral at the centre of the

Anglican Church had seen many fine men in the position of Archbishop over the centuries.' After leaving the cathedral we had a delightful but expensive afternoon tea in Libertys.

From Canterbury we headed back into Dover the following day for a visit to Dover Castle. We then drove on to Hythe, passing Folkstone on the way where we noticed the beginnings of ground works related to the Channel tunnel. In Hythe we made a fruitless call at the home of Bill Hill, a former teaching associate of Millie's with whom we had made contact years before in Aylesbury. A neighbour told us they had just gone off to Spain. 'They are always going away,' he said. We followed the sea coast through Romney Marsh - where the Romney sheep breed comes from - and both Old Romney and New Romney. The 'Old' and 'New' distinction arose in 1247 when a severe storm changed the course of the river and cut off the old town. Romney was one of the Cinque Ports up until that time. As we passed through Rye I was reminded of a short visit I made during the war at the invitation of a friendly RAF airman. It was a very interesting town with cobbled streets. The old Mermaid Inn was rebuilt in 1420 and is said to be the oldest inn in England. There is a place with the quaint name 'The House Opposite.' Just down the road was Quaker House beside which was a door marked 'Elder House' - guess who lined up to be photographed there.

Further along the coast we came to Hastings, a town on two levels. The original town backs onto some very steep chalk cliffs with the newer part on the high ground above. The town borders the scene of the Battle of Hastings at Senlac Hill in 1066 when King Harold was defeated by William the Conqueror. The ruins of the Abbey built by William about 1090 stand there with the undercroft and walls still in wonderful condition. At the end of the day we returned to Alverstones and were hosted to dinner by the Fairlies as their guests.

We headed across Kent and Surrey next day to the Hilton Hotel in Cobham. On the way we paid another visit to the gardens of Vita Sackville-West and Harold Nicholson at Sissinghurst. The 270-room Hilton was set in woods and rhododendron groves. Dinner was expensive so we went out to The Old Boar where we got a more reasonably-priced meal - this was all to the good as Millie was not very hungry. The hotel stood adjacent to the A3 arterial route out of London which produced a continuous muted roar of traffic. On Sunday we headed into London to meet Barrie and Judie Hibbert and to attend Bloomsbury Central Baptist Church. We had a little difficulty finding the church in the middle of its very commercial surrounds. Barrie spoke on 'The Long Hard Haul' of the adult years, mentioning the three aspects of Vocation, Personal Relationships and Inward or Personal Spiritual Growth. After the service we went down to the Friendship Centre in the basement where we lunched with Hibberts and Barrie's mother and Bing and Joyce Lucas and Geoff from Tawa. Some four hours later we retraced our route to the hotel with a brief stop-off in Windsor.

Monday saw us heading south to Southsea through Guildford, Midhurst and Petersfield.³ We followed the signs to the D-Day Museum, where we spent an hour viewing the D Day Tapestry. Millie accepted the use of a wheel chair which was just as well as otherwise the tapestry had to be viewed standing. It was a wonderful example of modern tapestry

³ Petersfield was to become familiar to me many years later as my second wife Elizabeth's sister lives near there.

embroidery - the famous characters were clearly recognisable as they had been so well done. We went on to another piece of naval history as we viewed The Mary Rose, the flagship of Henry VIII's navy. It had sunk in Portsmouth harbour about 1540 and had recently been raised under the patronage of Prince Charles and is now on view. It is completely under cover and constantly sprayed with water at a temperature of three degrees to kill off wood-destroying bacteria and prevent disintegration of the timbers that would result from drying out. In the morning we called Rod Keillor from a call box and were chatting nicely until our coins ran out and we were cut off. Rod is a former Dunedin flatmate of Dawn's who was working in Portsmouth Hospital as part of his overseas training and Dawn had given us his phone number. He is now a consultant eye specialist in Dunedin.

Millie had information about a town called Hungerford which was well known for antiques. We located Hungerford in the road atlas in the region of The New Forest and set off in search of it through Portsmouth and past Fareham and Southampton. We eventually found that there was not even a village - it seemed to be just a row of houses which may have been part of the estate of a 'big' house. Disappointed we headed to London but did at least get to see some herds of the wild ponies which roam the open New Forest.

We navigated our way successfully to Russell Square in Central London and were directed to our hotel by a very pleasant policewomen. We had a corner room overlooking the square. We visited Harrods, where Millie bought a blouse, and came back east to the British Museum near our hotel where we spent quite a time in the Greek and Roman sections. The next day we set out for the Tower of London - a lift at Russell Square station down to the Underground, change at Kings Cross coming up to the Piccadilly Line by a long escalator and up several sets of steps. At the Tower Millie asked the Beefeater guard if we could go straight to the Jewel House. 'Certainly. Go straight ahead, turn left at the Bloody Tower, then go up the distance of a bow-shot and you will be right there.' There was no queue at the Jewel House and we were able to follow a steady stream going round the outer displays - maces, gold plate, medals and robes of the Knight Orders - before going down to the Crown Jewels. 'Keep moving in the front row. No stopping. Keep moving means no stopping and no stopping means keep moving,' was the repeated cry of the attendants. The Orb, The Sceptre, The Star of India, The Cullinane Diamond, King Edward's Crown - they were all there. While at the Tower we visited The Chapel of St John the Evangelist where Lady Jane Grey spent most of her nine days as Queen before her execution - a lovely little chapel. One of the attendants noticed Millie's stick and offered to let her out by a short cut to save her going up and down over a hundred steps - his kindness was much appreciated.

We took a taxi to St Katherine's Dock as the driver did not know of the Dockland Light Railway. St Katherine's is an extensive development incorporating a major hotel, World Trade Centre and a block of offices, shops and apartment blocks, with connecting walkways. All of this is built around basins closed off from the Thames which contained moored private pleasure craft and even a canal boat. We had a cold drink in the Dickens Inn where a man accosted us asking if we would give him the nod when we left so he could move to our window seat. He also told us about the area and directed us to the railway. This light railway is totally automatic and covers a circular route through the old docks area

which is being completely redeveloped. I counted no fewer than 33 cranes operating on building sites immediately adjacent to the track as we rode round the circuit. In the evening we drove to Judy Springett's flat not far from the hotel and were very lucky to find an empty park just outside her door. The street was lined with parked cars packed very tightly together and it took me about half a dozen to-and-fros to get in. It was a nice visit though her baby Christopher was unwell that night.

The next day we kept our appointment with Frank Elder who took us out for cold soup, roast lamb and apple pie at Pitts Inn, the former home of William Pitt the Younger. Dot was up in Chinook baby-sitting the children for Sally who was attending a funeral. Frank showed us the devastation in several wooded areas from the very severe storm which had hit southern England about four years previously. He took us through Sevenoaks where they had replanted several of the seven oaks which had been uprooted in the storm. After parting from him we went on to East Grinstead where we had booked for the night. Part of the hotel was under reconstruction and I have noted in my diary some of the problems we experienced: the wall plug for the electric kettle was faulty, the 'hot' water just had the chill off, the towel rail was excessively hot, going to breakfast was an adventure through a poorly-signed route to the dining room and Millie's tea cup had no handle - it was a sugar bowl. At least we had a quiet night.

We finally we found the correct Hungerford which was in Berkshire west of Reading. We booked a room in the Bear Inn which directly overlooked the Dunn River, a clear, slow stream with weed and ducks. After a rest we went up the street to where antique dealers were lined up side by side around the Arcade and in booths in the central area. There were also independent antique shops up and down the main street. We had a cream tea at the Methodist Flower Show and the next morning went to the church service there. It was Ladies Day and a visiting lady from Newbury sang 'How Lovely Are Thy Dwellings' and 'Just for Today.' I have recorded that the songs were very beautiful. The following day we went for a night in Bath and looked round the ancient town. We celebrated our wedding anniversary with a couple of days wandering round the lanes and villages of the Cotswolds, some of which we had become familiar with in the past. Next we headed north through Stratford on Avon and Lichfield to Rugeley and Longdon Village where I had convalesced during the war. I found the entry to the village completely changed - a bypass road had cut Longdon Hall from the village. The Hall is now a boys' school. We carried on northwards through Uttoxeter and Ashbourne and on to Matlock. In Bakewell Millie placed an order for a Doulton tea pot in the old Yorktown pattern for £25 (less VAT, plus p&p). We also paid a visit to the palatial home of the Duke of Devonshire at Chatsworth and explored around the attractive Derbyshire countryside. It was interesting that we had left behind the soft limestone colours of the Cotswold stone, passed through the red sandstone of Herefordshire and were now among the grey stone of Derbyshire - changes of colour very much affecting the atmosphere of the county. We finally headed home to Blackpool via west Lancashire, driving through the West Pennines with their wonderful views over the moors and down through the old familiar family holiday haunts around Clitheroe. We picked up mail from Waterloo Road on our way to Jessie's - a copy of Kate's school report made very good reading.

The next few days were spent with the family in Blackpool, catching up with washing, collecting my new visa card from the bank, getting more spending money, enjoying a birthday lunch hosted by Jessie at Gibbon Bridge Hotel not far from Clitheroe, playing a round of golf at Blackpool Park, enjoying an afternoon with Jessie at St Annes and an evening at the Missionary Society's fundraising Strawberry Fair, a day at Windsmoor, picnicking at Brock Bottom where I had joined in with the Station Road Sunday School picnic many years ago, a trip out onto Beacon Fell, an outing to Fleetwood for Pitch and Putt and afternoon tea at the Chatterbox, watching Steffi Graf beat Navratilova in the Wimbledon final, taking Jessie to Isel through all the lakeland villages and valleys with views on the way and a few days with Margaret and Geoff. Geoff and I played golf at Ashton-Lea near Preston where I gave Geoff a stroke a hole and he won one-up. Why ever did I let him have a mulligan on the second hole?⁴ Geoff was only just taking up golf in view of his impending retirement, after not having played since his much younger days. He had to give me strokes when we played again later on.

In the midst of all this we got a phone call from New Zealand. Ron called with the news that he and Lesley were to be married on August 20th and would come over as soon as possible to have two or three weeks with us in England before we went home. I wrote in my diary, 'We are delighted that the decision has at last been made.' We had been having some discussion with Ron as to whether they should await our return. On balance, we felt that this would be rather nice and certainly better than going back up to Auckland immediately after we got home. We would miss the wedding itself but we would have the pleasure of hosting them in England where we could introduce them to Millie's family and take them to some of the favourite places of her youth. In the event it worked out very well. We received a very nice letter from Lesley's mother Val, introducing herself and Maurice. She said, 'Lesley and Ron were down for a few days just before they announced their engagement ... We both enjoyed having them and seeing them so obviously happy brought joy to this Mum's heart. Somehow it all seems so right and I hope you are equally happy. Dear Lesley, she is quite overcome that friends from Dunedin and Christchurch hope to be there.'

In mid-July we left for Glasgow to have some time with Renee Mackenzie. Prior to leaving New Zealand I had written to my cousin Ian Elder who I knew had seen the grave of my Great-Grandfather David Elder, Inspector of Fisheries, when he had spent some time in Scotland gaining experience in electrical engineering. He had replied with information about the grave, enclosing a photocopy of a picture he had taken of it. On our first day with Renee we set out for Stirling. Ian had omitted to name the cemetery in which it was located. We first called at the Information Centre where the girl thought that the picture and the dates I mentioned suggested the old churchyard of the Church of the Holy Rude up on the hill below Stirling Castle. We followed her directions to the cemetery and when I showed the photo to one of the staff he took us straight to the grave. It was a memorial stone laid flat at ground level with the following inscription:

DAVID ELDER,
OFFICER OF FISHERIES

4 A mulligan is a free second stroke after a duffed shot

RETIRED TO STIRLING IN 1861
HERE ENDED HIS EARTHLY WORKS
AND BEARING TESTIMONY
TO THE PRECIOUSNESS OF
HIS SAVIOUR'S BLOOD SHED FOR HIM
HE ENTERED INTO THE FULNESS OF JOY
ON THE 11TH JULY 1862
AGED 68.

JESSIE ROBERTSON
THE COMPANION AND HELPER OF
HIS EARTHLY LIFE GENTLY FELL ASLEEP
ON THE MORNING OF 3 JUNE 1863
AGED 60.

ALSO
JANE KERR ELDER
FOLLOWED HER FATHER
ON THE 30TH OCTOBER 1862
AGED 28

GOD SHALL WIPE AWAY ALL TEARS FROM THEIR EYES.
THE LORD IS GOOD - A STRONGHOLD IN THE DAY
OF TROUBLE, AND HE KNOWETH THEM THAT ARE HIS
THY LOVINGKINDNESS IS BETTER THAN LIFE
A GOOD MAN LEAVETH AN INHERITANCE FOR HIS CHILDREN'S CHILDREN.

It was quite moving to think of this forbear who had died full of faith 127 years before - I felt as if I had somehow shared in his inheritance. His children's children were my father's generation but the great-grandchildren also benefited from his legacy.

The Church of the Holy Rude has a long history. It was the venue for the crowning of Scottish kings, including James I. Stirling Castle is placed on the crest of the prominent hill and stands high above the valley floor, looking down on the district of Raploch where my Great-Great-Grandfather had been staying when he died. We had gone through the castle in 1982, little knowing that his grave was so close by. Wilfred and I visited the castle during the war and again did not know how near we were to family history.

The next day Renee went with us further north from Stirling for a couple of nights to see two plays in the Prince of Wales Theatre in the relatively small country town of Pitlochry. The plays run weekly during the summer season with a separate play each week-night and a musical performance on the Sunday. We drove past Loch Lomond and got caught up in a big tailback of traffic heading for The Highland Games in Luss. North of the Loch we turned eastwards onto a road leading through a valley of the southern highlands. Part-way along the glen at Killin there is a remarkable rock formation in the river which creates some very attractive rapids. We booked in to our Guest House in Pitlochry and went to that evening's performance. The theatre was delightful and we enjoyed a production of Lady Windermere's Fan. The next day we went up through the Killicrankie Pass to visit Castle Blair. There

were more than 200 guns lining the entrance hall, dozens of deer antlers including several cast by the senior Stag 'Tilt' and many lovely rooms with gorgeous antique furniture. Each day at 3 pm a piper plays in the forecourt. On our way back to our guest house we crossed the river from Blair and viewed Loch Tummel with the Tummel Bridge and The Queen's View. The latter is a spectacular lookout point at the foot of the loch which had greatly impressed Queen Victoria over 100 years before when she had spent three weeks at Castle Blair. At dinner time our host told the story of some very old golf clubs discovered in the attics at Castle Blair fairly recently. One club was presented to St Andrews Golf Course and the rest were auctioned in London - the proceeds came to about thirty thousand pounds. That night's play was 'The Witness for the Prosecution.' On our way back to Glasgow the following day, we detoured through Edinburgh and explored around The Royal Mile which is the street from the castle to the royal residence in Scotland, Holyrood House. The castle was not open to tourists as they were preparing for the Edinburgh Tattoo.

We left Renee's place on a Saturday, crossing the Erskine Bridge high above the masts of ships entering the Clyde and travelling down the east coast to Troon. We had plans to spend some time at The British Open golf tournament. We picked out the grandstand overlooking the first green and watched a good many of the later starters play through before moving to the stand overlooking the seventeenth green where we later watched many of the same players nearing the end of their rounds. These vantage points worked out very well in the light of Millie's arthritis. We started to leave about 5 pm to get a taxi from the entrance to the car park - in the end we had to walk a distance of about a mile which Millie managed with some discomfort. She had been reluctant for me to go and collect the car as traffic movements were very tightly controlled and I might not be able to come back to pick her up. We were booked to stay at a rather nice hotel at Newton Stewart which was a short drive away across some very attractive semi-moorland country. The hotel belonged to an earlier era but was very comfortable. Our menu orders were taken in the lounge and we were called when the first course was ready. The next day we carried on towards Dumfries, detouring by secondary roads through a variety of attractive country ranging from moorland to wooded valleys and forests. We arrived back in Blackpool in time to watch an exciting finish to the Open with a three-way sudden-death play-off before going to evening church. The next day we visited Ron and Vera Haigh who took us to see an old working cotton mill which re-enacted many aspects of cotton spinning. We returned through Ramsbottom and passed by Uncle David and Auntie Nellie's old home.

The evening of our return we got the sad news of Arthur Brammer's death. He was just over 97 years old. His niece Margaret Culpin had been very assiduous in caring for him from her home in Poulton some fifteen miles away, bringing meals, checking laundry, putting out rubbish and coping with other household tasks. Towards the end he was in a small retirement home for some weeks of extra care. Arthur had been a foundation member of the Station Road church, had been Secretary for very many years and was also the organist and choirmaster. He lived two doors away from the Haighs in Waterloo Road and had been a close friend of the family. He had a very quirkish sense of humour. He had been a keen cricketer in his younger years and was a keen follower of the game. He greatly enjoyed one afternoon on one of our earlier visits when we took him to a County match at Stanley Park

cricket ground. The funeral was held the next day. We met the closer family at Eric and Margaret Culpin's place and went from there to the crematorium. Each funeral is allocated half an hour and the mourners in one funeral leave by a side door as the next party is coming in at the front. The family chatted outside with the other friends who had come to the service before moving off to the Cliffs Hotel on the North Promenade for the Funeral Tea. Eric and Margaret hosted this very nicely as Arthur and his wife Kitty had not had children of their own. Millie and I recorded tape messages that night to be sent to New Zealand for reading at Ron and Lesley's wedding - it was one way of taking part from a distance.

The following day we left for two nights in Yorkshire at Hilton Garforth Hotel to take advantage of a special offer Winnie had received. We were allocated rooms at the far end of the bedroom wing with a long corridor leading to twenty steps down and fifteen steps up to get to the dining room. This was not good for arthritic knees and after the first meal we used the car to get from bedroom to dining. We explored around York and were particularly taken by the Yorvik Viking Museum. While excavating for a new building the contractors came upon buried artifacts dating back to the Viking invasions of 867. Work was halted while excavations took place and then the building was constructed over the top of a Museum designed to show off the archaeological discoveries. We rode in auto electric buggies known as Time Cars from which we could view various aspects of life in Viking times as disclosed by the finds that had been made. It was intensely interesting, and included sound effects like dogs barking and aromas (some quite unpleasant) which might have been experienced at that time. They had uncovered five tons of pottery and thirty thousand fragments of household articles. We visited York Minster again and this time we saw the renewal of the south transept which had been destroyed by fire in 1984. Once again we felt in awe of this lovely building.

Over the next few days back at Blackpool we took Margaret Wallwork, teacher friend of Millie's, out for a drive and meal, were taken by Eric and Margaret to Lytham, and visited Carmen Miller at Fleetwood.

The next event we had planned was a holiday trip to Richmond in North Yorkshire, taking Jessie for a week and then exchanging her for Winnie and Marjorie in our second week. Alas, this cunning plan did not quite work out. About Thursday of the first week we got a message that Marjorie had been called in for her knee replacement on the following Monday and Winnie was not prepared to come while she was in hospital. We did return on the Saturday as planned and stayed on to ferry Marjorie to hospital on the Monday morning and to carry her sisters back and forth for visiting. We waited till the Wednesday to hear that the op had been successful, called in to see her before leaving to go back to Richmond for the rest of our stay⁵. Quiet roads and the quickest route had us there in two hours. The cottage we had rented was about 500 years old in one of the narrow streets leading down to the bridge over the River Swale. We could only stop briefly at the door to

⁵ It will be interesting to record that I lodged a claim for four days lost time at our hired cottage under our travel insurance policy, and this was paid without question.

unload the luggage and then had to park 500 yards down the street and round the corner. It was comfortably furnished, with a free-standing iron bath in the bathroom. This was so awkward that I had to help Millie to get out after her bath.

During the week with Jessie we visited the ruins of three abbeys - Jervaulx, Byland and Rievaulx. This trip took us through Herriott country which was made famous in the books on veterinary life in the Dales by James Herriott. We travelled many picturesque routes. Yorkshire has many walking trails but our ages and physical abilities prevented us from using any of them. During the second week we thought we would enjoy some golf. Richmond Golf Club had only one set of hire clubs and referred us to Catterick - we did not realise the course was in the Army Garrison area and we passed it by. At the Thirsk and Northallerton Club the Pro was away and the golf shop was closed. At Kirkbymoorside the green fees were only nine pounds but they only had one half-set of hire clubs. At least we had been able to admire some of the countryside, including Sutton Bank which rises from the plain to 981 feet above seal level and commands a wonderful view of the central Yorkshire valley. It is said that in the days of steam one could follow the progress of a train for fifty miles from York to Darlington. Another day we followed the route of the steam train featured in the TV show Heartbeat through the North York Moors by the North Sea coast. We visited Robin Hood's Bay on the coast which has quite a story. The original village is tucked into the sides of a very narrow gulch leading down to the beach. The large bay is lined by cliffs at least a hundred feet high and the gulch is the only access. Motor traffic was not permitted, the car park at the top was full, and the alternate park was quite some distance away. We put Millie's arthritis problem to the car park attendant. He said, 'I'll let you through the barrier. You just take her down and drive back up and I will arrange a park for you.' He was true to his word. When I went to pay the parking fee he said he would see to that for me - I gave him the 75p and often wondered if it ever got to the meter! We spent some time in the bay. What a pretty little place it was - the cottages perched on the sides of the gully were very well kept and attractive but living in them would have had its problems. When we were done I climbed back up for the car, drove down to collect Millie and brought her back up. The road was thronged with people walking, some Dads pushing push chairs with toddlers, and my progress had to be slow and careful. I was looked at askance by other parties labouring up the steep hill obviously wondering how I had got to be so lucky - they didn't know that I had done the walk as well !.

We duly returned to Blackpool to find Marjorie progressing well. It was a lovely holiday and we had found the area very attractive. Late that night our thoughts were in Ponsonby Baptist Church where Lesley and Ron were being married. Next morning we had an exciting half hour or so when a phone call came from Susan and Dawn with a very graphic and excited account of the wedding. This would have been late on Sunday night in Auckland and was an immediate report to us of the events. They said that Lesley had looked lovely in her wedding gown. We realised how thoroughly they had planned things to include their friends at Ponsonby by having the wedding during the normal Sunday service. We had phoned Ron late on the Saturday night to learn that Susan, Roger and Dawn were coming to have breakfast with him. Their day was much in our minds around midnight when the service would have been taking place.

That Sunday I felt like a taxi driver - first to church after the phone call, then to Jessie's for lunch, take Winnie and Jessie to hospital to see Marjorie and pick them up again afterwards, then take Millie to the hospital after tea, drive Jessie to church and came back to help Winnie wash up the tea dishes, visit Marjorie myself and bring Millie home. My diary says it all, 'What a day!' I mention this as an example of the service we were continually giving while we were in Blackpool. In between these events I would fit in a round of golf occasionally and was cutting lawns, replacing a clothes line post, cleaning out a heap of rubbish from the garden shed, re-roofing the leaking shed with malthoid, pruning the apple trees and sundry other odd jobs.

We spent a day in Windermere booking a cottage for us to spend a week there with Ron and Lesley when they arrived in England. We found an agency and finally selected Tarn Rigg in Windermere where we could get a ground floor room for Millie and me. We had two nights at Storrs Gate House near Newby Bridge before we had to hasten back to Blackpool as I had promised to take Winnie to Victoria Hospital for an intensive check up. One day we had planned a day out, but it was wet and we talked of calling it off. Winnie said, 'Then I would miss my day out,' in a rather aggrieved tone - so it was on again. We finally left rather late but got to The Ship Inn at Arnside about 1 pm and enjoyed a very good meal. We shopped in Arnside⁶ for a while, found an art and craft gallery, and drove home through the well wooded country.

The next day Marjorie came from hospital. Millie and I had cleared her bedroom which she had made available to us so she could have it back. It was also exciting as a letter came from Dawn with a lot of details about the wedding and a set of pictures.

We were having a few days with Margaret and Geoff. On our first full day Margaret took us to Albert Dock in Liverpool which had been refurbished as a museum to the great exodus of folk in the mid eighteen hundreds to Canada, Australia and New Zealand. They had created a mock-up of the emigration ships showing the very restricted accommodation available for the families, complete with 'noises off' of timbers creaking, ropes straining, sails flapping and people's voices. Between decks it was almost impossible to stand upright. Some of the journeys took up to six months though others were much shorter. We also visited the Catholic and Anglican Cathedrals, both modern and both very impressive although in very different ways. We had a couple of nights at Isel where a digger was excavating a trench in which to re-lay a drain and the Electric Board was installing a new transformer to provide three-phase power for Jean and John's house. I cut the lawns for John and spent the afternoon renovating a flower bed for Jean - removing a lot of couch!

A couple of days later we met Ron and Lesley at Preston Station and took them straight to Windermere for our week there. We dined at the Damson Dene Hotel, and then let jet-lag dictate an early night. The next day was spent exploring the Lake District - Far Sawrey, Hawkshead, Tarn Hows and Ambleside. On Sunday we attended St Johns Anglican

⁶ Mention of Arnside reminds me of an incident on another occasion we were there. Millie was going into an exclusive dress shop to have a look around. Winnie caught her attention just inside the entrance and said in rather more than a stage whisper, 'This is an expensive shop.' Millie said that she knew that but she just wanted to have a look. We were pretty sure Winnie could be heard inside and so felt very embarrassed.

Church where there was a family service with a baptism. The young Vicar, recently arrived from Hong Kong, led an interesting and lively service which included a play-reading with participation from the congregation. Eric and Margaret came for the afternoon which we spent at Gunners How, the energetic folk climbing the hill while Millie and Margaret chatted at the car park. We dined again at Damson Dene Hotel before Eric and Margaret left for home. The following day we took the newly-weds to meet their aunts in Blackpool and enjoyed a very sumptuous high tea.

Wednesday was an important day. We hosted a combined Wedding Party and Farewell Party for all the family at Gibbon Bridge Hotel where Jessie had taken us for her birthday some weeks earlier. Ron and Lesley had brought over their wedding outfits and they wore them to the luncheon. Gibbon Bridge was an ideal venue on a pleasantly warm sunny day. The hotel has very attractive grounds which made a wonderful background for family pictures. For the record the guests were Ron and Lesley, Ron and Vera Haigh, Dyllys and John Allen, Jean and John Springett, Geoff and Margaret Bonney, Eric and Margaret Culpin Jessie, Winnie and Marjorie Haigh and Millie and Ivan Elder. This was a very complete gathering of the inner English family circle. We returned to Windermere in the evening.

From Windermere we took Ron and Lesley to Matlock for a two-night visit to the Derbyshire area and then went back to Kingsway for our last few days. There was a farewell high tea hosted by Marjorie and Winnie at Waterloo Road. The next day we had a lovely lunch at Margaret's and then explored the Goosnargh district. We viewed the grave of Millie's Great-Grandfather William Fowler before returning to Kingsway for another 'beautiful party table.' Jean drove home and rang to report her safe arrival but saying she had experienced high winds with broken branches on the road. Two days later we loaded up our rental car with four people and all of our luggage and set out for London. We had a couple of nights at a place called Jordans in Buckinghamshire and called on Judy and Brian Bayley before going to Heathrow for our evening flight. We handed Ron and Lesley and their baggage over to Lesley's brother Chris and his partner Lucy and checked in for our flight. We had a couple of nights or so with Dawn in Perth before coming on to New Zealand and home.

We regarded this as one of our major visits to the UK. It was well filled with many experiences. We did not quite envisage a wedding breakfast but that was a very wonderful opportunity for us to introduce the newly-wed couple to all the English family⁷. Some of those experiences live on remarkably in memory today many years later. Because of the major nature of the visit in our eyes, I have commented fairly fully. I think I would not have done the experience justice otherwise.

⁷ Sadly the family circle has now been broken several times. As I write this Ron Haigh, Millie, Jessie, Marjorie and Jean have also passed on. It was fortuitous that Ron and Lesley were still in England when Winnie died only four months later and were able to share that time with the family. It is a remarkable how the New Zealand family members have been able to share to a great degree in the passing of Millie's sisters. Ron was there at the time of Winnie's death, Susan made a quick visit to the family just before Marjorie died and I was in England myself at the time of Jessie's death.

Overseas Again 1992

We seemed to have got itchy feet again in the autumn of 1992 and this led to another fairly long trip home to Millie's family.

We departed from Queenstown at the end of May. Susan had come up to Kelvin Heights to see us safely off and took us to the airport. On arrival in Auckland, we caught the Airport Shuttle to Ron and Lesley's home in Ponsonby. It was Ron's birthday and we celebrated with them at the Bronze Goat restaurant in Ponsonby Road. Ron and Lesley looked after us for a couple of days over the weekend - we went to church with them at Ponsonby Baptist followed by a visit to Parnell for lunch. Monday was Millie's birthday and Ron and Lesley made sure we marked the occasion.

A couple of nights' stopover in Singapore allowed us to do some shopping. Millie took the opportunity to update her watch to a new Seiko with which she was very pleased. I took the opportunity to order a pair of trousers and bought a shirt. In the afternoon we went to Raffles for afternoon tea but found that they now serve a High Tea from 4 pm. We filled in the time looking round the completely remodelled hotel and its enlarged shopping precinct. The hotel is now very highly rated and shopping is very expensive, obviously catering for a different class from us. High Tea was beautifully presented - spotless white table linen, silver tea service and cutlery and a smorgasbord. One of the most popular desserts was Bread and Butter Pudding - we noticed that the serving dishes were constantly being refilled. Millie enjoyed being a lady for an afternoon.

We flew out to London that evening to arrive early the next morning. We picked up our rental car from Avis and drove out to The Greyhound Inn in Chalfont St Peter where we were able to rest up for a while. After lunch we visited Judy and Brian Bayley nearby then were collected by Graeme Botting for an evening with him and Shirley in their school flat at

Gerrards Cross. This area is very popular with the financial whizz-kids from London and the private school was very highly regarded.

The next morning we headed north around the outskirts of London into Yorkshire and then turned west across the Pennines to Clitheroe. Familiar lanes and villages took us to Windsmoor House. Margaret had Jessie and Marjorie waiting to greet us and I leave that reunion scene to the imagination. The next day we took Marjorie and Jessie for an expedition to Lancaster for lunch and had a browse in a fairly high class antique shop. We arrived home to find that Margaret had prepared a party for Geoff's birthday. Jean and John and Eric and Margaret had come to share in the celebration and to welcome us. The birthday cake was a large Vanilla Square - Millie was invited to share in the cake-cutting in honour of her own recent birthday

We had planned to be in England in time for the annual reunion of the Ormskirk College where Millie had trained as a teacher. Millie had been a little lukewarm about this but I had pressed her to participate. Renee had come down from Glasgow and we picked her up from her sister's home in Longton on our way to the college north of Liverpool. She was surprised to find that the college is now a University. She was also surprised to find that there were other students from her year attending the reunion - she had doubted that this would be the case. The day featured a guest speaker as well as a speech from the Principal and in recognition of the distance she had travelled Millie was asked to move the vote of thanks. She was a bit overwhelmed about this but did the job in her usual thorough and capable way. There was time to look around the college as well as to exchange news with fellow alumni. We dropped Renee back to her sister's but declined an invitation to have a meal - we felt we had done enough in the last three or four days. I wrote in my diary, 'It was, I think, a very rewarding day for Millie and she thoroughly enjoyed it.'

The next day we took Jessie and Marjorie back to their homes. They both lived in Abbeyfield Houses where they had en-suite rooms with their own familiar furniture. They had tea-making facilities in their rooms but lunch and dinner were provided by the Manageress. Jessie was still in a small rather cramped room which felt crowded with all of her furniture but we also saw the room she would soon be moving into - it overlooked the street and faced the sun. The residents pay a rental for their room and meals, can have their own cleaner and are expected to leave a legacy of about two thousand pounds on termination of their occupancy. Jessie had met this legacy condition in advance by paying for the installation of an en-suite. Marjorie's Abbeyfield was in the very next street. They were close to each other and very conveniently placed near the Highfield Road suburban shopping area.

On 11th June we met up with Eric and Margaret for a trip with them into Germany. Eric made good time to Dover where we had a snack at the Tesco supermarket. Eric got just enough petrol to get us into France where it is cheaper. We missed the 3 pm sailing but we caught the next boat and still got to L'Esclalle by 6.30 pm. We spent a day in Calais exploring the Hotel de Ville (town hall), the Castle and the Cathedral. Then we set out for Germany. On the way we stopped in Reims to see the Cathedral which is noted for

its exquisite exterior and its stained glass windows. I was very taken with the large rose windows on three sides. The sextet of windows in the east behind the altar pictured many individuals and events in the Old and New Testaments. We stopped overnight at Beaumont-sur-Vesle in the Champagne region. In the evening Eric drove us through field after field of Champagne grapes on the slopes of a low conical shaped hill in which there are many caves and cellars where the wine is held to mature.

The next day we passed through many places with well-known names from WWI - Vimy, The Somme, Amiens. Eric took us to an American military cemetery. There were 14,000 graves, each with a white cross inscribed with the name of a soldier - there was also a list of soldiers who were missing or not identified. The crosses were in precise neat lines, and the cemetery was beautifully kept, displaying a great care for the memory of those who had given their lives for peace and freedom. It was very noticeable how many of the soldiers were aged between eighteen and twenty three.

We passed through a corner of Luxembourg where Eric filled up on petrol because it was cheaper there. At a place called Remich we crossed the Moselle into Germany and turned aside to see a very interesting roman villa with a magnificent mosaic. The Mosel River - Moselle in French - flows from France into Germany through a deep valley with quite steep sides. As we travelled along the valley slopes became covered with vineyards, in some places so steep that motorised ropeways had been installed to assist the workers picking the grapes and lowering them to the roadway. We travelled by autobahn which crossed similar steep-sided valleys of the Mosel's tributaries by huge viaducts that swept across the countryside in smooth curves. Eventually we dropped down beside the river to the town of Briedel. Hilda Schneider was well known to Eric and Margaret and they had booked two rooms with her for a week. It had been a long day and after a rest we went into Zell to a very friendly family hotel for dinner. We had chicken breast and pork and a magnificent chocolate sauce ice cream for dessert.

In the morning we first called in to Puderich, a pretty village with narrow streets, attractive courtyards and typical German timbered houses. Next we stopped at Straben-Strarbach which is two villages joined by a high bridge over the river with prominent gate towers at each end. We sat there by the river for nearly two hours listening to a youth band and watching the river cruisers and the long narrow barges constantly passing. The temperature that day was 24 degrees.

We visited Cochem with its old restored castle on a commanding knob of a hill. Millie bought a pair of Sioux shoes marked down a third in price. We saw some New Zealand Red Delicious apples for sale - unfortunately we found them a bit soft. That night we looked at three restaurants for dinner - two were closed and one had a noisy party - before we found a nice one with an English menu and an English-speaking waitress. Eric speaks German fluently so we did not have any language difficulty but it was nice to carry out our own conversation. In the morning Eric drove us up the steeply winding side valley from Zell and across the plateau to the town of Boppard on the Rhine river. I suppose I had heard of the Rhine in geography at school and of course it was mentioned a great deal in the news

towards the end of the war. I suppose we imagine a river according to our knowledge of actual rivers we have seen - in my case like the fast-flowing Clutha or the lengthy Waikato. These did not prepare me for a river such as the Rhine. It has a huge catchment area extending across two or three countries. It is very swift. It is very wide. And there are not many bridges. I could very easily appreciate the obstacle it presented to the Allies as they pressed into Germany in 1945.

Because of its size and volume it is a very useful waterway for the transport of people and goods. There are numerous passenger cruises up the Rhine from Cologne. Trains run frequently along lines running up each side of the river and there are main roads as well. Millie and I had travelled up the east bank of the Rhine on our Europe trip in 1970, stopping for lunch at a place named Asmanhausen. I recall being impressed then by the number of cruise ships and barges on the river. On this visit we boarded one of the local river ferries at Boppard for a trip up-river to Bad¹ Zelsen where we had lunch before returning. As we motored upstream we stopped briefly opposite the Lorelei which is said to be the place where the lady on the rock combing her long hair distracted the sailors so that they lost control in the swift current. The Lorelai is in fact a huge buttress of rock jutting out into the river on one side - it creates a very swift turbulent current in the river. Along this part of the Rhine there are many castles on prominent viewpoints along the bank. On our way back the ferry was due to call at a small town but had no passengers to board or unload - the Captain did a 360-degree turn and Eric translated his comment over the loud speaker, "That was a little round trip!" The Mosel river is a tributary which contributes a very substantial flow of water to the Rhine which it enters at Koblenz. There is much barge and cruise traffic on the Mosel as well. That was a very interesting day.

We paid a visit to Trier the next day. This is one of the larger centres in the area with a population of over 100,000. The cobbled market square was overlooked by the Cathedral and the Porta Nigra gate from Roman times. The Porta Nigra was quite impressive, several storeys high with a very dark frontage from which we presumed it got its name. The Cathedral was large and bold, with organ pipes decorated in some kind of Mother-of-Pearl and a very striking ceiling at the west end. The following day was also interesting, being a public holiday in recognition of a church festival in nearby Zell. A number of temporary altars had been erected at various points around the town. The Host was carried through the streets with pauses for a very brief service at each before the procession moved on. Some priests took the lead, followed by a band and by the city fathers with a long procession following behind. In front of the priests were a number of boys in smart black suits and girls in white dresses who were taking their first communion. The town of Zell is divided by the Mosel but linked by a high footbridge over which the procession marched to the church on the far side. I had gathered over the years that the people in this region of Germany had what I had known as Teutonic features and I was struck with this characteristic which was very noticeable among the city fathers.

We passed through Bad Bertrich, a popular resort with hotels, shops and hot mineral springs. Further on up on the plateau we came upon some "crater lakes". One had a

1 Bad is German for spa or resort.

circumference of about two and a half miles with sides rising 200-300 feet all round. It had no visible inlet source of water or outlet, yet seemed completely fresh - it is still a mystery to me. We enjoyed 'Flea Market' day in Trarben-Trarbach one morning and bought little things like a Pinnochio and a car-shaped pencil sharpener and a toy violin.

Burg Eltz was a turreted castle in the hills. The car park was a two-kilometre walk from the castle. Eric and Margaret elected to walk but recommended Millie to ride on the free bus. I accompanied her and Eric warned us to push our way forward when the bus came - there would be no orderly queue as in Britain. They were right and we pushed our way on to the first bus to come. The castle was set on a little knob in the centre of a wide basin which was all very well wooded and presented a lovely vista. The castle had turrets in real fairy-tale fashion and was very attractive. Part of it was open to view but we did not go in as it involved steps which Millie would have found difficult. On our way home we passed through Cochem again and were in the little square at 4 pm when the Glockenspiel rang on a set of bells at the top of a four-storey building. The sound was very musical and pretty.

Each day of our time on the Mosel had been filled with sight-seeing, picnicking, shopping or exploring and we'd had a most interesting time. Hilda Schneider had looked after us very well as B&B guests in her Gasthaus. She gave us her bill for DM378 but we gave her DM450 with our profuse thanks. I described the breakfast she served on Sunday in my diary: 'lovely smoked ham, thinly-sliced cheese, boiled egg, various breads and a thermos of delicious coffee.' This was the longest day - midsummer's day. We drove by autobahn via Trier to Luxembourg where Eric filled up with petrol as it is the cheapest in Europe. We pressed on into France and had lunch on the banks of the Meuse. We chose a logis in Rethel with fewer stairs that served an evening meal as well as breakfast. During an evening stroll in the twilight, Millie and I came across their war memorial. For the First World War there were about five columns of names - for WW2 there was not even one full column of names. It struck me very forcibly that France was only in the war for ten months after which she was under German occupation. This meant that France suffered very few military casualties relative to those nations which fought for six years. At the same time I recalled that the Underground had operated secretly to rescue many allied airmen, had carried out many acts of sabotage and suffered much persecution and many executions. Many Frenchmen escaped to England where they joined the Free French under General Charles de Gaulle and eventually played their part in the 1944 invasion. Many others were conscripted to work in German factories.

We headed through France towards Calais which we reached in good time on the second day. Alas the Continent Supermarket on the north side of Calais was closed for stocktaking so we carried on to L'Esclache. It was open the next morning and Millie bought the last in a line of French pants and a very nice black blouse with white spots. On the ship we caught up with our first English paper for fourteen days and enjoyed coffee with some vanilla squares Margaret had bought in the supermarket. Off the ferry in Dover Eric filled up with petrol because it was cheaper than in France. After lunch in the Tesco supermarket we found our way to the new motorway to London that had been built to serve the new Channel tunnel. We took a detour at Birmingham to visit Eric's sister Julie and her husband

Sam in Streetly. Julie was affected by a stroke and I recorded in my diary that 'Sam, tall, immaculate, caring for Julie who is virtually chair ridden but very neat and looking cared for, had made a lovely tea'. We reached Caldervale late in the evening and Eric and Margaret left us to drive on to Poulton.

We had found Eric and Margaret very good company. Eric was a very good driver and we always felt comfortable. His Vauxhall Astra rode very well indeed and Eric was capable of pushing on at speed in suitable places. They were very experienced in continental travel and were accomplished at selecting suitable overnight Logis taking consideration of Millie's arthritis. Eric was the close pal of Millie's from their childhood. I had made a hit with Margaret's mother when in Blackpool during the war and knew her background and family. We explored areas of Europe with them that we had never expected to see. I am extremely grateful to them for these trips.

We paid a visit to Carmen Miller in Fleetwood - I left the girls chatting while I walked to the prom and had an uninterrupted round of chip and putt. Our wedding anniversary was a lovely day. We had dinner with Margaret and Geoff, Nicola and Lisa and then went to have tea with Jessie in her new room. We were held up by the gala procession from Little Ecclestone across the road to Great Ecclestone - it was a very colourful sight with the Rose Queens and their attendants, We had a lovely visit with Jessie who coped very well with her limited kitchen corner. We called in for half an hour with Marjorie on our way home.

Our next trip took us into East Yorkshire. We paused on the outskirts of Clitheroe to attend the Anglican church service at Lowmoor. It was a family service with a full parade of youth organisations and the crowning of the new Rose Queen. Afterwards the congregation paraded round the block in a march of witness but we carried on across the Pennines to the Bramwood Guest House in Pickering. We spent the next four days rambling round the Yorkshire moors, driving through the coastal resort towns, following the route of the vintage steam train, exploring narrow country roads down through deep dells, catching the odd museum like the excellent one at Pickering, seeing the Hole of Horcum which is very steep on three sides with a stream outlet on the fourth, driving down the east coast past Filey and Scarborough and then back to Pickering. On the final day we visited Castle Howard which had been made famous by its use as a location for a film. We found it very impressive with many beautiful paintings, thousands of books (some of them very old), a magnificent long picture gallery and a very nice chapel with William Morris stained glass and a colourful Bas-relief of the Madonna and Child. We returned to our guest house through some remote and beautiful parts of mid-west Yorkshire with a meal in Richmond on the way.

Jessie's 80th birthday was to be celebrated in the Lake District. We had booked into Cottage in the Woods at Whinlatter Pass. We had been given a tip that John and Dylis Allen might be staying there as they were coming from Nottinghamshire for the birthday. The tip was correct and we enjoyed dinner and the evening in their company. We filled in the next morning visiting some of our favourite spots and having teacakes and chocolate at Watendlath with chaffinches waiting for the crumbs. The party gathered at the Friars' Crag

boat harbour. Jean and Margaret's plan was a boat trip on Derwentwater followed by an outdoor feast at Isel Cottage. Jessie arrived in a sailor outfit with a Captain's cap and caused quite a stir. While we were waiting she posed behind the tiller but got a very sudden start when the skipper started the engine - she was out of that seat like a shot!. It was a real 'family do' with a very good turnout. From our point of view it was a wonderful chance to catch up with all of the branches of the family. We brought Jessie and Marjorie home afterwards to their respective Abbeyfields. It took me three trips from the car to Jessie's room to carry the cake and all of the presents and flowers! We reached Caldervale very late for a cup of chocolate and milk and bed.

The 7th of July was a special day as the mail brought a letter from Susan saying she was clear of the Post Viral Fatigue Syndrome - that was good news indeed. We set out later in the day for a week with Marjorie in the Cotswolds, staying at a B&B in Toddington. The highlight of the trip was a day with Dot and Frank, first at the church in Broadway and then at Batsford Arboretum. Our base there was the garden shop and restaurant but we enjoyed a long walk into the Arboretum which had been established by the parents of the 'Mitton girls'. The five sisters were very prominent in the upper-crust of English society in the period just before the Second World War. One married the British Fascist leader Oswald Moseley. Another was living in Germany and was acquainted with Adolf Hitler. The youngest became the Duchess of Devonshire and lived at Chatsworth in Derbyshire. Each day for the rest of our stay was spent exploring the lovely Cotswold region. At the end of the week we dropped Marjorie off at Windsmoor and carried straight on to Isel for a couple of days before heading up to watch a day of the British Open Golf Championship at Muirfield near Edinburgh. We over-nighted at Wooden which was a farm B&B on the outskirts of the borders town of Kelso. This proved very interesting. Elizabeth Bentham welcomed us and showed us to our room and then invited us to the lounge for a cup of tea. Well ! The lounge stretched right across the south end of the beautiful two-storeyed Georgian house which had extensive Virginia Creeper on the exterior walls. The lounge was a magnificent room, furnished with very fine period furniture. The hostess carried in a tray containing a silver tea service and fine china tea set. Before long her husband John came in and soon got on to his pet topic. They had discovered a hoard of coins dating from before 1642 while drainploughing. The plug of the plough had smashed a china crock and dragged a couple of the coins to the surface. They dug down and eventually found 1352 silver coins and 9 gold pieces. It was presumed that the owner of the property had gone to fight in the Civil War and had not returned - he must not have told anyone where he had hidden his wealth. We went next morning to see the coins on display in Floors Castle, the home of the Duke of Roxburghe².

We had early breakfast next morning as it was the day for 'Riding the Boundaries' and the troupe was to pass through a corner of the farm. We joined the onlookers and watched in amazement as about 250 riders passed through, from children on ponies to horsemen and women on enormous Hunters. The event is apparently an annual one and dates from centuries back. We discovered that Elizabeth had been a very successful show jumper and had also been co-driver on rallies with Pat Moss, the sister of the famous racing

2 No - the 'e' at the end is not a spelling mistake.

driver Stirling Moss. She was unable to ride that day because of a serious operation three weeks before. John was riding in her place - the first time he had ridden for twenty years. Elizabeth had a room full of trophies displayed in large glass showcases. It was an intriguing stopover.

We spent our day at the British Open sitting in the stand overlooking the 18th green and saw all the golfers finishing their rounds. We then drove on to Bearsden for the night and our trip to Skye with Renee Mackenzie. As we were heading up the shores of Loch Lomond the sky darkened so we stopped earlier than intended for morning coffee. We soon ran into rain. Passing showers and clearing clouds gave Rannoch Moor a freshly washed and awakening look. The Moor is very lonely and wild and we always enjoyed driving across it. I wrote, 'There was the lovely soft green of the moor, contrasting with the rugged steepness of the surrounding hills, mostly covered with vegetation but with some forbidding rugged rocky outcrops and very steep slopes.' We passed through the wild glen of Glencoe and arrived at Loch Duich Hotel, where Renee had booked our first night. The cost of dinner was a shock as was the bill for the night's accommodation. In the morning it was a mere eight miles to the Kyle of Lochalsh where we drove straight on to the ferry and 15 minutes later we were across the narrow channel and driving onto Skye. We based ourselves in the Cuillin Hills Hotel in Portree for a couple of nights while we explored the north-west part of the island, going through places like Sligachan, the ruins of Duntulm Castle, the Needles and the Old Man of Storr which was a massive upstanding slab of rock visible for miles around. We ventured south to the region of Dunvegan, the ancestral home of Clan McLeod. We were interested in this as my predecessor in the mayoralty, Jim McLeod, was the local Clan Chief and had been visited by the World Clan Chief Dame Flora McLeod. We found Dunvegan Castle very interesting. There were the galleries with pictures of all the Clan Chiefs, many mementoes of the past, dungeons with sound effects and a very informative video by the Chief about the Clan history. The whole place was infused with a strong clan presence. We also enjoyed the lovely gardens surrounding the castle. Dunvegan stands in the midst of the typical mixture of bracken, grass and moss that gives the soft muted greens characteristic of the Skye landscape. After another night in Portree we headed again for the ferry and back to Glasgow. We were highly impressed with the efficiency of the drive-on/drive-off ferry and surprised at how quickly the cars from a crowded ferry dispersed once on the road. By a strange coincidence the Highland Games were again in progress as we went through Luss by Loch Lomond but a newly-built bypass saved us a hold up like we'd had in 1986. We arrived at Renee's place in good time for dinner and enjoyed a game of scrabble in the evening.

We took our time saying goodbye to Renee and it was late in the morning before we left for Isel. After a detour into Milngave - pronounced Mullguy - to post letters we crossed the very high Erskine toll bridge and bypassed Glasgow by taking a route through Paisley east of the city. We passed through Kilmarnock, which I described in my diary as 'disappointingly unattractive,' and then on through Strathclyde to Carlyle and down to Isel. The countryside was very attractive, reasonably hilly, sparsely farmed and with extensive afforestation. We enjoyed it. My diary says that at Isel we had a light meal, watched the TV News and then talked until nearly midnight. We had a rest-day catching up with some

chores like the laundry and washing the car - I got to watching some cricket on TV and took a walk round the block of about three and a half miles - I timed myself at fifty-five minutes. Jean brought our photos back from Cockermouth with 15 exposures lost through a fault in the camera. I bought a new Hanimex camera from a pharmacy in Keswick marked down from seventy to fifty pounds.

We were heading back to Margaret and Geoff's at Caldervale and Millie bought her third Dannimac in her favourite Atkinsons shop in Ambleside. It was a wet day, the shop was quiet and she was very disappointed to find there were none in stock until eventually she discovered one in a back corner marked down by 25% - a nice reward for a faithful customer! There was a letter from Susan waiting for us in Blackpool to say that Isabel Weir had terminal cancer - she died before we got home³. We had a day at the British Seniors Open at Royal Lytham. We talked our way into the last space in the reserved car park on the strength of Millie's arthritis. Millie stayed by the 18th green and watched a number of famous golfers finish their rounds. I found Bob Charles, Neil Coles, and Tommy Horton teeing off at the 15th and followed them for their last few holes. Charles bunkered his drive on the 18th and dropped a stroke to finish one over in a tie for second with Neil Coles. After tea with Jessie we went to church at Whitegate Drive and then took the girls to Margaret and Eric's where we had 'a right good evening of fun.' Tom and Mary Bateman were there too. Next day Geoff and I had a round of golf at Longridge on the Fell which Geoff won 3/2 and then crashed playing out the 17th after the match was over.

The following day we were heading east on our way to Dyllys and John's when we encountered a chap near the ancient single-lane Cromwell's Bridge over the Hodder. He returned to the spot hoping to see a kingfisher that he had spotted near there earlier. Strangely enough it did fly rapidly upstream as we were talking - I hope he got a better sighting later on. Dyllys and John's place at Farndon in Nottinghamshire was a new home they had spotted being built while they were looking for a retirement home. John told me later they had chosen to retire in Nottinghamshire for three reasons - the area had the lowest rainfall and best sunshine records, they had a daughter not far away in Sheffield and they would be roughly halfway between their other two daughters in Edinburgh and in Tonbridge in Kent. Their home was lovely and had been greatly enhanced with the addition of a sunroom. It was very hot and we were happy with our north-facing room. John took us to Southwell Minster - pronounced 'South'ell' - which is the cathedral of the Diocese of Nottinghamshire. It has some interesting features - pepper pot caps over the west door and Chapter House, a beautiful series of rings over the arch of the north door, a segment of Roman pavement and lovely Flemish windows over the main altar. After lunch back at their house John took us to Belton House which had been the home of Lord Brownlow. The father of the present earl had been an equerry of King Edward VIII had escorted Mrs Simpson to the south of France at the time of the abdication. It was an imposing place with an impressive marble hall and staircase inside the entrance, many portraits of ancestors, bedrooms that had been used by Edward and later by Prince Charles and remodelled kitchens with an underground passage and a trolley on rails to carry the food to the dining room in the other wing of the mansion. Next morning Dyllys rode with us as we followed John through part of Sherwood Forest

³ I was one of the trustees in her husband's estate and later was able to prevent an error which would have disadvantaged the girls.

and through the Notts coalfields to Anston near Sheffield where we had coffee with their daughter Nicola and her two little girls Alison and Bethany. Their cousin Rosemary was also staying with her - a very nice lass about ten. Her mother Janice is John and Dyls's older daughter who is a lawyer in Edinburgh and married to a Vicar. It was a bright sunny day for our drive home to Caldervale and we had wonderful views over the moors and round Skipton and the Trough of Bowland.

We had a much needed rest day till Margaret came home with Jessie and Marjorie and Geoff came back from work. After tea Margaret went off to work at the Guy Cheshire home for crippled ex-servicemen, Geoff did some painting and I cut the big west lawn. The girls watched some of the Olympic Games in Manchester and we were delighted to hear that Lorraine Moller from New Zealand had come 3rd in the marathon. The next day we set off for Isel with Jessie and Marjorie. We reached the Ship Inn at Arnside for lunch and we all had a good meal except Jessie who reckoned her plaice 'must have been at least 20 years old'. As we came out from lunch the 'Arnside Bore' was running. This occurs when the incoming tide builds up and then rushes through a narrow entrance under the railway bridge into the very expansive estuary. It is customary to ring a warning bell to warn swimmers, picnickers and boaties of the potentially dangerous few minutes. Unfortunately we had missed the spectacular onset of the 'bore' and only got to see the very fast current which succeeds the initial surge. After a nostalgic ramble round the area we headed on through Ambleside and Thirlmere to Isel. John was up for the weekend and the following day we headed east round the north of Skiddaw to Talkin Village. This was very close to where we had rented a cottage on a previous visit. Jean had booked for lunch and had specified a table near a window - they had complied but it was a non-opening window and did not supply the fresh air she needed. All was well till the dessert was served and other diners started lighting up cigarettes with their coffee. The smoke forced Jean to take her sweet to an outside table - I followed a bit later to keep her company.

Jean and John returned to Isel and we four headed north towards Linlithgow, veering off the main road to follow a different valley by the Border Forest to Jedburgh where we had tea in the Penny Farthing Tea Shop. We admired the ruins of Jedburgh Abbey in passing and noted the house of Mary Queen of Scots. Our route led us to the southern outskirts of Edinburgh from where we fast-tracked to Linlithgow. We had booked our B&B accommodation at Belsyde House⁴ a little out of town where Nan Hay was 'very welcoming with her soft Scots brogue.'

Linlithgow is the town where my Gt-Gt-Grandfather had lived. He was a cooper and my cousin George had recently located his home in the main street. Gt-Gt-Grandfather David Elder married a local woman Hannah Jamieson in the parish church on 12th October 1788. It was customary for the Vicar to record the parents of the bride and groom with their place of birth but for a five-year period around this marriage date these details were not entered. We have thus drawn a blank with respect to earlier forebears. The church is just outside the gate of the Palace which overlooks Linlithgow Loch on the other side. The church is over five hundred years old and was built on a very early Christian site. I would

4 My golfing friend, Jim Oliver, came from Linlithgow, and knows Belsyde House.

have liked explore more in this town of my earliest Elder ancestor but did not have enough information at that time to make it worthwhile. My companions were not really interested and we needed to make Pitlochry that afternoon.

We started exploring around this very attractive area - the Pass of Killiecrankie with its own Queen's View, The Soldier's Leap where a trapped soldier had leapt from a bluff on one side of the river to the opposite bank - an impossible leap but maybe fear lent strength to his limbs, Loch Tummel and Loch Rannoch where we picnicked - we could not find Lochaber of the Skye Boat song, then crossing over to Aberfeldy and back to Pitlochry. We went to a play that night called The Dominion of Fancy - rival groups trying to establish a theatre in the same building, one in the cellar! The following morning we went south through Dunkeld where Marjorie and I looked through the ruins of the old cathedral, part of which has been restored as a parish church. Someone mentioned Glamis Castle so we headed there. We joined a guided tour in which much was made of the castle having been the childhood home of the Queen Mother. The tour included the suite which the then Duke and Duchess of York had used when visiting Glamis. The Castle is very attractive from outside with its turreted features and inside gives the feeling of it being a well cared for home. The 17th Earl had died suddenly five years earlier so the present Earl was only in his thirties. Back in Pitlochry, the play that night was A Month of Sundays. It was set in an Old Peoples Home and touched in a very humorous way on the problems, foibles and difficulties of the elderly - of whom I am now one!

Our next day took in a very attractive drive between the Cairngorm and Grampian Mountains with their steep round topped hills covered with great expanses of heather just coming into bloom. Our destination was Braemar, home of the Braemar Gathering and Balmoral. The Castle was not open and was less visible than in earlier times as trees had grown since 1970 leaving only glimpses of the buildings. We did get to see Crathie Church where the Royal Family attend when at Balmoral. The highlight of the day, however, lay in the journey itself and the magnificent Highland vistas. The play that night was an Agatha Christie whodunit which maintained the suspense until the last minute. It was a good holiday and a great opportunity to spend time with Jessie and Marjorie. It was time for home in the morning and our route lay through Perth, where we visited a glass factory, then over the new Forth Road Bridge which is built very high to allow shipping to pass underneath. It is supported by two very high towers and offers an excellent view of the old Forth Rail Bridge. We skirted Edinburgh and had a good run down to Isel. We all spent the night there and next day headed down south to Caldervale where Geoff took Jessie and Marjorie back to Blackpool.

In the morning I confirmed our flight reservations with Continental Airlines and phoned British Rail about trains to Gatwick. I discovered a through train from Preston which took about five and a half hours - this seemed ideal and I made reservations. We then booked a room at The Checkers Thistle at Horley, right by the airport. Geoff and I had a round of golf - I recorded in my diary that my score was 91 and he had 106, down 4 from his previous best. In the evening Geoff and I cleaned up some prunings down beside the drive. We went into Blackpool to get some travellers' checks for the USA and then picked

up Jessie and Marjorie for a day out to Ron and Vera Haigh's at Bolton. In the afternoon Ron took us to The Drop Inn Village which had accommodation, three or four restaurants, shops for antiques and gifts and novelties and suites for all kinds of functions. Vera served her usual very tasty High Tea before our evening run back to Caldervale.

The following day was my birthday and cards and gifts appeared miraculously even before the post arrived - socks and 'Roses', a 25-year commemorative Preston Guild handkerchief, golf ball marker and pitch-repairer, golf ball, salt and pepper, films and a bank draft from NZ! There was also one of those inflatable balloons with 'Happy Birthday' on it. I hosted a birthday tea and farewell party at Horns Cottage near Goosnargh. We were a fairly large party with only one other small family group in the same room. We had a hilarious time. At one stage Jessie apologised for the noise. 'Not to worry,' they said and went on to explain that they had played 'I Spy' over their dinner. One of their children had chosen the letters 'C B' which turned out to mean 'Chatter Boxes'!! We had a final day out with Margaret and Eric to Milnthorpe Market and Kirkby Lonsdale. Millie bought me a white acrylic jersey for my birthday. We carried on later to Ingleton with views of the three major peaks of the north Pennines, Whernside, Ingleborough and Pen-y-gent, all around 700m and noted for their rather similar 'flat top' appearance. All of them were somewhat in the way of icons for Millie. On our way home we had dinner at The Boars Head south of Garstang. It was a great day out with very easy companions on a lovely sunny clear day.

Marjorie entertained us to High Tea in her Abbeyfield room. We also called on Margaret Wallwork whose friend Harry put on tea for us. Margaret was suffering from early amnesia and Harry who lives nearby was keeping her household in order and giving her friendship. Margaret had no family and few relatives still around, so Harry was doing her a real service - we learned that she had died not very long afterwards. The following day we picked up Jenny Moses and Carmen Miller, teacher friends of Millie from before our marriage, and took them to the Chatterbox in Fleetwood for lunch and then for a drive around the byways and lanes of their youth. On our way back to Caldervale Millie and I had dinner at The Punchbowl in Churchtown which is popular with the family. With a little help from Millie Margaret put on a family farewell dinner - Jessie, Marjorie, Eric and Margaret, Margaret and Geoff and Giles, and ourselves. The visitors left about 9 o'clock and we finished the evening in very relaxed fashion with Geoff and Margaret.

Millie seemed to have an intuition that this was to be her last visit to the family in England but she did not want this to become a tense tearful farewell. She asked me to help keep the atmosphere as light as possible. I am sure, though, that others also realised that this could be the position. We organised a final hour in turn with Jessie and Marjorie in their rooms and I know they appreciated that. We got through it all very nicely indeed. I recall them as very important days and as I relive these days I feel they were very well organised to achieve a final renewal of old friendships and relationships within the closer family.

Geoff had carefully planned to make our departure as smooth and calm as possible. I delivered our rental car back to Avis where Geoff and Margaret picked us up and took us out to The Fleece at Penwortham on the outskirts of Preston for lunch. It was a warm and

friendly place. We were in good time at the station but when the train came in our car was about three cars back from where we were standing. Getting to it took valuable time and when we got there about a dozen scouts were boarding at the rear entrance. We dashed along to the rear and got aboard. Geoff had intended to see us well aboard but he had to jump off quickly as the train started to move off - it was a very brief stop indeed. I am sure Geoff was disappointed at not being able to see us more settled and I felt sorry for him.

We were aboard but our troubles were not over yet. The scouts were moving to their seats at the rear with all their stuff. We were both still in the entrance lobby with our bags except for one which Geoff had got through to our seats. I waited till the scouts had got settled and then brought the bags along one by one. The train was full and there was no space left free for stowage so I just piled them beside our seats in the aisle. Millie was then able to come through, only to find that one of our seats was occupied by a young lady. I discovered that the 'Reserved' seat label had slipped out of sight. She accepted the situation and went off to find another seat. We were miles down the line before we were all settled. We were rather cramped until the couple sitting opposite us left at Coventry, about half way to our destination. At The Checkers Thistle we ordered soup and sandwiches from room service and got to bed as soon as possible. We were on the courtesy coach at 8 o'clock, got checked in very early and then had breakfast of bacon and eggs, toast and marmalade. We made our somewhat tortuous way through milling crowds and moving walkways to our departure gate with five minutes to spare before boarding.

So ended Millie's last visit back to her homeland and family. It had been a wonderful time and we had seen a wide range of places that had come to mean much to us both and especially to Millie. We had also had quality time with her sisters and her wider family and special friends. Looking back as I write this I marvel at how successful we were particularly in view of the limitations of Millie's arthritis. We covered a great deal of ground, enjoyed seeing many things of immense interest and the personal encounters have given me much satisfaction in retrospect.

We made landfall over Cape Cod and were on the ground in Philadelphia early in the afternoon. About an hour later we emerged from Immigration to find David and Kate in the arrivals hall with Peggy and Ken soon appearing from the car. Ken was a little shy and settled into the wagon part of the car among the baggage. He later thawed out and came over onto the back seat. We were heading to Ruth's home at Cloverly Corner for Kate's birthday party the next day. We were able to enjoy Ruth's own bed as she was at her time-share in Wyoming at the time. Later the cover came off the pool and the children swam and we had a late dinner by candlelight by the pool. The next day was party time - from noon till dusk. David and Kate went off to the supermarket and brought home drinks, chicken pieces, franks, cheeses, butter, and paper plates and cups. Soon there were 20-odd children swimming, sunning to warm up, swimming to cool off, enjoying drinks and eats from the barbecue and ice cream and of course birthday cake. It was a very pleasant calm and relaxing evening ... when all the guests had gone! David went off to work next morning and Peggy went in to Cambridge Street to see about the installation of a dishwasher. David came home that night with a second-hand Ford Probe two-door with a sporty American

body. Back seat space was cramped but it had a large 'trunk'. The next day Ruth's neighbour Ginny Hayes arranged for me to play golf at the Rydal nine-hole course. I used Ruth's clubs and played with a chap called Ed Moos and two retired men from Florida. I visited the rough too often and it was quite long so I took a few more shots than I liked. I had another nine holes there later with a rather better result. It was hot but I had hired a cart and was glad of it. The following day we moved out of Ruth's bedroom into the room with the very firm adjustable 'health' bed.

We headed north about mid-afternoon the next day to an area called Clinton for a weekend with Peggy's friends Kathy and Joe Sipe. They lived in a lovely open-plan retirement home in a rural area backing on to a reservation. They were a lovely couple and Millie and I very quickly felt at ease with them. After a luscious brunch late next morning they took us further north across the Delaware River and the Delaware Gap to an old established pub called the Walpack Inn. It has a very good reputation and provided delicious food. The day ended on a sour note as Joe was stopped for a faulty tail light. It was unfortunate as he had taken Kathy's car, so he didn't have his licence and his insurance card with him. In the end he got a ticket for not carrying his licence and the cop let the other things go. When we got home I phoned Wilfred to congratulate him on his 80th birthday and to enquire after Clarice following her stroke. We got up late the next morning to find that Joe and Kathy had been about since 6.30 am - Joe because he always wakes at that time and Kathy because her cat wakes her with his crying! Who would keep a cat like that?

Back at Ruth's I did some cleaning up around the pool and also did some vacuuming inside. Kate, all twelve years of her, used a new bargain cleaner David and Peggy had bought to clean up around the kitchen. I also used a blower to collect up all the leaves and rubbish round the pool from a thunderstorm the previous night and then reversed the blower into a vacuum to suck up pile. Leaves are an annual problem that goes along with the large trees Ruth had on her property. Her neighbours also had very tall trees just across the lane at the back of the pool. There were some lovely specimens but they had grown to a problem stage. A lot of friends came in that evening with nine children between them so more fun was had around the pool. I did most of the barbecuing. The children swam again after the meal and had to be brought out when it got too dark for adequate supervision. Kate and her girl friend said that a man had made approaches to them in the shopping area earlier - David and Peggy reported the matter to the police who came but I never heard if anything resulted from it.

We headed down to the Cape May cottage of Peggy's brother Tom situated very near the inland or Delaware Bay side of the Cape. I wrote in my diary that on leaving the Cambridge Street house we had 'An immediate introduction to the Schuylkill Expressway west and south of the city travelling at speed in three and four lane roads with underpasses, over-bridges, and numerous exits and merging of freeways.' It was a four-hour trip with the volume of traffic diminishing as we left the city environs. Tom's house has a very welcoming and comfortable aura about it. We enjoyed a leisurely day with Millie visiting a hair salon at the nearby shopping centre while Ken and I paid a short visit to the nearby beach. The sea on the Delaware Bay side of the peninsula had no breakers and the water was

generally calm. One night we watched the complete orb of the sun sink through the haze into Delaware Bay, a brilliant red ball of fire created by the conditions.

Cape May has very carefully preserved the early American style of its original town in much the same way as Arrowtown and is very picturesque. It is the terminal for a regular ferry service across the mouth of Delaware Bay. We had crossed by this ferry in 1982 in the course of our tour along the Blue Ridge Mountains and our visit to Williamsburg. Peggy and the children went back to Philadelphia in the morning, leaving us with the Probe and we made a leisurely tour around the Cape area. We also did the laundry clean up from the big party over the weekend. The weather was very hot and humid and it left us fairly listless - it was difficult to sleep at night but we enjoyed a relaxing week. We had another party in for the weekend and were then left for another three or four days on our own. During the weekend we visited a place called Wildwood on the other side of the peninsula where there was all the fun of the fair - the children had a great time. It was not unlike the Pleasure Beach at Blackpool. The trick was to buy a 'whole load of tickets' which could be spent at the various attractions. There was also a long boardwalk along the beach frontage facing the Atlantic Ocean.

We then had the demanding exercise of finding our way back to the city in the unfamiliar Probe through the traffic maze that is Philadelphia. We carefully planned our route and carefully noted the exit we needed to take as we got into the city. We coped but made it more difficult for ourselves by choosing older main routes through country districts rather than going by the freeway. I had to remember to keep on the right and we had two-way roads, intersections and villages to negotiate. It was, however, much more interesting as the freeways are often lined by trees or hedges to muffle the traffic noise for nearby residents and consequently one does not see much of the surrounding scenery.

Our days with Peggy and David in Philadelphia were pretty full. We had lunch with David in the open air cafe at the University and looked around the university campus; took an evening drive through the city to see the lights; visited the fairly new Liberty Centre and the Farmers Market where much country produce is sold; went to the Barnes Foundation Gallery which has over a thousand paintings by the old masters including one hundred and eighty by Renoir; visited Joe and Sandy Dych⁵ in their 'very fine terrace house near the city' where they had a surprise visit by their friends Judy and Mark and their tiny and beautiful three-day-old baby Anne; leant a hand to Peggy in a start to cleaning up their garden and much more⁶.

Millie wanted a hairdresser one day when Peggy was not there to advise. We drove up to Girard Street which runs through a black district and found a charming black girl who could take her right away. When I called to pick Millie up the girl asked, 'Did I do a good job?' A little taken aback at the question I managed to say, 'Yes, it looks fine.' Millie had found her very friendly and while chatting had discovered that she was a Christian. When

⁵ Sandy and Joe were later to be neighbours across the street when David and Peggy moved to Green Street.

⁶ At this time I must have picked up a story about golf as I have a record in my diary as follows; 'Ben Hogan was so accurate with his driver he did not like playing 36 holes in one day. He hated having to play out of his morning divots all afternoon'. This was like the story of the British golfer Henry Cotton. 'How is Cotton driving today?' 'It is impossible to tell if he is favouring the right or left side of the fairway'.

Peggy learned where she had been she sounded a bit horrified.

We set out on a completely new venture for us in America - a driving holiday on our own. Following David's directions and our own study of the map we managed to get onto the New Jersey Turnpike which extends for mile after mile north to the northern limits of New Jersey adjacent to New York City. There it connects with the Garden State Parkway which circles round the inland side of New York and leads to the Hudson River Bridge. This is an impressive structure crossing over a very large river. I used to read about sailing on the Hudson River in the Dinsmore novels when I was a boy. It drains an enormous area of New York State almost up to Montreal in Canada some 350 miles away. Included in its catchment are the western Appalachians, the eastern Adirondack Range and the large Lake Champlain at its northern limits. It is a big river. Our route onwards led us along the coast of Connecticut on the Merritt Parkway to our first billet in Mystic, Connecticut⁷. Dorothy Comolli was our B&B host and she took charge of us. She took us on a tour round the extreme end of the little peninsula on which Mystic is situated and then to an expensive residential area on Masons Island. We drove by the luxury home of a razor-blade magnate named Enders which is now used as a retreat centre by the Roman Catholic Edmundite order. We spent time in Mystic Village which is a cute shopping area with walkways between shops and a carillon playing hymn tunes - a place to browse in for a long time. Next we visited The Mystic Aquarium where there was a half-hour display by the dolphins and a Beluga whale and Cal the Sea Lion.

From Mystic we turned away from the coast and travelled through wooded country dotted with small open areas where the main crop seemed to be corn. Some of the houses were very attractive. We were booked into Econo Lodge Motel which lived up to its name as it was very good value. In the afternoon we visited Old Sturbridge Village which is a very good development of a colonial village. There was an old Friends Meeting House, a Protestant Meeting House, Knights Store, Parsonage, Tavern, Tin Shop, Fenno House for widows, Thompson's Bank, Bake Shop, Print Shop, Town House and Farm and a Cider Mill. It is a fascinating living museum as there were attendants at most sites and it certainly gave an insight into pioneer days. Travelling and sightseeing in New England certainly reminded me that the British colonisation of America took place only a century or so earlier than in New Zealand. Many of the historical artifacts in the US can also be seen in our own museums.

Breakfast in the morning was hot coffee with a selection of muffins and donuts and sugary iced rings. We set off for Boston and the Howard Johnson Hotel in Revere on the north side of the Charles River which divides Boston in two - it was not as good value as the Econo Lodge. It took us forty minutes to navigate our way through the centre of Boston to the bridge leading to Revere. We were tired so spent quite a time resting in our room with only a cursory tour of the rather dreary shopping centre. We dined out at a Friendly Restaurant. The following morning was Sunday and we got directions to a Congregational Church where we very much enjoyed the service. We had planned to use the trolley bus tour to see the interesting parts of Boston - once you are on board you can drop off at a place of

⁷ Mystic is at the head of Fisher Sound, which in turn is guarded by Fishers Island across the entrance. The island protects the port from the full force of Atlantic storms, and Mystic is a very popular boating port.

interest and then re-board the trolley when you are done. There were plenty of things to see⁸. We alighted first at the Science Museum but the timing of displays was inconvenient so we carried on to Boston Common and walked across to Filines Dept Store and Bargain Basement. On the Common there was a crowd gathered round a speaker. We had read that Bill Clinton was to be in Boston so we walked across to see what was going on. We found it was a pro-hemp or pro-marijuana rally with a passionate young speaker advocating legalisation - we did not stay. It was drizzling so we carried on a bit to the Boston Tea Party. Here there was a very capable girl encouraging the crowd to support the motions passed by the revolutionaries in opposition to the Tea Tax. We boarded the boat and after another harangue they got two lads from the crowd to heave overboard two token boxes of tea. By this time it was raining steadily so we decided to head for home. The trolleys were now very busy and we had to wait half an hour in the rain for one with space for us. We bought a pizza from the shop next door for dinner and ate it in our room.

In the morning we set out for the Cape Cod peninsula, first heading west to Cambridge for a glimpse of Harvard University and then to Lexington and further south. We crossed the Sagamore Bridge over the Cape Cod Canal which provides a short cut for coastal shipping, eliminating the detour round the Cape. We checked in with Marie Brophy at Isaiah Hall Inn in West Dennis. As she was escorting us to our room up some steep stairs she noted Millie's stiffness and made an instant decision to give us a ground floor room. It was en-suite with a four-poster bed which had a delicate netting canopy with frills hanging down. The bed was covered with a patchwork quilt - it was very comfortable and cosy on a slightly colder night. In the morning we sussed out Hyannis Port to locate the ferry departure point. Here I nearly caused a nose-tail collision as I came upon the entrance suddenly and braked to turn in. On the way across to Nantucket Island we talked with a local man who told us that Nantucket was known locally as 'The Grey Lady of the Sea' because all houses were required to be clad in cedar shingles, which weather to a silvery grey. We took the car across to the island even though it cost over US\$200 - we figured that Millie would not be able to enjoy much of the island's history without it. And so it proved. After the Peter Foulger Museum we visited the Whaling Museum. In a ninety-minute talk we learned that the whaling industry had brought great prosperity to the town until a sandbar made harbour entrance difficult for shipping and a disastrous fire in 1840 destroyed most of the business district and the whaling installations. The discovery of oil replaced whale oil for lighting and this sounded the final death knell for the whaling industry. In spite of having the car we took a coach tour round the island. This was well worth while as Bob Grimes on the coach 'talked nonstop for two hours.' He showed us sea-front sites priced at \$1M bare land and multi-million-dollar homes including the home of one of the Gilbert family of 'Cheaper by the Dozen' fame - it looked anything but 'cheaper.' On the Atlantic Coast they were experiencing very serious erosion. He pointed to one house owned by a widower in his seventies which had been moved back 30 feet and was seriously in danger again. He could not afford to move it again and it had no sale value so he was just going to live there till he died and leave behind a worthless house. Cranberry-growing is a big industry there and he showed one plot which was flat like a bowling green. They are harvested at just the right time by flooding the bed so the berries float and are trapped at the run-off point. We

⁸ Attractions on the route included the site of the Battle of Bunker Hill, 'Old Ironsides' USS Constitution which is the oldest warship still afloat, Boston Garden, the Science Museum, Boston Common, the Charles St Meeting House, Trinity Church, the Prudential Centre Sky Walk, the Boston Tea Party Ship, and Museum Wharf

returned by the ferry to Hyannis and located our lodging at Rose Petal Lodge - we had a lovely room with bed covers in a pattern of large roses.

Next morning we were on our way to Chatham on the southeast corner of Cape Cod which has many expensive-looking houses looking out over the Atlantic Ocean. A well-known lighthouse flashes its light even in the daytime. Heading north to the Cape proper, the trees gradually decreased in number and size. The spit narrows to only three to four miles wide and very low in height above sea level - it becomes very sandy and the soil has poor fertility. We found Provincetown rather drear with not a lot of interest even though it was the initial landing point of the Mayflower with its group of Plymouth Brethren pilgrims from England. Their main permanent settlement had been made at Portsmouth on the mainland coast more or less opposite the Cape.

It was here that we encountered the worst B&B that we had ever experienced. We were booked into The Captains Lodge⁹ which boasted a 'sea view' - one had to stand upright on the little balcony to see the sea from our room ! Millie thought the sheets on the bed had not been laundered but I am sure they had just not been ironed, leaving them very crumpled. There was a large stain in the middle of the floor. The open plan reception and lounge area was dark and dismal and furnished with old couches that had rugs thrown over them to cover the wear. Breakfast consisted of one muffin per person and coffee which Millie declined. We felt very uncomfortable and cancelled our booking for the second night. We asked for a refund on our prepayment but they refused so we cut our losses and left anyway. So ended a rather unpleasant experience. I was somewhat annoyed as we had chosen our stopping places from a brochure of touring information and I felt that this one definitely did not come up to the standard indicated by the recommendations. I felt like writing to tell them so but never did.

Millie phoned Isaiah Hall at West Dennis and asked rather earnestly if Marie could help us out - fortunately she could. On the way south we visited two very good antique shops, one with a recently-acquired house lot of very good furniture, a picture gallery, had brunch in a coffee shop, visited two beaches and a neat little marina at Sesuit Neck Dock - so the day was not a complete loss. Marie and her husband welcomed us back to come to Isaiah Hall warmly and seemed glad to help us out. Incidentally, the name of their place came from the original owner, Captain Isaiah Hall. Breakfast was a social occasion with about a dozen folk helping themselves to liberally-supplied food. We talked to two English lads on a visit to New England and to an English couple. We headed west again over the Cape Cod Canal and through the State of Rhode Island to East Hartford in Connecticut. We found our way to Stephen Potwine House run by Bob and Vangie Cathcart who were very welcoming. It was an 1831 colonial house in three and a half acres of grounds with a couple of Maples just turning a brilliant red. On our way we had stopped at a roadside cafe called, - wait for it - Kenny's Kitchen. We nearly got stifled in our bedroom where a heater was blasting away and there was no way to turn it off. We wakened our hostess some time after midnight and she had to go into the next bedroom (which was occupied !) to flick the switch. We then slept with the passageway door open as well as a connecting door to her

⁹ I discovered from a brochure that about 60% of accommodation in the town was 'Gay' owned and operated and this included our unit. When we got back to Phila with this story, Peggy's comment was 'Of course, that is the 'Gay' centre for the East coast'. !!!

gym which had a window open to the outside. Our room gradually cooled off and allowed us some sleep. Millie asked for a boiled egg at breakfast time. 'A boiled egg? How do you do that?' Millie explained. The egg came to the table rolling round on a side plate. 'Do you have an egg cup?' 'What do you mean?' Millie said it did not matter and coolly dumped the end of the egg onto her plate to make it stand up on the broken shell. At least it tasted good.

One of our purposes in coming north was the hope of seeing the New England fall colours but we were a bit on the early side. We therefore chose a northerly route on the higher ground nearer the Fishkill Mountains. Route 202 led us through lovely country with some brilliant fall colours which were quite spectacular although not yet in full glory. Eventually all of these beautiful leaves would litter the roadways, gardens and parks and clog the gutters. We crossed the Hudson river on one of the twin bridges and once again admired this impressive river. We continued along this route until we were abreast of Philadelphia where we turned at right angles onto the North East Extension which led us straight into Philadelphia. This was rather a long day but it remains in the memory for the blaze of beauty we saw on the way. We found our exit onto Girard Ave and Cambridge Street where we arrived just after six. It had been a tiring day but it had been a very interesting and wonderful trip. We felt a sense of achievement and were very grateful to David for allowing us the use of his car.

The following day I was in the garden when Kate and Ken came in from school, and started cutting a face in a pumpkin. Ken was only six but he knew exactly what he wanted and I helped him to cut out the eyebrows, nose and mouth. This was my first experience of pumpkins for Halloween - there is always something to learn. One day Peggy took us to the school for the morning session in the Meeting House. I was impressed at how the children became very quiet for about an hour and listened to what was said by several people, including Millie and Peggy. The next big event was a weekend at a Mennonite farm guest house in Lancaster County. Peggy, Ken, Millie and I went out in the late afternoon and had dinner in nearby Mt. Joy at a restaurant in a former brewery. There was quite a severe storm during dinner with lightning and thunder. It is interesting that the continental climate of America causes frequent thermal up-currents which develop into thunder-storm activity and this produces a lot of the summer rain. We had to carry a sleeping Ken into the farmhouse when we got back. David and Kate came the next morning. Our host John led devotions before breakfast on Saturday morning - his subject was 'Till death us do part. Loyalty and Commitment.' Breakfast consisted of fruit juices, French toast, syrup, sausages, apple crumble and coffee or tea, all in plentiful supply. That evening we went to the Goff Farm Restaurant run by Betty Goff and her husband. After the entree Kenny got tired and lay down on the floor in a corner behind our chairs and went to sleep. The Goffs always speak to every guest table towards the end of the meal. When she heard we were from New Zealand she asked if we knew Rev Alan Morgan - it turned out that Alan and Nancy had spent an exchange year as pastor of the Mt Joy Presbyterian Church in which she was an Elder. Next morning we borrowed the car and went to the service and conveyed greetings from New Zealand on behalf of Alan and Nancy and our church. That was quite a coincidence¹⁰. Sunday breakfast at the

¹⁰ Perhaps an even greater one was that on our first Sunday back in church at Frankton just two weeks later, Alan Morgan was in the pulpit!

farm was very different from Saturday. The family had gone off to worship and had left out food for guests to serve themselves. We came back to Philadelphia through Amish country and had lunch at Bird in Hand just as we had done with them ten years before. That was a great weekend.

Two days later David took us up to Newark Airport for the first stage of our trip home. We made a stop-over in Los Angeles where we spent another fascinating day at the strange wonder-world of Disneyland. It was fairly busy but it is very well organised and queues were always moving. Schools had taken up for the term so there were no great mobs of children and the lines were not too long. We managed to fit in a lot of the rides - the Steam Train, the Canal Boat Trip, the Mississippi Boat Trip on a boat named Mark Twain, Pinocchio's Adventures, Peter Pan's Flight, Snow White and the Witch, Captain E O Space Film in 3D (wow !) and the Monorail that gives a great overview of the whole park, . There was a gorgeous red sun that evening. Next morning we visited Ripley's Believe It Or Not Museum, and then walked to Buena Park Mall. We taxied back to the hotel and caught the courtesy coach to the airport for our flight to Hawaii.

Our taxi driver from Honolulu airport to the Outrigger Reef Towers hotel offered to take us next day on a tour of the city sights. We decided it was a good offer and phoned him after breakfast to accept. It worked out well. We booked a hair appointment for 4.30 pm and asked Manny to pick us up in Cab 777 shortly after ten. Our main interest was Pearl Harbour and the USS Arizona. After a tour around with commentary on all the points of interest Manny dropped us at the Arizona memorial. The programme here was very well organised. It begins with a theatre presentation on the story of the attack with historic pictures from both American and Japanese fliers. We went out by a different exit to the ferry which would take us to the wreck of the ship. The Memorial is built like a bridge over the sunken battleship with a wall containing the names of the 1,177 sailors who had died in the attack. The Arizona sank in eight and a half minutes and blazed under water for two and a half days - it was still oozing a small amount of oil from its tanks. It is a very moving experience, especially with the ship visible in the water under the memorial bridge. I was recalling that I had been in the city just a few miles away only two months or so before this event and was thinking about my feelings when the news came through to me in Canada. I was also recalling the effect of this attack on the attitude of the American people to the war. From being very strong isolationist so far as the European war was concerned the nation turned to become one hundred per cent committed almost overnight. Roosevelt had been helping Britain in every way possible with Lend- Lease arrangements for armaments and the loan of fifty virtually obsolete destroyers for valuable convoy duty. Out and out support had not been possible politically and entry into the war at that time was absolutely impossible. America's primary focus had to be the war against Japan but it was also recognised that they were engaged in the European war as well. New Zealand and Australia owes its protection from Japan to the American participation in the Pacific. We well know how quickly the Japanese juggernaut rolled down through Southeast Asia. By 1943 the effect of the American contribution was beginning to be felt in England and North Africa and she took an integral part in the invasion of 1944.

On our arrival back in Queenstown I found that the potatoes I had planted deep and hulled up high before leaving at the end of May. They had come through the ground after frosts had ended and were growing nicely - we had early potatoes that year.

Millie was able to make a number of visits home during her life in New Zealand for which I have been forever grateful. She went back with the boys in 1950. Although I was unable to accompany her it was a wonderful visit for her and actually made her aware that New Zealand had become her home. We went back to England together in 1970 when only her Dad was missing from the family circle. We went again in 1978 just after her Mum had died and then in 1982, 1986, 1989 and 1992. She also had visits in New Zealand from her family - Winnie in 1953-4, her Mum in 1958-9, Jessie in 1966, Margaret in 1966-7, Marjorie and Renee in 1983, Jessie, Winnie, and Marjorie in 1985, Jessie for our Golden Wedding in 1995 and a lovely visit from Eric and Margaret Culpin. I am delighted that there were so many contacts with her homeland in contrast to many other War Brides who never got back to England or maybe went only once after retirement.

As I review this overseas trip now in retrospect I realise what a wonderful return it gave Millie to her homeland and beyond and to her remaining family and friends. We missed Winnie who had died shortly after our previous visit home. As Millie feared in the closing days of this time there in 1992 it proved to be her last visit.