

**The Life Story of**  
**Eva Margaret Nancy Payne nee Lindsay**  
**Born 31<sup>st</sup> January 1926**

**in**  
**Wormit**  
**Scotland**

On a mid winter evening at 8.15pm., this scrawny squawking baby girl, with hair resembling a black toilet brush, so I'm told, made an impatient entry into the world, beating the doctor by two hours. She was impatient for all the adventures, many of them happy, some sad and tragic, that her life was to bring to her.

She was warmly greeted by her mother Eva, an ex. nurse who hailed from the Island of Crete, and delivered by her father George, a Pharmaceutical Chemist. Waiting in the downstairs living room were her brothers, Nicol, age 7, Bruce age 6 and Bill aged 4 years. They were pretty disgusted with the whole affair as they would rather have had a dog, but all through my tender years they were to become my teachers, friends, playmates and bodyguards. No one dare lift a hand to their baby sister who tagged along behind them at all times.

The only time my brothers turned on me en masse, was the day we were all sitting in our tree house at the top of a very large Damson plum tree, close to the side of the house. The boys decided to have a competition to see who could wee the furthest down the side of the house. I aged about 4 scrambled down the tree and ran crying to my mother because I couldn't do it too, and believe me, I tried. There was great retribution all round and my brothers banned me from the tree house for quite a while. Those salad days of childhood and early teenage years came to an abrupt end on

1st September 1939 when Nicol and Bruce, who were in the reserve forces were called to arms 2 days before the war started. Bill was to follow 18 months later when he turned 18. Harris Academy, my school in Dundee was evacuated to the countryside but I didn't go with it as I was booked on a school ship to Australia, to be safe with my Aunt in Brisbane, but the first school ship to leave Britain was sunk with all passengers lost, so my parents decided to keep me at home, and I went to work in my father's shop for a year until the school returned to Dundee, finding it safer from bombing than the countryside. Dundee, with the Tay Bridge which was the only rail link between the Scottish midlands and highlands, was a strategic target for the bombers, but because of the formation of surrounding hills,

was very difficult to see from the air so was considered fairly safe. I was reluctant to return to school as I would have to catch up on a whole scholastic year but I was very young, so back I went until I graduated. The war years were traumatic for everyone and to this day I cannot listen to the song 'The White Cliffs of Dover' without seeing my mother's face with her beautiful dark eyes spilling over in tears as she visualise her two eldest sons in France. We were the lucky family in our little village of Wormit at the end of the Tay Bridge, who had all the family return.

My best friend at school was Margot Milne, also the youngest in a family of boys. Little did we think in those days that she would one day become my sister-in-law. When she and Bruce married after the War. Margot and I were two of a kind, although she was almost two years older than me, we were in the same classes and the despair of our teachers. We were usually the ringleaders in any mischief going, and played truant on quite a few occasions, with our brothers writing our excuse notes for the school.

Our favourite trick was played on Friday afternoons, our forms games afternoon. We would tell the teacher who was taking the girls to the playing fields, we were going swimming. Then we would tell the teacher who was taking the girls to the Swimming pools that we were going to play netball, then off Margot and I would go to the Cinema, using the money we had saved by skipping lunch a couple of times. Strangely enough we were never caught, although it must have been obvious what we were up to, as we were in school uniform. We had an excellent schooling with very few interruptions for air raids. We were very versed in Air Raid Drill and carried our gas masks with us at all times. Margot left school before me and went on to Business School, but I had made up my mind to follow in my mother's footsteps and become a nurse when I turned 18. I stayed on at school until I had my lower and higher leaving certificates then I too went to business school where my best friend became Catherine Fyffe, Margot having already left. Catherine too, was to become my sister-in-law when she and Bill married after the War. I still had 2 years to fill in before I started my nursing training so I spent 6 months at the College learning Shorthand, typing and book-keeping, followed by a further 6 months in the College office. Next came a most miserable 3 months as typist in an Accountants office, typing row after row of figures, for 10/- a week. I still had 9 months to go the magical age of 18 so got a job in the magazine department of one of the big newspapers. That was more my cup of tea until I had to type out knitting patterns, or even worse, check someone else's typing of patterns. I did enjoy typing out the serial stories but would spend more time reading the story than typing. Then came January 31st - I was 18 years old, and the next nurse's intake was only 4 days away.

During all this time my brothers were at war.

My first day of 6 years 'on the job' training, on 4th February, age 18 years and 4 days. It was exhilarating, terrifying and fun. I met the other 14 girls starting at the Preliminary Training School with me. We were to be together for the next 3 months in the PTS building across the road from

the Dundee Royal Infirmary. We were 3 or 4 to a room, with one ablution block. Sister Tutor and Larry the Skeleton also lived there. 'Larry' was regularly placed in Sister Tutor's bed every 3 monthly nursing intake. I think she was quite fond of him because she always managed to find him, no matter where we put him, and quite a few of his tattered joints were tenderly taped together. Our first 3 months consisted of lectures, weekly tests and how to make beds etc., 5 days a week 8am - 6pm with Saturdays and Sundays on the wards as general dogsbodies. We had no domestics in those days and it was one round of spit and polish, it was hard work. At the end of the 3 months we had a weekend off to go home, then transfer our belongings to the Probationers floor, where we were 3 to a room, on the top floor of the Hospital. We were now called 'Pinkies' - our uniform was pink - and the lowest form of Hospital life, even the cockroaches had a better time. At least they could hide and I bet their feet didn't hurt like ours. There wasn't one treatment known to man we didn't try on our hot aching feet. We had regular Air Raid warnings and the most senior Pinky was responsible for getting the rest of us out of bed and down to the Air Raid shelters as the raids were usually at night. We were a bit blasé about it all as there had been only a few bombs dropped near us, and on a couple of occasions I had slept through it all as my bed was hidden behind the door. Our first year passed in a haze of work, lectures, tutorials, tests, bedpans and tears. We had one whole day and one half day off a month - a 78 hour week on day duty, and 84 hour week on night duty. Then the 'biggie' our Prelims. All but one of our 'set' passed, and we got out of our Pink and into 1st year stripes. Now we could step on the cockroaches and we could walk into the Dining room in front of the new 'Pinkies.'

In my second year I was put on night duty almost straight away and spent four months on the Women's medical ward. The Day Sister was called 'Red Bella' and when was baaaaad! She would come on duty in the mornings and before we could go off duty she would inspect everything as if she had microscopes behind her eyeballs. One morning - a day I was meeting my mother in town for coffee - I was just finishing making the patients look healthy but immovable, when my eyes, and only my eyes, strayed to headlines on a magazine, when her microscopes zoomed in and she caught me! She bawled me out and was almost the 'straw that broke the camels back'. When I saw my mother coming along the street towards me, later in the morning, the tears started to flow and flow. Mum took one look at me and said "Red Bella." I could only gulp and say "I am quitting." Mum just quietly took my arm saying "no Lindsay ever quits, and let me tell you some things about Red Bella's mother who trained with me." Bella never got the better of me again as I ceased to be frightened of her and whether my mother's stories were true or not, I felt I had the last laugh.

At this time Penicillin had just been discovered, and what a miracle it was. Prior to its discovery a person with pneumonia was doomed. We had a young boy of 7 in the Children's ward who had Meningo-Encephalitis

(inflammation of the brain.) He was the 1st patient in our hospital to be given Penicillin, and he lived. I was the second patient to be given it. I was due for 'nights off' and had a large boil in my nose, but no way was I going to report it and miss my 'nights off.' Night Sister reported it instead, much to my disgust. Up to sickroom I went where I was put to bed with a poultice on my nose, the boil just got bigger. The doctor lanced it and I was told I was better and could go home in the afternoon. I felt awful and had the worst headache I can ever remember but 'Sister Sick room' said I was well, get dressed. I got back into bed and pulled the bed clothes over my head and vaguely remember Sister saying "Nurse Lindsay get out of there," but I wouldn't. The next thing I remember was waking up in a side ward with my left leg in a splint and a bottle of Penicillin dripping into my left thigh - I had blood poisoning and everyone was most concerned, including me, but I had seen that young boy recover so knew I would. But they put me on a light diet, after 4 days of fluids only. The diet consisted mainly of boiled fish. I just had to get better to get rid of that horrible diet. One of my friends used to sneak in a tin of baked beans, can opener and teaspoon, which did much more good.

During this early training period, the war was still raging, my brothers were all overseas, & food and clothing rationing was severe. Our uniforms were supplied but shoes and stockings depleted our clothes ration. Sugar, jam and butter were issued individually, once a week and we soon learnt to go without them as we invariably forgot to take them to the dining room. Dad was working very hard as he couldn't find another Pharmacist to help him in the business. He was even making lipsticks as there were no Brand name ones to be found. I shall never forget his chief assisting Peggy. She had dyed black hair and we used to tease her about her lovely figure because she told us she wore 'Spirella' corsets. Those corsets were always referred to as 'Saspirella' instead of 'Spirella' until one day Peggy had saved enough clothing coupons to get some new ones. Lo' and behold' she asked the assistant in the corsetry department of Draffens for 'Saspirella corsets'. She never lived it down, but remained wording for my father for many years.

D Day came at last and we set about evacuating as many patients from the hospital as possible. The children's wards were emptied, and I had the un-enviable job of taking ambulance after ambulance, full of sick children to the country hospitals. All surgical patients were evacuated, except for 1 men's and 1 women's ward, for emergencies. All the operating theatres were equipped to the hilt and almost all staff donated blood. Then we were all on stand by for troop casualties. It was 72 hours before the first ones arrived. They had had 1st aid treatment at the casualty clearing stations, but most of them were in a bad way. Every available surgeon was there and all 7 operating theatres worked non stop until every man had been attended to and was comfortable in bed. I was still very junior so my job was taking the men to the Theatre, staying to count the swabs etc. then back to the ward with them and off again with the next patient. We had 3 German POW's amongst the casualties, they had to be screened off

together at the end of the ward. Once the rush was over and the boys were recuperating our fun and games began. A ward full of young lads who have just escaped from the jaws of death and only two young nurses looking after them, in retrospect, my mind boggles at some of the pranks they got up to. There was certainly never a dull moment. It was rather tame after our lads all left us - one of the POWs trying to jump out of the toilet window - and the other patients came back. It was back to routine, lectures, tutorials and exams. Then V.E. day in May 1945. It was lunch time, on the 8th May 1945, I was in the children's ward on the top floor of the hospital. All the other nurses had gone to lunch so I was on my own, sitting beside a toddler feeding him custard. The radio was on in the ward so I heard the fateful words declaring the end of the War in Europe. Tears of joy were pouring down my face and the poor toddler was having custard shovelled into his mouth, eyes and ears while I snivelled away, but oh! what jubilation when the other nurses came back. The ships started hooting in the Port, the church bells were ringing, and it carried on all night. There was dancing in the City square that night and the joy was beyond belief for those of us whose relatives were safe, and such sadness for those who had lost their loved ones. It would be more than another year before the war in Japan was won but for the moment we were content and got on with our lives. I was now well into my 2nd year of training and beginning to enjoy all my new found knowledge. Our sore feet were behind us and our excess energy was put into scheming how to get out of the hospital after we came off duty in the evenings without having to sign the 'off duty' book, as once having signed it going out, meant we would have to sign it coming in again, by 10pm. There were ways and means, and there was always the mortuary wall to climb over, and up the fire escape, coming back. Dundee had so many troops of all nations that girls were in demand, and dancing was my joy, so we were never without partners, and I still write to a couple of Australian men I met and introduced to my father, who took them under his wing and made him feel he was 'doing his bit' by looking after them. It is only a few months ago since a Kiwi I met then, wrote to the Lord Provost in Dundee to trace my family, as he and his wife were going there for a visit and wanted to meet any of my father's descendants, he met my sister-in-law in June, in Scotland, and is now back in Torbay, NZ, he and his wife are intending to pay me a visit here. But I ramble on, those were the friendships we made in those days.

By the end of my 2nd year's training, many lectures tutorials and exams past I had my first stint in the operating theatre and fell in love with it. I never got close enough to a patient at that time, to really see what was happening, I was too busy bustling around cleaning and sterilising instruments, dodging bloody swabs thrown by irate surgeons - also the occasional instrument! But the atmosphere, how do I describe it? Tense, electric, terrifying, joyous and funny. I learnt a lot of new words, not all of which I could repeat to my grandmother. There were periods of intense concentration followed by satisfaction. I knew I would be a Theatre Sister one day, but it took me almost 10 years and a lot of travelling before I

achieved my ambition. It was about this time, when my grandmother, who had lived with us all my life, was reaching the end of her life, aged 90. When she turned 80 she had decided she couldn't sleep without a tablespoon of 'medicinal' brandy, at 85 it was a tumbler full, and at 90 she had developed quite a head for it. It was left to my aunt and me - I was having 4 'nights off' from night duty - to attend to the final nursing stages as my dear mother was just too tired. It was the first time I had encountered a death in a home, and it was a very stifling and sad experience with all the blinds kept drawn, everyone dressed in black or with black arm bands, and the relatives gathering around us - many whom I didn't know.

VJ Day in June 1946 was a real celebration and our families gradually began to come home. Bruce was the first to arrive, he pressed the front door bell and when my mother saw him standing in his ill fitting de-mob suit she ran to him, but he cried "please don't touch me I've got lice." It always amazed me how he could go through the horror and filth of a war yet be daunted by a couple of creepy crawlies. Bruce and I were very close and he used to unburden his war experiences to me.

Life at the hospital went on with every day being exciting, sometimes hilarious, sometimes tragic. My 21st birthday was around the corner, and plans were afoot to have a combined party as my 3 brother had missed theirs. The cake was made with 4 21sts, one in each corner. The hotel was booked, everything arranged and only one fly in the ointment remained - would Bill make it? He was still in the Merchant Navy and no one knew where his ship was, so we all just prayed he would make it in time. I was on night duty once more, but had special permission to have this great night off. Nick and Bruce called for me at the Night nurse's home to escort me to the hotel. It had been snowing hard so we were shaking the snow from our coats when I looked up into the sparkling eyes of my handsome youngest brother Bill, still dressed in his uniform. He had come straight from his ship. What a night to remember that was. I was asked to give a speech! utterly dumbfounded I stood there speechless! me speechless, all I could say was "lets dance." My mother and father had to leave at 10.45pm to get the last train home, but my brothers, friends and I danced the night away then I was escorted back to the hospital in the wee small hours. We had to walk through a park to get to the night nurse's home and it was snowing heavily. I was clutching a huge box of chocolates which ended up in the snow during the scuffles of trying to keep my brothers hands out of it. The four of us ended up sitting in snow drifts picking chocolates up and stuffing them into our mouths amidst gales of laughter.

About 3 months after I had passed my State final exams I was staff nurse on a male surgical ward, once again on night duty, when I was told at 7am that I had 'nights off.' The moment I reached the night nurses' home I phoned my mother to tell her I would be home on the next train, which would be at 11am. I was greeted with my father's voice on the phone

asking me not to wait for the train but to try and catch the first ferry at 9 o'clock and he would have someone to meet me. Both Dad and the doctor had been in touch with the hospital since 1am trying to have me sent home as my mother had had a stroke and they didn't expect her to survive the night. Night Sister callously never informed me but gave my premature 'nights off' and left me to find out for myself. I Never forgave the senior hospital staff for that and was destined not to return to the hospital again except to pack up my belongings. I can remember running to catch the ferry and standing on the deck in the pouring rain, I was too shocked to go into the cabin. My eldest brother, Nick, met me at Newport putting his arms around me as he led me out to the car telling me Mum was fighting hard. When I got up to Mum and Dad's bedroom I found my lovely mother with a twisted face and paralysed down her left side. Somehow she seemed to sense I was there as when I spoke to her and took her right hand there was a faint return squeeze. Mum and Dad slept in separate beds which had always been pushed together, so after Dad, Dr. Ross and Nick and I had made her comfortable I lay down in Dad's bed and cuddled her. Whether I was in a state of shock, extremely tired or having one of my several communications with 'another being' I felt a peace come over me and knew my mother was going to live. When Dad and Nick came upstairs again after having some breakfast, Dad said he could see the improvement in Mum. That was the start of a very demanding 18 months of looking after an incontinent mother, 3 brothers and father. In those days it was the girls of a family who looked after their parents and families, and my brothers were typical macho males. Rationing was still a bugbear and I was no cook. The first Friday the butcher delivered the weekend roast - it looked like a red wedge of cheese with a bone in it to me. I hadn't a clue how to cook it, my mother couldn't speak, there were no cookbooks and the men were at work, so I cut all the meat off the bone and put it through the mincer as I knew how to cook mince. Another time the boys wanted chips, I didn't know how to cook them but I did know the fat had to be boiling before putting the chips into it so I was merrily waiting for bubbles to form on the fat when Bill came into the scullery to find out where the blue smoke and smell were coming from.

My mother's recovery was slow, she was incontinent for about 6 months which was very difficult to manage in pre-washing machine days, but fortunately it was the beginning of summer. One Sunday afternoon I can remember vividly, I was washing 11 blankets. I put them one by one in the bath then ran up and down them with my bare feet. My father helped me to hand wring them then put them out on the washing line. My mother had always had a lady to help her with the washing and housework but I had only been home for a week when I had to ask her to leave. I could have tolerated her chronic BO but I found her pilfering, taking advantage of Mum's illness. The only time I was ever out of the house in the first year of my mother's illness was on Wednesday afternoons when my father had his 1/2 day off, as most businessmen did at that time. I used to get Mum really comfortable then Dad would sit beside her all afternoon while I went over to Dundee to visit my friends Mary and her husband Ed. Sometimes

we used to go dancing but mostly they just let me blow off steam over my weeks' frustrations. They were, and still are, good friends. I used to massage my mothers' paralysed arm and leg and gradually with us working together she began to get some movement back. Her speech was gradually recovering and she knew what we were saying to her. Her sense of humour never deserted her and she could be incredibly naughty. One morning, when I was giving her a bed bath I left the sponge in the basin of soapy water while I cut her toe nails. Mum managed to get the soggy sponge in her paralysed hand and started bopping me with it, laughing her head off. When I saw it was her bad hand she was using I was so happy we both ended up soaking, and giggling our heads off. Our house was in a very aptly named place - Hill Crescent - so as Mum slowly but gradually improved we realised she would never again manage the stairs inside or the man steps outside. Dad started looking for a house on the flat and put our home on the market. I hated the thought of leaving the home I had been born in but knew it had to be. I had cooked my first Xmas dinner there, for 14 of us, the day the boys carried Mum downstairs to sit at the table. She was able to talk by then and had told me how to cook it so I had made a fairly good job of it. It was a happy day. The last big family event to happen from that home was my brother Bruce's wedding to Margot, my school friend. I was bridesmaid. Although it was an austerity wedding with clothes rationing still going strong, I think we all looked pretty good. My eldest brother, Nick, was best man and Bill was usher meeting everyone at the church door. Margot and I were very nervous but climbing the church steps we could see Bill with eyes full of laughter and a risqué joke to tell. Bride and bridesmaid went laughing down the aisle hurrying to catch up with Margot's eldest brother, Barry, who was giving her away. It was a happy day. Margot had been able to get hold of a parachute, a great find in post war days, and had made her trousseau from the silk. By various and devious means, Bill and I found out where they were spending the first night of their honeymoon and on the way from the Church to catch the train to Dundee for the reception and theatre show, we passed a phone box. We sent a telegramme to their hotel saying "count to 10 before pulling the ripcord." The best part of the phone call being that on putting down the receiver we pressed Button B for a lark, and got not only our money back, but about another 5/- in pennies and 1/2 pennies. My father would have had a fit if he had seen the theatre show he had booked for us - he was at home with my mother - it was one of the first shows where they had naked women on the stage. They were at the back of the stage and were not allowed to move. I think everyone was embarrassed, I know I was. Nick, Bill and I went back home on the same train and played silly beggars chasing one another all the way from the train up to the house. While Nick went up to tell Mum all about the wedding, Bill and I started clearing up the confetti and giggling about having found a hot water bottle in Margot's suitcase, which we had duly stuffed with confetti along with her umbrella. I was with Margot in Dundee a few weeks later when it started raining and she put up her umbrella for the first time since the wedding. I

had forgotten about the confetti but ended up catching most of it as Margot, being my best friend, held it over my head as she put it up.

About a week before Bill was due back to sea, he had had leave for Bruce's wedding, he developed a very sore throat and was in bed upstairs. My other friend Catherine went up to see him and came down a while later sporting an engagement ring. It wasn't a surprise to the rest of the family but she had to endure a lot of teasing about having to wait until he was sick before she could get him to propose.

The house was sold and another one with no outdoor steps and plenty of places for my mother to walk to, bought. I was nearly 22 and mother was able to look after herself, she had made a limited but very remarkable recovery so it was time to move. Before the move we were invited to Bruce & Margot's new home for afternoon tea. We were all sitting around the table and it being mothers' first real outing she was being treated like a duchess. There was a silent moment in the conversation, Dad at one side of the table, Mum at the other, when up she piped "Pass the shugger you grey haired old bugger." Then this lovely lady who had never let a swear word pass her lips before, let out a sigh and said, "I have waited years to say that."

The thought of the actual moving a household of goods, to a much smaller house was quite daunting, never having had any experience of it before. My brothers had all left home so there was only Dad and me to tackle the task while trying to keep Mum from helping. I can't recall any removal van, I can only remember thinking to myself "I'm so tired, will this never be finished." But we did finish with Mum and Dad in a downstairs bedroom, complete with fireplace and wash-hand basin. When my mother was first able to venture out for a walk was a red letter day, everyone she passed spoke to her and she was able to see all the gardens. Later in her life she was to become quite notorious for taking snippets of any plant or shrub which took her attention, but all our neighbours loved her and realized she would never have done such a thing before having the stroke. Crunch time came for us all when Mum was able to look after herself with the help of a 'Daily' and I had to think about my future. I decided to do midwifery training and applied to, and was accepted at Lennox Castle Hospital, outside of Glasgow, to commence the 1<sup>st</sup> part Maternity training. Lennox Castle hospital had been built by the Americans during the war as a temporary hospital. It was built as a series of Nissen huts, and housed wards for the intellectually handicapped, insane and criminally insane, four ante-natal wards and four post-natal wards. It was quite the most extraordinary hospital I have ever known. All the staff quarters were next to the intellectually handicapped and emotionally disturbed wards. We would walk out of our quarters to see all the patients with Downs Syndrome, who were all adults, being lined up in military fashion by an ex sergeant major who had been shell shocked. There was one female and one male ward each for the insane, and one female and two male wards for the criminally insane. Those were locked wards of people being referred from the courts

and were mainly rapists and murderers. The Maternity wards were only a short way away and all the buildings were surrounded by a security fence. We had to have clearance to get out or in. The only form of transport used were buses – to Glasgow and they were always searched both ways. Strangely enough, in those days we were rarely frightened. On duty in the ante-natal wards, babies born during the day were transferred, along with the Mums, to the post-natal wards by ambulance. During the night if a baby was born who required resuscitation we had to phone the main psychiatric ward where the nurse in charge had all the lights switched on and sent an escort for the nurse and baby. Mum was not transferred until daylight. We did not make the decision to transfer a baby lightly as it was quite terrifying to rush through the grounds, blazing with lights and catcalls from the patients who had been wakened by them. The baby or babies we were carrying were either very tiny or very sick and completely covered in blankets, leaving only enough air to breathe. There is an old saying “A nurse never runs except in a case of haemorrhage or fire” but we sure learnt a fast trot. I can’t recall or never knew, the history of Lennox Castle itself, but the building was used as staff quarters for the psychiatric staff and administration block for the whole hospital. The post-natal wards, large Nissen buildings, had nursery units built on to them, with three walls of windows from about 3 feet up. When we were changing or bathing babies we could see almost everything going on outside but we couldn’t be seen as the buildings were raised from the ground and the changing tables were quite a way from the windows. When on night duty we fed glucose water to every baby under five days old, at 11pm, and 3 or 4 times during my 6 months there, the alarm would sound and lights go on in the grounds as a psychiatric patient had escaped. We used to sit on top of the changing tables and watch everything going on, a real ringside seat, and as we switched off the lights in the nursery the babies were inclined to get a bath in glucose water as we couldn’t see their mouths. The escapee was usually found very quickly as there were very few places for them to hide when the whole of the grounds were floodlit. Such a thing happening in this day and age would cause news media headlines, but away back in those days, when Adam was a little boy, it was just a fact of life and forgotten about within a few days. I thoroughly enjoyed my first part midwifery training, becoming a maternity nurse after the 6 months were finished. There were a few tragic deliveries, but watching a mothers face as her healthy baby was put into her arms for the first time, gave me such pleasure that I went on to do my second part midwifery at the Western General hospital in Glasgow. I never lost my sense of enchantment at the birth of a healthy baby, although I delivered quite a few hundred during my nursing career.

Our second part midwifery training consisted mainly of home deliveries under the watchful eyes of a District Midwife, in the Gorbals of Glasgow, one of the most notorious high crime areas of Britain. The razor gangs of the slums, where even the police had to walk in pairs, would step aside for nurses in uniform, carry our bags and dare anyone to harm us. They wore brimmed caps with the brim cut open and razor blades inserted in to it so

that all they had to do was take off their cap and 'hey presto' they had a ready made weapon in the form of a long razor blade. As all the men in those days wore the same type of cap it was really a concealed weapon, and there were many gang fights. The whole area consisted of tenement buildings with one bathroom per floor usually indescribably filthy. Quite often the toilet cistern would be bent over and lying in the bath, in rusty water, making both toilet and bath unusable. Fleas, lice and bedbugs were the order of the day but nurses were shown the most utmost respect. Many a cup of tea was drunk with closed eyes to shut out the filth of the cup as we wouldn't dream of insulting them by refusing to drink it. The patients were issued with all the gear i.e. tarred paper, linen and swabs etc. in a sterile pack, with instructions to leave in unopened, prior to delivery. The District Midwife always carried a spare pack along with the gas and air machine. She was usually with the patient by the time we arrived, as if it was during the day, we had to get there by any means possible, usually bus or tramcar and 'shanks pony.' If it was during the night the hospital provided transport which was quite often a taxi, or if possible the District Midwife picked us up. To arrive at one of those tenement buildings during the night was quite an experience. We always knew if it was the correct address as there would be three or four anxious men waiting, usually, with stitches or scars to their faces and hands.

I vividly remember the delivery of one baby boy, it was the lady's 20th and they all lived in the same room, along with grandparents. What a job it was getting all the family to leave the room and organise Dad to get boiled water etc. The baby was welcomed as if it was the 1st born, and with so many brothers and sisters to look after it, Mum could lie back and rest. By law we had to stay with the mother for at least one hour after delivery, and to witness the afterbirth etc. being burnt. It was often quite difficult to find a fire in the slums and 'girl guide' methods were used on more than one occasion. My friend during this 2nd part training was Doris Kneen who had an Aunt who lived in Bearsden the 'posh' suburb of Glasgow. Doris and I were always welcome there for a meal and being healthy young ladies we went there often, where we always felt at ease. One evening I felt so relaxed that I reverted to hospital table manners and felt all the slices of bread on the plate to find the softest piece, then looked up to see Doris's aunt grinning from ear to ear. My embarrassment continued when we were served 'rollmops' i.e. pickled herrings, as an entree. I felt that having made one 'blue' already I should try and eat this. I could feel it sliding up and down my throat as my stomach rebelled, but I managed to keep it down, then found another one had been put on my plate. I couldn't face it and as I pushed my chair back with a hurried 'excuse me please' I looked at the faces of Doris and her aunt & uncle - they were almost puce with suppressed laughter, then I remembered that a few weeks previously Doris and I had been talking about our 'pet hates' of food, mine being pickled herrings. I got my own back on Doris a few weeks later. We always cut one another's hair, as we were always too broke to go to the hairdresser. My hair had been cut and I had half of Doris's taking a couple of inches off one side when the phone in the corridor rang. It was one of

my boy friends wanting to meet me, so I went out and left Doris with one side of her hair 2" shorter than the other. She was waiting for me in my room when I got back. Doris, who came from Liverpool, and I remained friends for many years and I was to spend many days off with her and her new husband when stationed at Tidworth, near Liverpool , in later years. While we were working in Glasgow we both had a number of boy friends and it was a very exciting City to live in. Having a boy friend was a boon, as being student midwives living in hospital we were always hard up and ready for a good meal instead of hospital fare. In those days, before the sexual freedom years, a girl was not expected to pay for her supper and many a good evening we had dining and dancing in the 'friendly City.' State finals fast approached with all of our class having delivered, by ourselves, our required quota of 20 or more babies in the final six months. There was great competition for patients between the student doctors who had to deliver 8 babies, and us with 20. A lot of overtime was worked awaiting the arrival of the new generation. At last it was all over, practical and oral exams finished and final results waited for. All our class passed and we went in to the City to celebrate. We went to the pictures to see Bob Hope & Bing Crosby in 'Paleface.' We found it extremely funny and rocked with laughter. I have seen it since and found it only amusing, but that day it was hilarious to us. Next came planning for the future, packing and moving out as the new class arrived. I can't remember, and I don't think any of us cared very much about who delivered the babies in the meantime. We were all now fully qualified General nurses and Midwives and ready to follow our dreams. I had a position to go to, as Staff Midwife in Craigton Hospital in St. Andrews, but first home for a couple of weeks. My mother was almost fully returned to health after her stroke, but would always remain slightly 'eccentric.' She now had a dog, a Pomeranian, a dear little thing but a yapper. Dad was taking it to the Vet in Dundee one morning. He and his business cronies always travelled in the same train carriage every day. This particular morning one of his friends asked him what breed the dog was. A Titikarkin Mastiff said Dad, it's quite a rare breed. "Where does it come from" he was asked, "the Titikarkin Islands" he replied, and with that the train drew into the station. About a week later, long after Dad had forgotten about the conversation, his friend, the school teacher, said "I have looked up every Atlas and map of the world and I cannot find the Titikarkin islands" Dad quickly replied, "Oh! they are floating islands and only appear once every seven years." I believe the story continued and Dad got more outrageous as the months passed. I was one of only very few who could tell when my father was pulling someone's leg as his face would be poker straight and only a slight twinkle of the eye would betray the wicked fibs that would be believed totally by his victims until he burst into laughter. He was a delightful, well loved man. During my holiday Mum asked me to take her to have her hair permed, I tried to dissuade her as she had lovely hair, but to no avail, so off we set to the hairdresser in Dundee. I had never seen a hair perm before and when I saw my mother all strung up to the roof, or so it seemed to me, I was sure I was going to loose her with an electric shock. Her perm was very frizzy and took the

natural wave out of her hair. When we got home I looked at the Pomeranian (I forget her name) then looked at Mum and apart from the difference in colour there wasn't much to choose between them. Poor Mum she never risked a repeat performance. My two weeks at home were soon over but I was to be only eleven miles away at St. Andrews. The following year as Staff Midwife at Craigton Hospital was a real challenge as it was a teaching hospital, so it was a Staff Midwife's responsibility to teach the pupil midwives, which wasn't always easy. I well remember one pupil, a beautiful girl, at least 6" tall, every time I explained anything to her or asked her to do anything she would just stand and look down at the top of my head, most disconcerting, but we got used to one another. Craigton had once belonged to one of the big Beer Barons before it was converted into a maternity hospital. It was built as a castle, complete with towers. My room was enormous, being one of the corner tower rooms. It had a large fireplace which was stuffed full of newspaper to keep the wind out. All the corner rooms had a fire escape outside the windows so I used to be quite regularly wakened to let someone in. The story goes that the Beer Baron and his wife did not get on well with one another, he used to use the marble front stair case, she used the servants staircase. No expense had been spared on the building, the marble for the staircase had been imported from Italy and was complete with crystal chandelier. When the building had been converted to the hospital as much of the original materials had been retained as possible resulting in a most luxurious place. At that time the grounds were private and very large, so we had the freedom to roam through them at will. There was a miniature Dutch castle complete with moat, an Italian garden, extensive woods with every known variety of tree and in the spring you could look out on to a sea of daffodils. It was a magnificent place which is now open to the public and quite a tourist attraction. My year there was great experience in learning and teaching. Craigton is about 2miles outside St Andrews, with it's University, golf course and safe swimming beach. It's a very old place with cobble stone roads in places. It has a derelict castle which still has it's old bottle dungeon and subterranean passage. The world renown golf courses which run adjacent to the beach, there are two of them, the ancient and modern. I saw Bing Crosby & Bob Hope playing there. It was a great place for courting and I became engaged to Jim McKenzie a St. Andrews man. We must have been very hardy, or in love, to walk along the beach on those cold winter evenings. On Hogmanay (New Year) at midnight everyone congregated in St Andrews square while the church bells rang out and the dancing began. Jim had a broken leg - a cycling accident - which was in plaster, and was using a walking stick. He was dancing with the best of us but all around were in danger from the walking stick. There was a fishmongers shop with a huge goldfish sign hanging outside, which was repetitively taken down and hidden every Hogmanay. I got back to hospital, via bicycle, in time to climb up my fire escape, change into uniform and go on morning duty. It was not long after that, that I got bitten by the travel bug, much to Jim's dismay. I had to do a lot of soul searching before I finally decided to travel. I went to see our local doctor who had

always looked after my mother and whom I had known all my life. Dr. Ross understood my desire for adventure and told me no matter whether I stayed at home or went overseas my mother might have another stroke the next day or go on for many years, but if I put off an overseas trip I would live to regret it. Next thing was a family conference. My father was reluctant to let his only daughter go but my mother understood as she had left her own country of Crete, at my age. Betty Campbell, my friend, who wanted to travel with me was 'rarin to go' and sent for information on immigration in Australia and New Zealand. Meanwhile Jim and I found ourselves in one long argument - I wanted him to come with us, he didn't want to leave St. Andrews but wanted us to get married straight away. I knew I wasn't ready for marriage, there was a whole big world out there, but said I would come home in 2 years ready to settle down. Meanwhile Betty and I were poring over pamphlets about Australia and N.Z. We finally decided on N.Z. The process of filling out application forms, getting character references and having interviews was quite extensive, then came a medical examination and X rays, followed by a series of injections for almost everything, except rabies. We were given our date for sailing - 1st April 1951 on the *Atlantis*. We wouldn't be told our exact destination until we arrived in Wellington but had applied for positions as midwives in the central Nth. Island. Our resignations from Craigton Hospital were in and the staff gave us a great 'send off' party. I went home for a week before leaving and it was probably the longest week of my life saying farewell to family, friends and Jim. I felt dehydrated with crying as Betty and I stepped on the train for our first lap of the journey. In London we were told where and when to get the train for the passengers going aboard the '*Atlantis*' at Southampton. By this time Betty and I were so excited we couldn't have cared less what *HMS Atlantis* was like, but once our names were 'ticked off' at the top of the gangway and we were told our cabin number the excitement was wearing off. We were in a cabin of 8, right down in the bowels of the ship, which we discovered was making it's last voyage before being broken up. There were 900 passengers aboard this old troop carrier and we were packed in like sardines with extremely limited ablution blocks. I had known what homosexuals were before then, but to my knowledge, had never met any, but being aboard the '*Atlantis*' was an education. From a certain spot in our toilet block (on top of the wash-hand basins) we could look out on to the crew's deck. The crew used to have their 'gay' dances, the chief purser being Queen. A couple of the other girls in our cabin explained it all to us, Betty an I being very naive. It took 49 days to reach Wellington and it was a very rough trip. We went through the Suez Canal where I got the inside of my knees very sunburnt. The ship was at anchor for 8hrs to let a convoy of American ships through as two ships couldn't pass at the same time. We had been standing on deck watching, and as I thought, I was in the shade of the upper deck. I was, but my legs weren't and I suffered for days with the blisters. In the Australian Bight the sea was so rough we had to tie ourselves in our bunks at night and all the lower decks were closed to passengers. As we steamed into Wellington, our first impression was of

the different coloured houses and roofs. After drab Britain it was a lovely sight. As soon as we docked we were given our mail which was eagerly received, then we all had to report to Immigration to be told our final destination. We were handed sealed brown envelopes with the words 'Franklin Memorial Hospital, Waiuku' on them and told to get on the bus which had come to collect us for the train to Auckland. Betty and I had a lot of farewells to say to the friends we had made on the ship and were very glad they had managed to get us both into the same hospital. On the train journey to Auckland we examined those brown envelopes - where on earth is Waiuku, and how do you pronounce it. We handed our envelopes around the other carriage and were told it was south of Auckland and pronounced 'Y u coo' and was near 'Y kick a moo cow' - as we were to realise later is a standard Kiwi joke, and only half believed them at that time. We were met at Auckland by a Sister from Auckland Hospital and taken there for a meal, issue of uniforms and application forms for admission to the NZ midwives certificate. We were taken to the main dining room for our meal and on the table were tree tomatoes, a completely foreign fruit to us, but after we were told how to eat them it was a fruit we were to enjoy. The same Sister took us to the downtown bus terminal in Auckland and saw us on to the bus for Waiuku, giving the driver instructions where to let us off. Off we went at the speed of light passing fields (later to be known as paddocks) of cows and horses and exclaiming in broad Scots about the coats on the horses. Our excitement was immense when we finally arrived at the hospital where I was to spend the next year helping to train 1st part Maternity nurses. Betty was to leave there 3 months later - but that is her story. We were greeted by the Matron, Miss Noble, to be told we wouldn't be spending our first night there as our rooms wouldn't be vacant until the following day. We were to spend the night with friends of hers in Waiuku. Those friends gave us a right royal welcome and as a great treat for us had spent the morning collecting rock oysters. Our meal consisted of raw rock oysters accompanied by bread and butter. After being taught how to open the oysters and pop the beastly slimy horrible things into our mouths, I vowed I would never eat another oyster again. The first thing Betty and I had to do was to try not to use our Scottish vernacular. The first patient I had, who was just ready to have her baby, looked very blank when I said to her "you poor wee soul are you fair wabbit?" We settled down very well and everyone was very good to us. The hospital was smaller than any I had worked in before but it was very friendly. My only pet hate there was the Hoo Hoo bugs. Quite a few things were done differently from what we were used to but we soon learnt and the babies still came out the same way. One of the nurses, who all had their general training, and were doing their post graduate maternity training, was Margaret Meads. I didn't know in those days that her cousin Colin Meads was to become a famous All Black. Margaret and I became great friends and I was to become her bridesmaid at the end of the following year. After I had been there for a while, Miss Noble, the Matron, had 3 weeks leave and I was left in charge. One of Miss Nobles' duties was giving the lectures and tutorials to the

Maternity nurses. After the 1st lecture I knew it was definitely not my forte, I knew the material I was teaching but had no talent for imparting it to the others. It was a very long 3 weeks. The staff were invited to a Ball after I had been in Waiuku for a couple of months. My first NZ dance. I got all dressed up in a long dress and was astonished when my partner turned up in an open necked shirt. At the end of her 6 months training Margaret Meads left for a position in Te Aroha Maternity Hospital. We kept in touch by letter and phone and she told me she had got engaged to Keith whom she had known for a few years. At the end of my year in Waiuku I applied for the position of relieving Matron in Te Aroha, at Margaret's urging. So started my 2nd year in NZ. My arrival at Te Aroha Maternity hospital (it is now a rest home) was quite dramatic. I walked in the door complete with luggage to be grabbed by Margaret saying "thank God you are here" as she pulled me down the corridor after dumping my suitcases on the floor. There had been an unexpected premature delivery - the patient didn't even live in Te Aroha - and the mother was bleeding, the baby just 1lb. 2oz. No doctor could be found.

There followed a pretty busy few hours before we could relax enough to have a cuppa in the dining room. I still hadn't seen my room and by this time it was nearly midnight and the conversation had turned to earthquakes. Margaret and the other girls were very cheerfully telling me Te Aroha was right on top of an earthquake belt as I was taken out to my room in the pitch dark. No one had put on any outside lights for me and I hadn't a clue where I was. I unpacked enough for the night and snuggled down into bed to sit bolt upright as I felt the ground swaying and heard a great thunderous noise. Earthquake I thought, then saw lights flashing past. My room was almost on top of the railway line and the 1am express was passing by. I had been beautifully 'set up.' All the time I was in Te Aroha, about 6 months, I was in a very insidious position as temporary Matron, as I had applied for the job as Matron, but because I didn't have my Plunkett training the position was still being advertised. I made up my mind to learn and also enjoy myself as I had no intention of ever doing Plunkett, which I have never believed in. Margaret was busy with wedding arrangements and asked me to be bridesmaid. We had some great times together as Margaret's fiancé's parents, the Brimblecombes, took me to their hearts and treated me as a daughter. My first NZ holiday was at Whangamata, at that time, a one house, one tree, one horse and one dog place. Margaret, Barbara (another nurse) and I had one tent and Keith (Margaret's fiancé) and 3 of his friends had another tent. We camped under a big tree overlooking the beach, well chaperoned by the Brimblecombe parents, who had a bach on the other side of the harbour. They dropped in on us at unexpected intervals when there would be a fast shuffle and exchange between tents. We toured through the Coromandel in a Model T Ford a 1916 Buick and a 1948 Ford V8. Keith and Margaret took me into the native bush one day, a day never to be forgotten as Keith knew the name of every tree, leaf and flower and made it come alive with history. The day of Keith and Margaret's wedding dawned. It was held in Hamilton and they picked me up at the hospital in the morning. I had been

up working most of the night so was very tired but nothing could dampen the happiness of the day. After the ceremony the wedding party all went to the Waikato Hospital where Margaret's brother, Hamish, was a patient. He had had a very bad tractor accident and no one knew whether he would walk again or not. We all paraded up and down his ward in our wedding finery. Margaret looked beautiful in her white dress and left her bouquet on Hamish's bed. I missed Margaret after that but was busy trying to rid the hospital of the plague of rats that had been there for years. They were in the walls and ceilings and nothing had been done about them, as the previous Matron had two very spoilt lazy cats so wouldn't put down poison. I got someone in to put rat poison in the ceilings and was told that if I got a fox terrier dog I would have no further trouble. Scottie, the pup, duly arrived, I had no further trouble with rats but that puppy soon had all the staff wound around his little paw. I would find baby shoes, jackets and nappies in his kennel and look out on to the lawn to see him swinging from the bottom of the drying sheets as we did our own laundry there. The time came when another nurse with my qualifications plus Plunkett training was found. I was asked to stay on as her deputy but 2 weeks after her arrival I resigned as no way could I have worked with her. My next stop was to be Burwood Hospital in Christchurch, but first came my farewell party, given by Keith and Margaret and their families. It was held in a hall with no furniture, but one chair with a potted Scotch thistle beside it. The hall was over Keith's business premises, and the chair was for me. It was a great party, made even better by Hamish, Margaret's brother, getting the first flicker of movement in one of his legs: he was on the road to recovery.

The trip to Christchurch was the first of many a plane flight for me. The maternity annexe of Burwood hospital was a very busy place and at that time was mainly for deliveries where the unexpected was likely to happen and for difficult births. Many amusing things happened on that 2nd floor ward. One morning as I came on duty I found a man waving his arms hysterically, at the top of the stairs, shouting "my wife, my wife." I couldn't see his wife so grabbing a couple of pairs of forceps and scissors I dashed down the stairs calling to one of the other midwives to send a stretcher down in the lift. I found the car, all doors open, with mother in the front passenger seat sobbing "it happened coming over the cattle stop nurse." As I climbed into the car with her and her baby already born, I happened to glance upwards to see a row of faces at the windows of the geriatric ward looking on and applauding. Another time we had a 14 year old girl brought in with her baby who had gravel rash on its face. She had been sitting on an outside 'long drop' toilet when it was born. Life in the Sisters home was tremendous, we had great times and real comradeship. Our ring leader was a part Maori girl called Skipper, a very beautiful girl who made sure no one felt 'left out.' There was a station wagon that took us into the City on our 'off duty' times. Four of us bought bicycles and joined a horse riding school. We used to cycle to the stables where our teacher was an ex cavalry Sgt. Major. He taught us to ride - the army way. My first horse was Rajah, an ex race horse. he was a bag of bones and very old. We were not allowed to use a saddle until we could 'post' properly, so

round and round the paddock we bounced with the Sgt. Major shouting "left turn, right turn, back straight" etc. After our lesson he would make us do exercises while still on the horse's back, to keep us from 'being stiff' afterwards. He never considered our poor bottoms, I had blisters from Rajah's razor sharp back- bone. As we got off the horse he taught us the anatomy of the beast, then we un-bridled and rubbed the horse down before putting him in the stable. Once we could 'post' we were given a saddle and taken in a group down to the beach, by the Sgt. Major on his gig. I loved it, he would make us ride stirrup to stirrup, at a canter then gallop. He taught us to trot, to form fours, to wheel and to stand. He would have us standing, then trot past in his gig shouting "Nancy, sit up straight, keep your elbows in etc." After we could control our horses to his satisfaction we were allowed to go out in twos or threes, into the woods. Oh! what joy that was, walking our horses while we chatted, then having a gallop through the trees. When we weren't riding, cycling or shopping in Cathedral square, we were at the beach. What a happy time that was. It was all to come crashing down round my ears on the 12th January when I was wakened at 11am (I was on night duty) by one of the senior staff who showed me a cable from Scotland telling me my mother was critically ill. I had been planning to go home in July to see my mother and break off my engagement to Jim so tried to move all my plans forward. The first flight I could get home was a week away but before I could take it I received another cable from Dad saying Mum had died peacefully on the 16th and to delay my flight and stick with my original plans. I sadly left Christchurch in May and made my way to Auckland to catch a Sunderland seaplane to Sydney on my way to Brisbane to see my aunt, at Dad's request. The seaplane flight was fantastic. Why oh why has flight travel speeded up so much? Landing in Rose Harbour with the wash of the water splashing up and over the plane skids was a thrill never forgotten. I had made friends with a lady from Sydney, on the plane. Her husband had recently died and she had been on a trip to help her with the grieving process. She didn't want to go back to an empty house and as I had to spend 6hrs in Sydney before my plane to Brisbane left she asked me if she could be my hostess. She took me everywhere that day, gave me dinner in the Hotel Australasia and transported me by taxi to the airport, waiting to see me on the plane to Brisbane. I had my first sight of a City's lights as the plane made a complete circle of Sydney, switching off the lights inside the plane, before it made its way to Brisbane. My aunt had left Scotland 30 years prior to my visit to her and I was the first of my family she had met, but we knew one another at once as I stepped down from the plane, and she greeted me in broad Scots. She was so like my father but very unlike her sister Jessie, who lived in England. We had 2 weeks together. My cousin, Hugh, was living in Toowoomba at that time but joined his mother in giving me a good time. Before I had left Auckland I had had to get a tax clearance certificate, but was not told I would have to get one again before leaving Australia, even though I was only there for 2 weeks, so it was very fortunate that I called in to a travel agent to check on my flight back to NZ. My plane from Sydney was to leave at 12.01am but I had to leave Brisbane at 11am. The

plane from Sydney developed engine trouble and was to be delayed 12 hours but I had already left Brisbane before the travel people tried to get in touch with me, so I landed in Sydney with no where to spend the night. Panic stations, eventually they found a hotel for me, which I am sure was a brothel as there were very strange noises and comings and goings that night. I was petrified to go to the toilet and by morning my 'tonsils were floating.' I was picked up at 10am by car and we boarded the seaplane ready to take off at 12md. The plane engines were revved up and we scooted across Rose Harbour for a couple of minutes then arrived back again at the landing stage. More engine trouble, and as this was after 12 hours delay already the other passengers and I were getting a bit apprehensive. We all disembarked and sat around the airport lounge eventually taking off at 3pm. It wasn't the end of our woes however as about 1/2 an hour from Auckland we were flying through a violent thunderstorm. I was sitting just behind the left hand wing and could see the lightening playing around the propeller. It was quite terrifying and I was glad when we landed in Auckland. Barbara Hand, another nursing friend of mine was there to met me. Her parents had been phoning the airport every hour or so to find out when the plane was due to land as it was terrible weather. They were sitting in the car when Barbara and I made a dash for it, loaded up with my luggage. I spent two nights with them at their home in Pt. Chevalier, then went on to Te Aroha to spend my last week with Keith & Margaret Brimblecombe and my brand new Godson Neil. There were floods everywhere that week and after a very tearful farewell from Margaret I made my way by train to Wellington. We were the last train to get through for a few days, as the water was well up the wheels of the train and we were about 4 hours late in arriving in Wellington. They had held up the sailing time of the ship as there were quite a few passengers for it on the train. I'll never forget that ship leaving Wellington Harbour, the band was playing 'Now is the hour.' I was leaving all my friends behind me and didn't know whether I would ever return to this country I had come to love. There were tears galore. A Kiwi girl, Lorna McDonald, whom I had met at Burwood Hospital, where she had just finished her midwifery training, was travelling to Scotland with me, she was to stay with my family until she had found a job. She was excited about the beginning of her adventure and I was sad at leaving, so we made a peculiar pair. The ship anchored off shore at Pitcairn Island, our first stop. It was night time and the ship had its lights blazing over the sea as we watched the Islander's boats coming towards us out of a mist. They were sitting in the open boats with upturned faces, all singing "In the sweet bye and bye.' A most ethereal experience. They came on board to sell us souvenirs. To me they all looked the same. We stayed at anchor that night then set off again very early in the morning bound for Panama. Going through the canal took a long time but what an experience. I had made a friend of a passenger who was an engineer, who had been through the canal before. He gave me a running commentary as we moved through the locks. It was very hot but I took lots of photographs, now alas, lost. The day we spent ashore at Panama was just a haze of heat. Poor Lorna really

felt it as she had very long hair which she kept coiled around her head. We were quite glad to leave there. Our arrival at Southampton docks really brought home to me my mother's death. Dad had managed to get permission to be right on the dock-side and as I was standing on the deck as we drew alongside all I could see was the solitary figure of my father standing waiting for me. It was very sad. Having Lorna with me helped a great deal. It took us quite a time to say our 'farewells' to friends made on the trip, collect all our luggage and get to London. We spent the night with a cousin of Dad's then travelled up to Scotland the following day, arriving in Leuchars late in the evening, where my brother, Nick, was waiting to meet us with the car. Dad and I had hardly let one another's hands go all that time as we were both thinking of Mum. The floodgates stayed closed until we walked into the house. Poor Lorna, what a reception for her, but she understood. Once Dad and I had talked and talked about Mum we settled down a bit.

He told me that she had hung on to her life longer than they expected, waiting for me to get home. Then Dad asked me about Jim, and I told him that I was going to break off my engagement as after being away for 2 years and meeting so many other people I knew I didn't want to settle down and that Jim wasn't the man for me. I had phoned Him as soon as I got home and arranged to meet him the following day. As soon as I saw him I realised he knew what was coming as my letters to him had become fewer and fewer and references about other men more frequent. It was very difficult for both of us but we parted good friends. I took Lorna through to St. Andrews to introduce her to my old Matron at Craigtoun hospital who gave Lorna my old job as Staff midwife. Before she started work, Lorna, myself and another midwife I knew called Elizabeth, hired a car and did a trip around Pitlochry, Killecrankie and Blair Atholl. What a trip that was, and to my delight we saw, and heard, a piper in full highland dress standing on a hillock which was surrounded by heather. Where he had come from I don't know, there was not another soul to be seen, but what a thrill to be seen by my Kiwi friend Lorna. The heater in the car was faulty and could not be turned off so we were pretty hot and sweaty but we had a great 3 days. Lorna was installed in St. Andrews and I started job hunting. My brother, Bruce, and wife Margot, were going to come and live with Dad, rent free, in return for looking after Dad, who was still working full-time, so I was free to pursue my career. I decided to go district nursing and got a job in Perth. I had a district nurse's house, which was an old Nissen hut converted. It was one of 13 in a horse-shoe shaped street. There was no number 13 but 12 and 12A. It was ideal as Perth is only 22 miles from my home village of Wormit so Dad could come and spend his weekends with me. District nursing in those days included midwifery and it meant 24hr 'call' 7days a week, with 1 weekend off a month. It was very hard work and early morning starts, to give insulin injections to the diabetic patients before they had their breakfasts. Those injections had to be given regardless of lost sleep over an overnight midwifery call. Meal times were staggered as we had to come home and cook them ourselves, plus all the other household chores, including lawn cutting and gardening. There were

3 bedrooms in the house, one for Dad, 1 for me and the 3rd converted into a surgery, complete with instrument steriliser and 1st aid equipment. As I look back whilst writing this, I wonder how I coped and I realise, it was with great difficulty, a lot of laughs and lots of lost sleep. It was great having Dad at the weekends as he took over the cooking, did some washing for me and chopped wood for the fire. It was very cold that winter with deep snow. I was the only one with a car (my own) the other nurses used bicycles during the day or taxis at night. During the day I would be asked to deliver the gas and air machines for the other nurses, in return for a small petrol allowance. The only concession made for using my own car was being allowed to claim the equivalent of a taxi fare if I used it at night. How the other nurses managed I don't know as Perth is a hilly City. In my district there was only one street that I could have cycled up but the other areas weren't quite so hilly. In the mornings after we had given our routine insulin injections we had to report to the District Nurse's headquarters in the centre of the City where we were issued with the names of any new patients and treatments that had come in since the previous morning. When called to a Maternity case we took a pupil midwife from Perth Infirmary with us. It was part of their midwifery training and I used to enjoy their company if it was a night call, as the doctors, once they got to know us, never came out to the patients. If there was a dire emergency, the patient was transferred to hospital. The doctors still collected their fee though. One particular week, I hadn't been to bed for four nights, when Dad and the family came through to Perth to see a play at the Repertory theatre, bringing a ticket for me. I asked one of the other nurses to take 'call' for me and off I went with the family. As soon as we were all seated, I fell asleep and had to be wakened to stand up for the playing of the 'Queen' at the end of the show. The nurse who had taken 'call' for me was called out at 9pm and was out all night, so that was one 'I owed her.' Dad was gradually coming to terms with life without Mum and started planning to carry out one of the terms of her Will, which was to take her ashes out to Chania, in Crete, where she was born, and scatter them on 'Suda Bay.' She must have been homesick at times as she had even called our house 'Suda.' Anyway, Dad realised that behind Mum's request was the desire that Dad travel abroad, which he had never done since the 1st World War. He made all the plans for a 3 months trip, including me. We went by ship to Rome. Travel agents were few and far between in those days, so we ended up in a 'Pension' in one large single room (not two as requested) which had a marble floor, a toilet and a bidet, the latter intriguing Dad as he had never seen one before. Can you imagine explaining to a Victorian age father what a Bidet was used for. Neither of us could speak any Italian and I only had schoolgirl French and expressive hands, but found out we either took that room or nothing. Dad adapted a divider with the sheets from his bed, to give us both some privacy. We took all the guided tours available and saw a great deal in an incredibly short time until we wised up, and set off on our own. St. Peters and Vatican City remain imprinted on my mind. The wonders of art, to be seen only there, but I was appalled at the wealth displayed in St. Peters church and the hypocrisy of the poor

people going up the stair on their knees - each step being one day less in purgatory. They were supposed to say a prayer on each step, but they were going up quicker than I could walk. Then they would run down the stair again and then on and up on their knees, over and over again. Pompeii was very interesting and Dad took many photographs. The guide gathered all the men together and took them off to look at one of the buildings, which we females were not allowed to see. It was not until about 10 years later that I knew why the men were giggling when they returned. It was a brothel they had seen, with all the figures 'in situ' when they were entombed. The catacombs were not my favourite place, as I discovered I was terrified of loosing the main party of our guided tour, as they had the lights. Dad, being even more inquisitive than me was inclined to tarry and look around so I was constantly having to go back and get him. I was glad to be out of there. We saw churches, long churches round churches, Byzantine churches and even more churches. Art galleries and fountains and gardens of fountains and more Art galleries. We went out to the place where cameos are manufactured with the most intricate carving from shells. Dad bought me a pendant which I have since lost. From Rome we were booked on the Rapido train to Naples. We were leaving early in the morning and had expected to pay for our accommodation in Rome with travellers cheques but they wanted cash, the cash we were going to use for our travels to Naples, so we ended up at the railway station with no money. Luckily our fares were paid but I decided I would try and change travellers cheques at a Banco. Dad stayed with our luggage while off I went. What, with my lack of Italian and the Italian men's way with young girls, I was soon surrounded. A timid young girl would have soon been daunted by the bottom pinching but we all had a great time and I got a small amount of money changed in a shop as the Bancos were not yet opened. It was a very small amount of money, but Dad was very glad to see me arriving back at the station just in time to get on the train. The Rapido was quite a modern train but with our limited amount of money we couldn't purchase much to eat or drink, so I used cigarettes as barter, and did quite well, they were much more acceptable than money. The Italian couple and three children in our carriage found us very entertaining as we tried to make ourselves understood. Gesticulating hands, eyes and mouths make for great fun, but we learnt quite a bit about the country we were travelling through. We were never very sure whether they invited us to come and visit them in Naples or not, but they gave us an address, no name, just address, which we didn't take any further. The saying is 'see Naples and die' I think they refer to 'olfactory psychokinesis' - the smell is enough to bend anyone's nose. Our accommodation, found by putting the address under a taxi drivers nose was single rooms this time. I often wonder what Dad used the bidet in his room for, but we were quite comfortable. We did a few guided trips then decided to investigate on our own, forgetting about the afternoon siesta when all shops are closed. We went window shopping and walked and walked, loosing all sense of direction, ending up quite lost in the filthy back streets. There was no one about and my feet hurt, Dad was tired, looking quite exhausted with the

heat. We were a bit frightened too, when we saw a familiar statue in the distance at the end of a dirty alleyway. What a relief. The upshot of our being lost was that Dad bought me a new pair of shoes the moment the shops re-opened. They were the most comfortable pair of shoes I have ever had. Italian drivers are in a class of their own and believe the horn should be used in place of the brakes, and have two speeds, stop and very fast. The police directing traffic stand on a 3ft high stand in the middle of the crossings, with a whistle in their mouths and look like something from an Italian operetta, great for an hours entertainment. We risked life and limb and took a bus trip to Amalfi. The bus driver had his head turned around to us most of the time, giving a running commentary. One hand was on the steering wheel, the other waving in the air or on the horn. We went around one way corners with just a blast on the horn and the drivers teeth flashing at the passengers. Every time we stoped new passengers would get on and have an animated conversation with the driver, both his hands waving in the air. By this time our hilarity was so great we didn't care and our arrival at Amalfi made our terror worth while. I'm left with a memory of blue skies white cliffs and the restaurant which had a roof of vines. By this time we had become adept at eating spaghetti and after we had eaten our fill we went across the road to sit on the wall looking over the sparkling sea. Our bus trip back to Naples was just as hair raising but not so terrifying as we were becoming a bit blasé. It was from Naples we did our trip to Pompeii, not from Rome. So much was seen on our trip that it was a bit overwhelming and becomes jumbles in my mind. It was now time for us to pack up again and make our way by train to Brindisi, at the tip of the heel of Italy. We were fortunate in our travelling companion this time, a teacher who spoke English. He was a very learned man who told us a great deal about Italy and the particular part of his country we were travelling through. All in all, a good train journey. Brindisi was our stepping stone to Greece and the Greek Islands so we only spent two night there. My most vivid memory of the place is having dinner in this restaurant which was crowded with men who all seemed to have beards or large moustaches. I was so fascinated by spaghetti and tomato being sucked through the hair, quite a bit dropping on to the bibs around their necks, that I forgot to eat. This tall, dark, handsome waiter came across to me, much to Dad's amusement, and taught me how to manage the spaghetti properly. It is very difficult to eat when the laughter is burbling up. Our departure for the Greek Islands, first port of call, Corfu, was on a flat bottomed boat which had once belonged to the Canadians. There were two classes for passengers - steerage and first class. The steerage passengers slept on deck along with their chickens, goats and assorted livestock, on the bottom deck and were never seen, but heard, loudly, by the 1st class passengers. Our cabins led off a veranda above the main deck of lounges and dining rooms, so that we could step out of our cabin and look down on the activities below. The passengers were mainly Italian, very volatile, and Greek, also volatile. There were a few Americans and British and the Purser arranged the seating in the dining room so that English speaking passengers were together etc. We had an American

couple, 2 young Italian men and the 1st officer, who was Greek, at our table. The conversations were hilarious and Dad kept a weather eye on the men where the virtue of his only daughter was concerned. The food was out of this world, seven courses for lunch and nine courses for dinner. Lunch was about 1pm followed by a siesta, and dinner was about 9-10pm, followed by dancing to a Greek band. The sea was pretty rough and being a flat bottomed boat we rocked and plunged. After dinner one evening I came out of my cabin, hanging on to the rail of the veranda, looked down and saw one of my Italian men friends sitting in a lounge chair with a bottle and glass on a table. The boat rocked, his chair and table slid over the floor and he looked up at me with a laughing face, clutching glass and bottle, saying "Oh la la." He managed to pour another glass before he slid back again, feet up in the air 'oh la la-ing' with gusto. Our arrival at Corfu was in the late evening and quite beautiful. We sat on deck under the floodlights watching the unloading and loading of the boat, which was accompanied by shouting, quarrelling and laughing waving arms. Dad and I thought at first, that a riot was about to break out. My Italian man friend was sitting at my side, Dad was on the other side, and whispering the interpretations of what the workers were saying. He was very naughty and I was glad Dad couldn't hear him. We were up bright and early in the morning to go ashore on this northern Ionian island, accompanied by my Italian. It is a tourist orientated island but Dad's first joy was finding stone Ginger beer, which he hadn't seen for years. We spent the day looking at statues, ruins and ancient history before going through the shops for souvenirs, then back to the ship. Our whole trip from Brindisi to Crete was 10 days of luxury and gourmet food, sailing through the blue Mediterranean sea. Apart from our day in Corfu we only stopped at the other many Greek islands to off load and load goods, always accompanied by the volatile Greek and Italian boisterous manners. Our trip through the Corinthian canal was made at night and was absolutely amazing as the ship felt and looked as if it was encased in a tunnel with lights hanging from over the height of the ship. I don't think I would have enjoyed the experience in daylight, it would have been claustrophobic, but by night, it was romantic. My uncle and aunt - Georges and Nellie Naxakis - were there to meet us on our arrival at Crete and we were whisked off to their home in Canea (Chania, as it is now called.) I had never met them before as they were relatives of my mother's. I never discovered why, but during the occupation of Crete, Uncle Georges was the Swedish consul for the Island, and he and my aunt Nellie were imprisoned by the Germans as their chief hostages. My cousins, Crystalie, Marie and Iolanthe took to the hills and acted as couriers for the British and Kiwis etc. It had a profound effect on their lives and the whole family was very highly thought of. All the family were fluent linguists and spoke English, with a Scottish accent, French, Turkish and of course Greek. At the time of our visit the girls were in Athens. The day after our arrival was "Ochi Day" the day the Cretans said 'No, they would not surrender to the Germans.' There was a parade through the streets of a pathetically small amount of their weaponry. The bunting was flying and this was followed by a church service. There are no

pews in a Greek Orthodox church so all the congregation stands. Dad and I were escorted to the front with Uncle Georges. It was a very solemn occasion but I had the greatest difficulty to keep from laughing. There was the Archbishop, in all his glory, facing us, and on either side of him were three 'brothers' facing inwards towards each other. There was a great clanging of a bell after each chant - all Greek to us - the Archbishop would chant something followed by the 6 brothers chanting together. One of the brothers, the one nearest to us, looked like 'Friar Tuck' and was always 1/2 a second behind the other 5. He had such a naughty twinkle in his eyes that it appeared to be deliberate. We were treated as VIP's but didn't have a clue what was going on as Uncle Georges was so busy introducing his Scottish relatives he forgot to interpret ate for us. Back home for a meal. The food was delicious, but to me, the cooking facilities were very antiquated. At the time of our trip Greece was very anti-British, but the Scottish race were very welcome. Aunt Nellie had told the Matron of the hospital that I was a trained nurse and I was invited to tour the hospital. I was treated like royalty with Dad following behind me, like the King consort. The midwifery and nursery facilities were primitive to me but our tour of the operating theatre was disastrous for Dad. As I couldn't understand a word that was being said to me I just followed the Matron and when she opened this door to see a man lying on an operating table with his skull open, I had no time to stop Dad from following, and he felt rather ill. After we had been there for four days Dad asked Uncle Georges if he would take us to Suda Bay, our destination. I knew Dad had Mum's ashes with him but he wouldn't discuss it with me, so I didn't know when he was going to carry out Mum's last wish. At Suda Bay there were two Turkish ships in the harbour and as we walked out to the end of the harbour the sailors were calling and whistling to me, I was the only female there so of course, being me, I was playing up to them, when I turned around and saw my father scattering my mother's ashes into the sea. My feelings were indescribable. All I could do was put my arms around my father.

Our next port of call was Athens where we spent 10 days with my cousin Crystalie and her husband Vasily Paraskivopolous. They had a beautiful home in Stisihorous St. The land had belonged to Vasily and under a City scheme the buyer built a tenement building with Vasily and Family given choice of a flat. From the top of the building you could see right into the palace grounds with the Greek Evzones rivalling the Guards at Buckingham Palace any day. Vasily and Crystalie's flat was very large and luxurious with the sleeping area shut off from the living area. Athens like Italy had the afternoon siesta but Dad could not get used to late nights and still went to bed about 10pm which left us free to go out and about without him acting as chaperone. We went shopping then on to a Taverna most evenings, gathering friends of Vasily's on the way. One evening there were about 12 of us, all Greek except me, but all speaking English out of courtesy to me. We were at one large table in this taverna, the table being close to the band, when the band leader asked Vasily which one of us was English. Vasily pointed to me and said I was their Scottish cousin. With

this the band leader gave an enormous smile, turned and spoke to the rest of the band and they started playing "Muck in the Geordie's Byre" with great gusto. Crystalie and Vasily urged and urged me on to the table top where I did something resembling a Scottish dance, to the accompaniment of clapping. It was just one big party that evening, at the end of which we bought enormous ice creams to eat on the way home. Vasily had studied archaeology at University so appointed himself guide for Dad and me visiting the Acropolis and Parthenon. He brought it alive for us, so that we could almost see life many centuries before. Iolanthe, only 18 months older than me, was my guide around the City and beaches. She was a translator at the American Embassy, Crystalie doing the same work at the British Embassy. One day Dad, Iolanthe and I went to an out lying beach to swim. There was quite a long walk from the bus stop to the beach, with me desperately looking for a toilet. That was my introduction to the 'hole in the ground' loo - just two foot steps to stand on, then try and hit the hole. During our holiday my hair had grown quite long and I asked Iolanthe to act as interpreter at a hair dresser's salon, telling her to say I only wanted very little hair cut off. Needless to say, the hairdresser was scissor happy. It was the first time I had seen the wash basins where you put your head back. In UK it was still standard to put your head forward over the basin. I was getting quite hysterical not knowing what was happening, as Iolanthe had disappeared outside. It was soon time for us to say goodbye to our relatives and retrace our steps to Naples. It was a bitterly cold windy day when we boarded the ship for home. Once back at work in Scotland my job as District nurse in Perth had lost it's appeal. Getting up in the middle of the night and stepping out of the house into a snowdrift was no longer the way I wanted to spend the rest of my life and, on the ship on the way home from Crete I met a man called Michael Gallagher. He was Irish and lived in New South Wales. He was going back to Ireland to 'find his roots.' We became friendly on board the ship, just friendly, but he made me pregnant. I have never seen him since the ship docked in Southampton but wrote and told him about the birth of his son - giving him no return address, so that he would not find me. I was faced with the task of telling my father about my pregnancy. He took it very well and also took all decisions out of my hands. In the 1940's - 1960's having a child whilst not married caused a stigma on the whole family, but even more so, on the child. Dad arranged for me to go and stay with his cousin, Maggie Kenny, in Gosport, telling everyone that Maggie was ill and I was going to nurse her. So I said farewell to Perth and went to stay with Maggie in Gosport. Dad paid for my board all the time I was with Maggie but my memory of that time is very vague - the mind is a wonderful thing and can blank out painful memories. My son was born on the 16th August 1955 and as his adoption had already been arranged, he was taken away from me immediately. I created such a fuss that one of the midwives allowed me a glimpse of him wrapped in his blanket. I was put back in the ward with all the other mothers and for the first day was allowed screens around my bed at feeding times, but from then on I was made to watch the other babies being fed and not allowed to see my baby again. I went back to

Maggie Kenny's place in Gosport and was then (when my baby was only 2 or 3 weeks old) taken out on a dark night to a place where I signed his adoption papers. I don't know where it was. My father then came to England and took me for a holiday in Cornwall somewhere. I will now jump ahead in my story - the pain of loosing a son was never to leave me, all I knew was, his name was Simon, and I thought, lived in Stoke-on-Trent. But joy of joy, in August of 1998 I was to hear my son's voice on the phone from Melbourne - he had found me and his name is Simon James Pryor, his wife is Judith and my grand-daughters are Alice and Kathleen. My life has come full circle, and my family is complete!! JOY.

To return to 1955 - while in England I had a good look around and made up my mind what I wanted to do. I saw an advertisement in a magazine for a post graduate course in Plastic, Burn and Oral surgery - this was for me. I spent the next year at Odstock Hospital in Salisbury, England. It was a most enjoyable year, 6 months of which was spent as theatre sister. The camaraderie between patients and staff was different from anything else I had experienced. Very few of the patients were bed patients, except just after surgery, and as they all had some form of disfigurement, there was no self consciousness. The exception of course was the Burns unit where pain seemed to be the order of the day and changing dressings could be quite horrific. We only had the most severe burn cases, most transferred to us from other parts of the country. The Plastic surgery theatre was very interesting with never the rush of a general surgery theatre. Standard instruments included pen ink and a ruler for marking the operation sites and making sure that every piece of skin, or whatever, fitted precisely. I still had the travel bug and the particular friend I made there, Isobel, and I decided that after our course was finished we would join the Army. Unfortunately, Isobel was turned down, but I went ahead and after extensive interviews, references and medical examinations, on the 8th August 1956 I became Lieutenant Eva Margaret Nancy Lindsay 448414 Queen Alexandra's Royal Army Nursing Corp. - QARANC - or QA's for short.

We had to report to the Army head quarters in London then were taken to Moss Bros. Tailors, to be fitted with our Khaki uniform, shirts, ties, shoes etc. - fortunately the etc. did not include the old fashioned government issue bloomers. Our personal measurements were recorded at Moss Bros as we would visit them quite frequently in the future. Dressed in our khaki which we were to get heartily sick of in the next 3 months, our class of 14 were given our first taste of Army transport on the way to the QA's depot at Guildford. On our arrival at the depot we were billeted in 2 large Nissen huts. We each had separate rooms with a pot bellied type of fire, for which we all cajoled the batman to give us extra fuel. I landed on my feet as one of the three batmen in our hut came from Dundee and as I was the only Scot there, he took me under his wing. We had to 'Bull' our black uniform shoes, i.e. 'spit and polish.' It could take hours of finger breaking work to get the required mirror finish on new shoes, but my batman, George, whisked my shoes off, the first night I was there, and returned them in the

morning looking like glass. I very rarely had to use my own spit during that 3 months, and I always passed inspection. The first two days were mostly spent getting to know one another and finding our way around the camp. We spent a lot of time dodging anyone else in uniform as we hadn't a clue who to salute or who saluted us. This was to change rapidly. Every morning and afternoon we had 2 hours of lectures on Army protocol and law, followed by 2 hours of 'square bashing' where we learnt which was our left and right feet. I did not easily take to marching, I always found my zany sense of humour bubbling up, especially when we had to stand to attention for inspection. We weren't even allowed to blink, and my mind would be off on one of its flights of fancy. The Sgt. Major who taught us parade ground drill used to shout awful things at us, followed by Ma'am. He could get away with saying anything as long as he finished it with Ma'am. I didn't envy him his job as apart from our 'green squad' he had to drill all the other QA's who had been re-called from the Reserve list for the Suez crisis. Some of them were Matrons of big hospitals who never expected to be precipitated back to Army life. The Army law was fairly tedious. Apart from the history of the Corp etc. we were told how and when to put someone on a 'charge,' which we never expected to have to do, but soon learnt it was necessary. We learnt the protocol of Officer's mess dinners, when and how to toast the 'Queen' how to address Madam President and 'Madam Vice' - which always made me crack up. I always imagined Madam Vice to be a painted tart of a brothel keeper. We were allowed to go into Guildford on Saturday evenings and found it a delightful place. On Sunday mornings we had compulsory church parade. And of course, every evening we had to press razor sharp creases in our uniforms, launder our shirts and smalls and 'Bull' our shoes. Our squad all became very good friends but I was never to meet any of them again as we were all posted to different places. We had two more visits to Moss Bros. in London, for uniform fittings. Ward uniforms were grey with scarlet shoulder length capes and gold buttons. Tropical uniforms were white with scarlet epaulettes and gold buttons. Dress uniforms were Air Force blue with peaked hats. Those hats were worn with tropical uniforms too. We were also issued with two pairs of khaki trousers, for which we never had a fitting. Mine were at least 6" too long and I never wore them. During our training we were given 'front line' drill, complete with very realistic casualties. That was followed by the CCS (Casualty clearing station) very similar to MASH without Hawkeye Pearce. We had written tests and exams then in our last week we took the 'Oath of allegiance to the Queen.' This was done in the chapel at the depot, the service being taken by an Army Chaplain. I found the whole service extremely moving and I doubt there was a dry eye in the chapel. After this our number, rank and name was 'posted' in the London Gazette. Then came our passing out parade. It was taken by the depot Commandant and went very well until we were marching off the parade ground 'at the salute.' The front 'right marker' whom we followed - she was supposed to follow the Captain - hadn't heard the Captain call left wheel, and marched straight on, us following, while the Captain was marching off on her own. Fortunately it wasn't seen

by the others as we were almost out of sight of the parade ground when it happened. Next thing was waiting our first 'postings' and the prospect of a week's leave. Waiting to know where we were going to spend the next few months was quite exciting but made us realise we no longer had any say in the matter. Eventually the news came through, I was going to Tidworth Military Hospital, near Birkenhead, across the Mersey from Liverpool. The other girls were scattered all over the country. We were all saying our farewells as we packed our black tin trunks, with our name, rank and army number printed in large white letters, followed by their destinations. Those trunks were wonderful things and ended up with many labels and bumps and dents on them. The farewells were accompanied by a lot of 'high jinks' taking of photographs and promises to keep in touch with one another. We were all to see the Guildford depot many times again as we stayed there before and after postings abroad or different leaves, but I never met any of our class again. Next thing was our weeks' leave home. We had to travel in khaki which meant 1st class, paid by the Army. I always preferred travelling by night as I had done the trip from London to Dundee so often it had lost it's interest. I was on the train at 10pm and asleep by 10.30pm and only wakened in time to get off the train at Leuchars at 8am. Dad was there to meet me, beaming his welcome. My brother, Bruce, wife Margot and nephews Roy and Eric (who by this time were living with Dad) were all waiting for me at home. It was a Saturday so there were no shop hours or school and it was so good to be home. We had a quiet week, but a happy one, then it was once again on the train to London. I had to change stations in London and was looking for a porter to help me with my luggage and find me a taxi when this voice - which I recognised came from a person who had had a tracheotomy - called out, "I'm coming nurse Lindsay." I looked at this man, then looked once again, my heart filling with joy as I realised it was Jimmy, an old patient of mine from Odstock hospital. He had come to us there from a London Hospital where he went to have a wisdom tooth pulled and they found he had cancer of the jaw. They removed the whole lower jaw and we constructed a new one with skin and bone grafts. It didn't take him minutes to find me a taxi and I was soon at Tidworth hospital. It was a very old bleak building and apart from all the military discipline i.e. patients lying to attention for C.O's rounds, no different from any other hospital. One thing that does stand out in my mind was when I was on night duty, doing the hospital rounds, the psychiatric ward was a locked ward with a sergeant and corporal on guard. There was a great stamping of feet and jingle of keys as I approached, then after the doors were locked again I would do the round of the patients with a R.A.M.C. orderly and the sergeant and corporal on either side of me guarding me from the poor inoffensive patients. It was quite archaic. Any time off I had I spent with my old friend from Midwifery days, Doris Kneen, who by this time was married and living in Liverpool. She was working as a nurse on Liverpool docks and I would go and give her a hand which was a relief from Tidworth as I was not greatly enamoured of that hospital. At the end of three months I got my first overseas posting to Nairobi. With a fluttering heart I took myself back to Guildford where I got all my papers,

then on to the military airport at Gatwick where the last plane to leave there had crashed on 'take off'. The plane was full of Army personnel with wives, I was the only female service person, so soon chummed up with one of the wives. The departure lounge had one wall full of Life insurance machines. Everyone looked at them and laughed, poo poohing the idea. We boarded the plane which taxied out, revved the engines, then took us back again where we were told to disembark. This time quite a few of the passengers went to the Life insurance machines when we knew there was engine trouble. 2 hours later there was a repeat performance and by this time it was about 11pm. We were told we would not be taking off until the morning and all army personnel were to be billeted at the barracks, civilian personnel were to go to a hotel. I looked at the officer in charge then all those lovely army men - now, I would think 'goody goody' but in those days I thought 'Oh! dear'. I went with the wives to the hotel. In the morning we took off and had an uneventful trip to Nairobi. I was met at the airport and transported out to the B.M.H. My first impressions of Nairobi were wondrous and the African continent just wrapped itself around my heart. The following day was my birthday and I wakened to the sound of birds, the brilliant colours of the trees and the sound of African voices. 'I was home'. My first day was spent finding my way around the hospital. Our quarters were across the road from the main buildings but new rooms were being built in the hospital grounds. There were African guards with dogs visible everywhere as the 'Mau Mau' were still very active. I was struck by all the different colours and sounds. Our servants were all Kikuyu, who were the back bone of the Mau Mau. This frightened me at first until I realised how blasé everyone else was about it. My first ward was the maternity ward, only 24 beds but always surprisingly full as there was a large contingent of Army in Nairobi at that time. I was there only 3 weeks when I was posted to Mauritius where I was to spend the next 18 months with the 2nd Kings African Rifles. The air flight there was uneventful but the landing was extremely painful. The formation of the volcanic mountains made for a very quick descent with the resultant exquisite earache. The B.M.H. was at Vacaos and as there were only 5 female officers (soon to be 4 when the Col. Matron went tropo and had to be escorted home) we lived the hard and high life. One of us was always on duty or 'on call'. After the Colonel went home, there was Maj. Jean Dallas, Capt. Betty Halliwell, Lieut. Houghton and myself. Jean, Gil and I spent many happy times together. Betty was engaged to one of the KAR officers so we didn't see a great deal of her. All the RAMC officers were married so were living outside the compound. Our quarters were in the same compound, but separate from the male officers. The 4 end rooms in our building were kept for visiting VIP's or Navy officers. The hospital itself was across the road from our compound and was built in a 2 storey square with verandas all round and grass lawns in the centre of the square. On the ground floor were the African RSM and SM's quarters, and two African wards kept for any epidemics. There was also an STD ward and Leprosy ward. On the 2nd storey was a female and 1 male European ward, theatre block and male and female African wards. There were 3

RAMC doctors and the rest of the staff were Indian. The senior Indian theatre orderly was as good as any theatre Sister in fact all the Indian nursing staff were terrific. We did not employ any of the Chinese or African Creoles on the island as they had been found unsuitable. The KAR Battalion were all from different African tribes, 'straight out of the Bush' and had no communal language so had all learnt to speak Swahili which we had to learn too. Between speaking Swahili in the hospital, French Creole on the Island, pigeon English with the Indians, I spoke broad Scots and waved my arms a lot and usually managed to make myself understood. I did wonder though when I was taking the ante-natal clinic with the doctor why he and all the African bibis would be rolling around with laughter. I only learnt after about a month of this hilarious pantomime that instead of asking the Bibis (African women) if they had passed urine, I was earnestly telling them I wanted to pass urine. At mid-day every day, the Askaris - African soldiers - paraded, complete with brass band. They were a joy to watch as they have a natural rhythm which their European officers lacked. We always tried to be on the veranda to watch them. As for the Bibis, we just 'clicked.' They have such a sense of humour and dignity, with a bit of naughtiness, they are delightful. We did find that most of their NCO's had been Missionary trained, and usually turned out to be troublemakers. Mauritius is a tropical paradise, apart from the Cyclones. When I first arrived Gil Houghton and Jean Dallas, who had only been there for a few weeks, and myself, hired a taxi to take us around the Island. The main industry was sugar cane which seemed to be everywhere, and the native houses were mostly very unsubstantial huts. The Island is 500 miles east of Madagascar, and is densely populated, mostly Indian and Chinese. In those days there were only 5 pure French families - they were the elite of the Island, and most of the Creoles claimed to belong to one of the families. The main port is Port Louis with our nearest shopping centre at Curiepe where most of the shops were owned by Chinese, and we had a leave camp at Le Chaland. We worked very hard but our social life was tremendous. Any visiting VIP was entertained in our Mess by us. For the first six months I was 'bar member' which meant I had to account for every tot of spirits or bottle of beer drunk. There was a register which was signed by the person buying the drink and the amount was presented as a Mess bill every month. The bar member had to do accounts every week. I had to learn how to mix cocktails, ice glasses for White Ladies etc. The cocktail parties were usually fairly small about 20 or so, all in uniform. Usually we were the only females there, either 2 or 3 of us as one was always on duty. Government House dinners were command affairs, usually one or two of us (we took it in turns) and again we were the only females in uniform. The Governor General was Sir Robert Scott and a very poor conversationalist, he could only talk about gardens. There was about one dinner a month on average and when any big ship was in Port there would be a dance. On one occasion when Lady Scott was ill, a request, or rather command, was sent to our Commanding Officer for one of us to deputise - it was me. Oh! boy did I have a Ball, yessiree. I had to stand in line with Sir Robert to receive the guests, all

naval officers and the five French family members, then I danced the night away. Whenever Sir Robert got tired or 'fed up,' he had the band play 'The Queen' we all had to stand to attention, then leave. It was always a very abrupt end to an evening but after a couple of times, we used to make bets when it was going to happen, and if we were really enjoying ourselves tried to get an entertaining partner for Sir Robert. If it was a boring evening we would get him a boring partner. Lady Scott used to disappear after the guests had been received, or if it was a dinner she would go after the ladies had rejoined the men, after their 'Port.' We used to have leave of 2 weeks every 3 months and Gil, Jean and I bought an old bomb between us and it was put to very good use for our leaves. A new world was opened to me at Le Chaland. Never a strong swimmer I was apprehensive before my first snorkel and flipper attempt but it only took two minutes to forget my fears as I saw the beauty of coral and fish all around me. By my second attempt I was swimming out to the coral reef surrounding the island, a mile away from shore. At low tide the reef would be uncovered and the most amazing coloured star fish and other small sea creatures could be seen. Quite often it would take a large wave of the rising tide to make us realise there were sharks on the other side of the reef and we would go hell for leather to shore. I was once swept off my feet and had a bad coral graze down my spine, extremely painful and difficult to heal. Another of our delights was going out for a Chinese meal, far superior to any I have had anywhere else. We would be greeted with an enormous bowl of prawns to titillate our appetites, while the food we had chosen was cooked. We were always surrounded by male escorts being the only eligible white females around. But it wasn't all beer and skittles, there were the devastating cyclones. The hospital, the school buildings and our Mess Quarters were considered the only cyclone proof buildings around, so we all had our allocated duties. Mine was the hospital. At the first warning I reported there and arranged for all patients fit to be moved, to be evacuated to the school and all immobile patients moved into easily accessible rooms but still keeping the European and African patients in their separate wards with an open ramp (roof only covered) between. At the second warning, usually about an hour later, I had to put the hatches up over all the windows etc. notify our senior doctor and the Sergeant Major. The other doctors went to the school and our Mess, along with the wives. The Sgt. Major had all the walkie talkies arranged along with our food, usually baked beans, as when the 3rd warning came we knew all communications to the outside world would be cut. We had generators for power but they weren't always reliable so torches and lamps were the order of the day. Most often the cyclone didn't reach a third warning as it would veer away from the island, but 3 of them did, in the time I was there and they are terrifying. I still had to look after the patients and walk that ramp between the two areas, once to find one of the African Bibis (women) had managed to climb up the steps from their quarters to the labour ward in 2nd stage labour. I had to deliver her baby by torch light while the cyclone blew, without any way of summoning help. Fortunately it was a straight forward delivery but when I got back to the

European ward and was offered a plate of Baked Beans by the Sgt. Major I wasn't in the least bit hungry. But like all things, the cyclones passed and we were left the devastation to view the next day. If the sugar cane had been destroyed it was a disaster for the Islanders as their standard of living was very low. One of our Mess batmen, an Indian named Gobin had to be sacked for thieving, and as charges had been laid against him he had to go to Court. I was summoned as a character witness for him and sat in this French Court not understanding a word that was spoken. When I gave evidence for him telling how low his wages were etc. it was done through an interpreter. He still got a short jail sentence and as he was the only breadwinner in the family the whole of his family reached almost starvation point before he was released. Our battalion, the 2nd Kings' African Rifles were recalled back to Dar-es-Salaam to be replaced by another battalion, almost the last before the end of British rule. Gil and Jean flew back to Nairobi but I went back with the battalion on the troopship. There were 4 male officers and myself. I was to be in charge of the Bibis & Totos (women & children.) What a trip that was. I knew most of the battalion as they had been either patients, relatives or visitors of patients, and I got on well with them all. I used to go to their quarters on the ship - steerage style - morning and afternoon and the children would clamour all over me while the women would show me how to plait their hair, which would take hours. I was very privileged to know them and have them trust me. It was a great trip and the African band was there to meet us at Dar-es-Salaam. What a sight they were, so proud, the music was so awful, but everyone was glad to be back in Africa. The Battalion was marched off the ship, the Askaris (African soldiers) first, followed by the women and children. I was standing alone at the side of the ship watching. The proudest moment of my life was when the Battalion passed, they gave me an 'eyes right' and kwa here ma'am, asante sana - goodbye, thank you very much. The ship's Captain said he had never seen it happen before. I was to spend two nights in Dar-es-Salaam and had a great time with a most memorable Crayfish Thermidor dinner at one of the swank hotels, followed by a beach party. Then it was back on board ship, the only female again, and on to Mombassa. I was to come to know Mombassa quite well, as our leave camp was there, but this time it was a case of disembark then on to the train to Nairobi, an overnight trip. Once back at Nairobi I met up with Jean and Gil again and was back at work. By this time Jomya Kenyatta, the leader of the Mau Mau, had been captured and the African unrest was quelled. Jean, a Major, and myself were in charge of the men's ward and Gil was on the women's ward. Not long after getting back a new Sgts. Mess was opened and we were all invited to the opening party. I got talking to one of the Sgts. who had a long story about a German Shepherd puppy that had been abandoned by someone. How sick it was and how he couldn't look after it because dogs weren't allowed in the Sgts. Mess. I knew I was being properly 'set up' but said I would take him - so Chui (Swahili) for Leopard) came into our lives. For the first few weeks Jean, Gill and I took turns looking after him. We filled him full of antibiotics and cleaned up the ensuing messes in my room. The end result

was an extremely handsome dog. One of our patients, an SIB Sgt. who had had pneumonia, was a dog handler, so he took over the training of Chui for me. It was quite amazing how at every stage of Chui's training the same X Ray of the Sgts. lung appeared over and over again. The Sgt. was also very good at keeping discipline in the ward and enjoyed his extended illness. One night when Chui was about 10-11 months old I wakened up with him jumping on my bed, pulling the mosquito net down in the process. I switched on the bedside lamp to see what was wrong as Chui was shaking. The entire floor was covered with Safari ants and they were still coming in under the door. I found my slippers and after shaking the ants out rammed them on my feet and ran over the ants to the door leaving Chui shivering on my bed. I knocked on the doors of the girls on either side of me then started gathering every carrying utensil to be found. By this time most of the others were awake and we threw as much hot water as possible over my room floor. You could almost see the Safari ants forming fours and marching out of my room into the room next door. They were a seething mass and it took many buckets of hot water, much help and a long time to get rid of them. In our off duty time we used to go into Nairobi and never had any lack of escorts. One street I always loved was where you could buy all the different Indian spices. The different scents were euphoric. An evening out would usually end up at a night club dancing to the African bands. We had a weekend trip to the Tree Tops hotel, spending two nights in the hotel built in the tree, watching the game come to the salt lick. We saw the Flamingos at Lake Naivasha, a pink cloud as they took to the sky. We spent many days at the Game parks, our cars almost touching prides of lion. Baboons on our car bonnet, Giraffe reaching up to get the tallest morsels from the trees. We saw the Rift Valley which in places is flanked by walls more than 3,000 ft. high. Nearly half of Kenya is a high plateau divided by the Rift Valley. Volcanic masses such as Mt. Kenya rise above the plateau. To the North east the country becomes arid. I had a photograph of myself standing on the equator line, huddled up in jerseys, it was so cold because of the height. I developed Bacillary and Amoebic dysentery, an illness I wouldn't wish on my worst enemy. The cure for amoebic dysentery is worse than the disease. On my recovery I was sent 'up country' on a 2 weeks sick leave, to Eldoret. By this time the Mau Mau uprising was settled but Eldoret was in part of the country where some terrible atrocities had been committed. There have been many books written about the Mau Mau. Not many of the people outside of the Army have ever seen the oaths taken by the Kikuyu Mau Mau. I was sick after reading 7 of them. Eldoret was a smallish township and the farm I stayed on was built by an English couple who had had every brick, tile and pieces of furniture shipped out from England. It was paradise. It had two guest houses, croquet lawn, the 'works.' I almost decided to have a relapse after my 2 weeks of being waited on hand and foot. A friend of mine was staying at Kitale, 15 or so miles away, so we did a bit of tramping around. On my return to the hospital I was put in charge of the family ward. That meant Maternity as well as everything else, then after about a month I was once again on night duty in charge of the lot.

One night I felt vaguely unwell and put it down to something I had eaten. I went to bed in the morning when I came off duty, as usual but awoke about 1pm with a pain in my tummy. I was minus a very bad appendix about 4 hours later. Edward, the African batman who looked after 3 of us insisted he held one end of the stretcher when I was being carried over to the ward and did not leave the ward again until I came out of the anaesthetic. I was up and about very quickly and was looking forward to another sick leave up country but only got a week's leave in my room. Edward had been looking after Chui for me, taking him over to the sports field for his exercise, but Chui was making himself, and me, very unpopular as anytime I went to the toilet block he wouldn't let anyone else come in. Bladders were overflowing while I showered. I was left with vague stomach pains after the operation and had exhaustive X rays as it was thought a piece of bowel had been caught in the stitches so it was decided to send me to London for further investigations. As I wasn't really ill, the powers that be decided I would work on my way home and put me in charge of two patients, from Nairobi to the London Military hospital. One an RAF airman had a badly damaged face and had to be fed. The other a soldiers' wife, was having her bladder tubes transplanted, and at that time they were coming out of her back, so I had very frequent dressings to do as she passed urine out of her back. I was suffering from a dented heart as I had had to say a fond farewell to my current boy friend, Alec. The only thing that made me in the least bit happy was that Jean and Gill were both due back in London as well. As the plane landed in London, my female patient collapsed, so we were transferred bag and baggage straight into an ambulance without going through customs - which was just as well as both my patients and myself would have paid quite a bit of 'duty' otherwise. After leaving my patients I was kept hanging around the hospital for 2 weeks waiting to see the specialist. As my tummy ache had disappeared I was having quite a good time especially when Jean arrived, followed a week later by Gill. After the specialist had seen me I was given 'sick leave.' Jean and Gill got weekend leave and the three of us stayed at the Officers club in Sloane Square. Gill by this time was a Captain so she and Jean, a Major, out-ranked me and were given a room together on the 3rd floor. I was in a double room on my own on the 2nd floor. We were all booked in by name, rank and number, no gender being given. I wakened up at 1am with a very nice looking young air force officer sitting on the end of my bed. We chatted for a while then he went to sleep in the other bed. Jean and Gill were very jealous when I told them in the morning. We did the sights that weekend and saw 'My Fair Lady.' My next move was back to the depot at Guildford prior to being posted to Cowglen Hospital in Glasgow. What a come down and I did miss Africa. Cowglen was a very old hospital and I loathed it. It was almost time for me making up my mind whether to 'sign up' for another 3 years, when I would be promoted to Captain, or take my Honourable discharge. One month of Cowglen decided me. I knew if I signed up again I would be there for at least another six months before another overseas posting became available, so

I came out of the Army, a wonderful experience I am glad to have had, but I wanted to get back to Africa.

While I was waiting for all the formalities, paper signing etc. for my Army discharge, I was scanning the papers for overseas nursing posts and found an advertisement for a Nursing Sister at the Roan Antelope Copper mine hospital in Luanshya, Northern Rhodesia (now Zambia) I applied for it and begged 'days off' from Cowglen hospital to go to London for an interview. I was accepted and found myself back in Africa whilst still on discharge leave from the Army. I was still on the Army Reserve list for another 6 years, so hoped I would never be required for service again. Zambia is a much different country from Kenya. It is a land locked country with different African tribes, more than 70 ethnic groups. Copper accounts for 90% of exports. The farmers were mostly subsistence farmers. Luanshya was divided into 2 different townships within one. The copper mine township being the larger part. The hospital was quite large and catered for European mine workers only, in one part, then another hospital for African mine workers in another part. We were well paid and well housed. Each Sister had her own room and sitting room which could be furnished by ourselves. Our social life was the usual whirl. Ndola for night clubs, the Aero club for parties and any entertaining we cared to organise in the Sisters quarters. Work was hard, with the copper mine causalities being particularly distasteful to treat, not because of the injuries - we had seen them all before - but because of the smell, when they had been brought straight up from underground the smell was appalling, and cutting off the clothes quite unpleasant. My first year there I went out with quite a few boyfriends until I settled on a special one, Bill Crofton. We went many places together, to the Belgian Congo, now Zaire. To the Livingstone Falls on the border of Zambia & Zimbabwe. To Ndola, Kitwe and Mufilira. I used to act as his cook and hostess if he was entertaining clients, and had many pleasurable evenings. It was different in those days you could be friends without becoming partners. My one big cooking disaster being the first dinner I cooked for his boss and wife. The recipe said 2 cloves of garlic and not knowing the first thing about garlic, I used two bulbs. The flat was very aromatic. On 5th November 1960 Bill and I went to a Buy Fawkes party at the aero club where he introduced me to his best friend Aubrey Payne. I had known Bill for well over a year but had never met Aubrey before. It was 'LOVE' Later that week Bill and Aubrey had a long talk together, unknown to me. next thing I knew about it all was coming off duty 2 hours late one evening, after a particularly harrowing accident admission, to find Aubrey in my sitting room surrounded by flowers for me. He asked me to marry him and I accepted without any 2nd thoughts, knowing full well he was a Widower with two children, a boy aged 7 and a daughter who was handicapped by muscular dystrophy and Cerebral palsy, aged 10. I made one condition, I wanted a private talk with Bill first and that nothing was mentioned to anyone until after Bill's Xmas party which I had promised to cater for. We became officially engaged on the 31st January, my 35th birthday. My bridesmaid to be Audrey and I set out for a months holiday to Mozambique the next day. You can imagine my

fathers' consternation on receiving a cable telling him I was engaged to Aubrey and going on holiday with Audrey.

Audrey and I set off by car for Mozambique and unknown to us Aubrey and Bill had got together and put a Governor on my car cutting back the top speed to 60mph which was fine until we were climbing the first lot of steep hills and found the car had no 'oomph' We spent the first night in Lusaka a straight 200 mile drive, with only the amazing number and different shape of the anthills we passed to wonder at. Audrey didn't drive but shared expenses, petrol etc. The next day we made it to Salisbury (Harare) in Sth. Rhodesia (Zimbabwe) We arrived in time to find a garage and have the governor removed from the car. Audrey had got fed up with me saying 'there is something wrong with the car' and told me what Aubrey and Bill had done. After finding accommodation for the night we had a big feed then tried to find the outdoor cinema we had been told about - we still haven't found it. WE drove round and round Salisbury in the dark, completely and utterly lost only finding our motel by 'fluke.' The next morning we left very early, complete with sandwiches and coffee, as we had a very long drive to Beira (Sofala) the capital and main port of Mozambique on the Indian Ocean. The drive to Umtali the border crossing from Zimbabwe to Mozambique was uneventful, but 'oh my' from Umtali onwards the road was unbelievable. The pot holes were so numerous and deep there was only one way to drive over them, and that was FAST. The heat and dust was frightful but we made it in one piece. On arrival our problem was accommodation and language. The predominate tongue was Portuguese, but again my schoolgirl French, Scottish, and arms awaving and Audrey who was a real beauty found us in a holiday flat on the beach. The flat was very comfortable in a big building consisted of 1 bedroom& 2 beds, kitchen and a bathroom and toilet. The toilet in immediate use by Audrey after our long trip had knobs and buttons all over it and I could hear screams of laughter as Audrey pushed them all you never knew if the water was going to go up or down or around about. The shower was out of this world. There was a hole for the water to go out, things like feet on either side of the hole to stand on, again buttons handles and knobs to push or pull. The water cam up, sideways and occasionally down. It could be used as a toilet, a bidet and once we got the hang of it, a shower. There was no hand basin. There was a sort of restaurant in the building but it was not a clean country so we were very careful what we ate, and drank only bottled water, of which we had a large supply. The beaches were glorious and we soon set off to get a sun tan, meeting up with a married couple of our age, Jean and Jim Marshall. They were great company. I overdid the sun bathing and ended up with badly blistered shoulders and sunstroke. Audrey decided my shoulders were so bad I should be seen by a doctor so we set off to find the hospital - me driving. We found this dirty building we had been directed to and rang the bell. The door was opened by a grubby little man in an even grubbier once white gown, not coat. We asked for the doctor and our grubby little man said " I doctor." The pantomime of trying to tell him what was wrong with me was painful as when I pointed to my shoulders he put his hands straight on top

of the blisters and started wiggling my shoulders to see what was broken. Audrey grabbed his hands and I took my top off to let him see what was wrong before he had me in plaster. He put a dressing on and gave me some pills. I don't know what the pills were but Audrey told me I spent the entire evening sitting on the middle of the floor, pleading with her to let me go in the space ship to the moon with the monkeys. We got an invitation, along with Jean and Jim Marshall, to go on board one of the ships that was in dock. The docks were very poorly lit but we could see enough to know we had to go down steps to get into the dinghy taking us out to the ship. I was first to climb down and as I couldn't see properly, climbed right down into filthy water before one of the sailors grabbed me. My screams alerted the others. We were wined and dined by the Captain and officers but the mosquitos were awful. In fact it was to be the mosquitos that drove us out of Beira. Next day Jean and Jim said they were going to cut their holiday short, because of mosquito bites, and go on to Umtali instead. As they were telling us this I looked at Audrey who was scratching like a monkey and I felt my skin on fire too, so we also decided to leave. Jim and Jean knew of a marvellous hotel at Umtali called Leopard Rock and said they would race us there, whoever got to Umtali first to wait for the others just over the border and customs post into Zimbabwe. Now I knew why Aubrey and Bill had put a governor on my car. We got on that pothole-filled road out of Beira, Jim & Jean in a Ford Falcon and Audrey & I in my Ford Anglia. We were behind them, both going like the clappers, planing over the potholes, and I passed them. I was doing 100mph!! It was a case of catch as catch can for the rest of the long trip to Umtali and we both arrived within minutes of one another, they were first. After we had been through the Customs, leaving Mozambique and entering Zimbabwe the road improved greatly and we drove sensibly with the other car in the lead as they know how to get to the hotel. The road leading to it was dominated by this large rock, shaped like a crouched leopard. Every turn and twist in the road made the rock appear to be getting ready to pounce. When we reached the hotel we could see it was very luxurious and impressive so Audrey and I got hold of the tariff and quickly came to the conclusion that our funds would only allow us two nights there. They were two night and days of being pampered and spoilt in the middle of the glorious African bush. Yes, we could hear Leopards after it got dark. When our time was up we said goodbye to Jean & Jim with promises to write etc. and decided to carry on to Salisbury (Harare) again booking into the motel we had stayed in on the way down. We again tried to find the new outdoor cinema, without success but had a grand time shopping. We then went on to Kariba Dam hotel, on the borders of Zimbabwe and Zambia. At that period of time Kariba lake was the biggest man made lake in the world and was to become quite a strategic factor in the African turmoils to follow. It was heaven, our room had air conditioning and looked straight out over the lake with the Impani trees still not yet covered. They stood out of the water in clumps, like sentinels. We spent another two night there. By this time I was longing to get back to Luanshya and see Aubrey and tender my resignation from duties at the hospital. We had worked it out that I had a

week after we got back on 28th February to work, before resigning on the 7th March, the wedding to be on the 8th April. From Kariba we went to Lusaka again for another overnight stop then the last 200 miles at a fast trot to Luanshya to be welcomed with open arms. It gave me great pleasure to hand in my resignation from the hospital. I had been happy there, but the racial tensions were becoming so bad it was quite unpleasant, particularly in the African part of the hospital. Riots were becoming common. During one particularly bad one, when the compound outside the wards became a seething mass of black faces, hands waving in the air, clutching bats, iron bars, bottles and petrol cans, the police were called in and two lone white figures arrived in a jeep which had a mounted machine gun. Before they could do anything, by law, the riot act had to be read aloud. As they were being stoned and battered it was read very quickly - it was quite a long document - then they opened fire over the heads. It was a very nasty scene, ending up with 16 badly injured black Africans. When we would come off duty in the evenings we were always glad our quarters were very close as there would be 4 or 5 black Africans hanging around whispering "Kwacha" (freedom) "you my Bibi (wife") As they were usually reeking of Pombe, their extremely potent Beer, made by themselves, into which everything went, including dead rats, it was quite frightening. Those last four weeks at the hospital were very busy ones as there were more than the usual number of mine accidents, and of course, I was once again on 'night duty.' As I was tucking the men in one night I was telling one of my favourite patients about getting married on Saturday. He was 'jossing' me and pulling my leg. I went out to get him a cup of tea and he was dead when I brought it to him. It really shook me up and having to do the 'Last Rites' etc. really stressed me out. To cut a long story short, no way would the African aides help me to the Mortuary with him, so I had to get the help of the only other sister on duty, the same size as me - the patient weighing about 16 stone. Well! we had to get this man into the refrigerator and of all things the bottom one was already occupied so we had to heft him up to shoulder height to get him in the next one up. We dropped him and he got wedged between the mortuary slab and refrigerators. We both sat on the floor and giggled hysterically - sheer tension. I won't go into details how we got him into that fridg. but he was pretty stiff before we shut the door. We had to make sure that the lights on the roof of the morgue were left alight, a sign of occupancy. The rest of that night remains a dream. I finished my last duty there on the Friday morning, the next day being my wedding day. I had sold all my furniture to the Sister who was taking over my rooms, and as I had decided not to give any of the staff formal invitations to my 'day' as it was a family only affair, they gave me a party that night. It was great fun. Aubrey and I had worked everything out that he would take all my things to his place that night, just leaving me with my night clothes, a dress to wear to the hairdressers and my wedding dress. Well that was all OK but when I arrived at the hairdressers in the morning I had no handbag and no money. it was all at his house. I was panicking about paying for my hair do when my future mother-in-law sat down for her wash and set, so I borrowed money from

her, even before the wedding. I got back to my room at the hospital to find Ron, a friend who was to give me away, and no furniture. It was all out in the corridor and my room was being spring cleaned. 'I hadn't left yet' Audrey, my bridesmaid sent a message to say she would be late off duty, and finally arrived stripping off her uniform and into her bridesmaids dress with my help. Ron calming us down and pushing us into the car which had been waiting outside for quite a while. When I walked into the church on Ron's arm nothing else mattered when I saw Aubrey with Bill beside him. The reception was held in Aubrey's house and as we walked in my new son Ted said "Hallo Mum." Could I have wished for more. We set off for our honeymoon at Lake Nyasa in Nyasaland (now Malawi. What a hilarious time we had. After we had left Lusaka we were travelling through dense bush on deserted roads. Aubrey playing the clown saying he was a tramline driver with a club foot, cleft palate and harelip. We laughed all the way to our first forest Rest house in a place called Catchalowlow. The couple who ran the Rest house were also white hunters so we were treated to a delightful Venison dinner. On to Lake Malawi, a beautiful spot. We went out in a little boat with an African attending to the motor while we fished, and we caught big fish, enough to feed the hotel. We went swimming, keeping well away from one spot where there were crocodiles. We went midnight swimming with Aubrey one night calling out "look, look Crocodile." He had swam out in daylight with a piece of stick on which two ping pong balls painted with fluorescent paint had been stuck. When all the others spotted the glowing crocodile eyes he called out "don't worry I'll kill it" and jumps in, knife in hand, and with a fast crawl catches the glowing 'eyes' wrestling them up and down spluttering and splashing to the calls of "be careful." New bride sitting on the beach cracking up with laughter. When we got back from Lake Malawi I moved into a ready made home and family, complete with mother-in-lay and her lodger, Skipper Weldrick. It was a very difficult adjustment ad mother-in-lay (Gran) did not take kindly to having a new mistress of her son's home and as I didn't take kindly to being dominated things could get rather heated and to my surprise, her friend Skipper, consoled me after one of her shouting tantrums at me, always of course in my new husbands' absence. The political and racial troubles were escalating throughout the country. Aubrey was out at night frequently as he was in the special police, so it was decided we get another paying guest, as Skipper was rather elderly, so entered George into our lives. He was young and sensible and I felt much safer when Aubrey was out at night. With Wendy being so handicapped we knew that if there were riots, she would be the first to be raped and killed, so we had to have a place that was bullet and fireproof. The only spot in the house was the shower (it was a very large shower) so emergency equipment was set up there. It was then decided that to get Wendy out of harms way, Gran should take her to England to see if any further medical treatment would be of any benefit to her. I cashed in an English Life Assurance policy I had, and deposited it in my still open Lloyds Bank A/C along with the bonus money I had received on leaving the Roan Antelope hospital. A quite considerable amount of money for

Gran to draw on, on her arrival in England. Aubrey also sent her a monthly sum for Wendy's upkeep. Not long after Gran and Wendy left I discovered to our joy that I was pregnant and our first thought was that my father should pay us a visit. All was duly arranged, my father and Gran meeting in London before Dad's departure for Africa. It was so exciting meeting Dad at Ndola airport, the same airport over which Dag Hammershfeld, the U.N Secretary, was killed a few months later. As I was to introduce him to my new husband and son. He instantly loved both of them and we didn't tell him of my pregnancy until he was leaving for Scotland 2 months later. He too fell in love with Africa and thoroughly enjoyed his visit. Aubrey and I decided to build a boat, with Ted's help, and it was quite a success. Next, a fishing trip to Lake Bangweula was planned. There was Skipper Weldrick, George, Ted, Aubrey and I along with Sally our Boxer bitch. The boat trailer was packed up with food, some in suitcases, and camping equipment in the boat. Everything went very well until we were about 10 miles away from the Lake, it was late evening and one of the tyres on the trailer developed a puncture, we had no spare. We thought we might make it to the lake but the tyre began to shred so decided to make camp for the night, then Aubrey and I would go looking for another wheel and tyre. We were in dense forest in north Zambia not far from the Congo (Zaire) border, it was very dark and there were lions around. Fortunately the racial unrest hadn't yet reached this area. We found a clearing in the forest, built a fire, collecting lots of spare wood, and manhandled the trailer into the clearing. Leaving the revolver and Sally with George, asking him to make camp and look after Skipper and Ted. Aubrey and I had to travel about 50 miles to Mpiko to get another tyre and it was very late when we got back, finding them all well organised. Skipper and George slept in the tent, Ted was on the front seat of the station wagon with Aubrey and I in the back. Sally, our faithful Boxer patrolled the camp all night sending out fierce some growls to the lions. We awoke early in the morning and on to the lake. The boat was too small to take us all fishing together so I stayed behind with Ted in the blazing sun, with little or no shelter. Ted and I never did get to fish as the men folk didn't come back in time for our turn. I don't remember any fish either. We had happy times in that boat though before the troubles really started. As I had left the mine hospital and township, and had no further connection with the copper mine, I had to book into the local hospital which was run by Catholic nuns - mother superior being a doctor - and one sister was a midwife. The hospital was due to close on 28th February because of the troubles, and my baby was due on the 27th, so you can imagine the antics we were going through to make sure he didn't delay his arrival into the world, as if I didn't get into this hospital I would have had to go to Ndola 50 miles away, in police convoy, as the Africans were throwing petrol bombs into the cars. Things were really brewing up. The African compound was only one street away from our house and we would be wakened around 4am with 1 drum and 1 voice shouting "Kwacha kwacha" I would be under the bed by this time. We slept with guns under our pillows and beside the bed, I did my housework with a revolver in my apron pocket and a knobkierie poised in any available

cupboard. After a lot of drives over pot filled roads etc. John entered this world late in the evening of the 24th Feb. and we both went home on the 26th while the hospital packed up. A local white doctor accompanied the nuns 'up country' after the hospital closed. They were all raped and killed. Just prior to John's birth Aubrey had come home at lunch time one day, very upset. He was in charge of all the Council transport and had sacked a black African for gross incompetence. The Mayor had called him in and told him he could sack any white person he wanted but not a black person. As he told me "I can't work like this, lets leave this country." "Alright" says I, where do you want to go?" "How about New Zealand, there are no racial problems there and you still have friends there" he replied. "OK" said I but I will have to have this bundle of joy first." So it was arranged, over lunch. Once the decision was made to leave Zambia it was all go. The house was put on the market but there were no European buyers, it was eventually sold to Indians at a great loss, and our passage was booked from Durban to Auckland. Our furniture and household goods were to be auctioned, and unfortunately the copper mine staff went on strike the weekend of the auction so everything was sold for peanuts. It was quite heartbreaking but that was not to be the end of our woes. The day after the auction, with no home or furniture we had a telegram saying our passage out to NZ had been cancelled as the ship had been commandeered for troops, by the Canadians.

We were in a quandary but packed up our station wagon with all our belongings, my new 3 months old son's carrycot jammed in tightly between luggage and up against his 8yr old brother who had a protective arm around him, and off we set for Durban. We were only allowed 1 hundred pounds to get us to NZ so we had been collecting, in South African money, through one of the lotteries, and as this was highly illegal and we had to have custom clearance leaving Zambia and entering Zimbabwe then again entering South Africa, our sons' carrycot mattress had lots of South African Rand tucked underneath it. I had one very smelly napkin at the ready when we were being searched, and John was being changed and crying as they poked amongst our belongings. It was a very smelly napkin. After crossing the border at Livingstone we made our way to Bulawayo where my husband had relatives who had a farm there. They were in the middle of a severe drought and having a young baby I had lots of washing to do. This had to be done in wash hand basins as we travelled then we hung it out of the car windows to dry. What a picture we must have made.

When we arrived at Durban, our place of departure for NZ., the only accommodation we could find was a flat in a holiday building at an extortionate price. The first thing we did after settling in, was haunt all the shipping companies and put our names down on the waiting lists for passage to Wellington. Next thing to do was enrol my eldest son in school, and find a job for my husband. He was fortunate having been born in Durban and having his old work records and I.D. card, as without an I.D. card no work could be obtained. We couldn't relax all the time we were in

Durban as my son did not like his school as learning Afrikaans was compulsory and my husband did not like his job, but as all this was only temporary we made the best of it and visited shipping companies every morning. At last, after about 6 weeks Aubrey phoned me at 10am saying we had to be aboard ship by 2pm, and that he would be home at mid-day. I had just done a large washing so the ayah started ironing everything dry - dryers unknown there- while I packed. The ayah was given all the food stuff which was left over and helped me shut suitcases etc. John, the baby, had a delightful habit of being sick over all his clothes, at all the wrong moments and he kept performing, on queue, that morning. Aubrey didn't get back until 1pm with the news that we had to get John to the port doctor to have his vaccination certified, it had to be seen physically, the certificate wasn't enough. What a rush, we had to get Ted out of school, his white shirt was black, John was sick again, the drive to the doctor was hair raising, Durban drivers being the worst I have ever known, and when we got to the ship, the porters were on strike. Just seeing that ship was wonderful but what a pantomime getting on board. All the passengers were leaning over the side yelling encouragement to us as we struggled up the gangway, Aubrey with suitcases etc. Ted with a pail of dirty washing and me carrying John and various articles draped all over me. I can't remember how we got the pram on board. Once we got settled in our cabin we discovered we weren't sailing until midnight. At 11pm Aubrey remembered he had left all his work tools in the car which was coming out on a later ship. Panic! He got a phone call to the AA who rushed the tools to the bottom of the gangway, they weren't allowed on board, as we were getting ready to sail, so Aubrey had to lug this big heavy container aboard. I don't know what we felt on saying "goodbye" to Africa, great sadness, excitement, relief and fear of our unknown future, no job, no home and no money. On our second day at sea, just before dinner there was a knock on our cabin door and standing outside was a steward holding a cablegram for us. It read "Job and accommodation waiting your arrival, will meet you Wellington, Margaret & Keith." I threw my arms around the steward and cried with relief as Aubrey read the cable over my shoulder. From then on our trip was a breeze apart from John being continually sick. On enquiring from the ship's doctor we found all the bottle fed babies were the same and it was put down to a lack of oxygen in the water. We had no warm clothes at all, apart from one outfit I had managed to buy for John in Melbourne, so on our arrival in windy, wet Wellington on 4th July was a bit of a shock. Keith & Margaret were waiting for us and Aubrey and Ted joined them while I once again cleaned up John before our great reunion. It was 9 years since I had seen them, I had been Margaret's bridesmaid and was godmother to their eldest son Neil, so there was a lot to catch up with. Aubrey and Ted were finding everything different from Africa, but to me it was as if I had never been away. Four adults and two children plus all our luggage were packed into the car for our trip to Te Aroha where we were to spend our first six months. We spent our first two weeks with Keith and Margaret, they were so very good to us. We had to buy winter clothes for ourselves, but the neighbours had all rallied around with warm clothes

for John, the baby. Aubrey's job was to be in charge of the Thames Valley Council transport. He found he had to sweep the floor in the mornings, a thing he had never had to do before. I spent a lot of time cleaning out the rented house which went with the job. The house was filthy. The furniture we bought was all 2nd hand and lasted us many years. There was an open fire in the lounge but first of all we had to have wood, so Keith took Aubrey out into the forest along with his (Keith's) 2 brothers Alan & Ian, to cut wood. We were all very cold and had been used to servants and quite frankly, were miserable. Aubrey was a big man and I think his sense of accomplishment on seeing a trailer full of wood overcame his tiredness, but little did he know at that time he was to leave a lot of that wood behind when we moved to Hamilton. I can't say those first six months were happy ones, they weren't. We were very hard up as the job was poorly paid, Ted was not happy at the school, Aubrey was not very happy at work and the sandflies were eating us alive, so at the end of 6 months we moved in to another rented house in Hamilton and a new job, selling trucks this time. We applied for a housing loan and had a house built in Hamilton. The section we bought was sold to us with the promise of being opposite the playing fields of the new University - it turned out to be across the road from the Halls of residence, with shops built next door, not the best of positions. The house was ready in time for Mother-in-law and Wendy coming back from England. Aubrey, Ted and I built the furniture for their room - I am still using it in the spare bedroom. Aubrey and I were horrified when we saw Wendy again as she was back into walking callipers and although she had grown a great deal, she was bigger than me, she had deteriorated mentally and physically. She had become extremely dependent on her grandmother and I had a tough job getting her back to the stage where she could comb her own hair and wash her face. I was working as relief charge nurse in Cassell hospital doing Saturday and Sunday nights, coming home on Monday morning in time to get the family up and ready for work etc. It was a very well paid job, but after mother-in-law arrived I started work as nurse/receptionist for 3 practice doctors, as 2 women in a small house together did not work out very well, and we needed the money. Gran then went off to a 'live in' housekeeper job and we enrolled Wendy as a day pupil in Christopher Park school for the IHC. I used to take her to work with me, clean the doctors rooms then take her to school picking her up again at 4pm. The doctors and other nurse were very good to me and used to let me leave Wendy outside in the car where I could supervise her until surgery was over. There were also two evening surgeries a week from 7-8pm but usually finished about 9pm. I was very fortunate in having a wonderful neighbour who looked after the boys for me, as I had looked after her girls previously. We worked in very well together. We took Gran (mother-in-law) down to Whangamata for a weeks holiday and bought a Bach there, at an auction. It was very cheap and the rates were 13pounds per annum. We were to spend a lot of time rebuilding it during future holidays. One time stands out in my memory, we couldn't get treated timber so had to paint all the timber with creosote, my job. I got creosote poisoning and felt horrible so wouldn't get out of bed in

the morning. Aubrey told me he was replacing all the timber around our bedroom that morning, but I just groaned in reply, not believing him. The next thing I knew was turning around in bed to face the wall, but there was no wall, I was looking right up the street with Aubrey laughing his head off. I was cured very quickly. We had many happy holidays there when Whangamata was still a one horse town.

Wendy was becoming quite a problem as she got older. Every month instead of having a period she would haemorrhage and usually ended up in hospital. She was also very sexually precocious and I wanted her to have a hysterectomy done but no way could I convince the specialist. The only replies I could get were "if she does become pregnant, she will abort as the foetus will not be normal." The neighbours, who all had young children, used to make a fuss of her and leave her alone with their youngsters. I had to go and explain to them that it was not a safe thing to do. She gradually got more and more unpredictable, removing legs from coffee tables etc. and banging the other furniture with them, but it all came to a head one morning when I caught her, just in time, going to drop a large brick on John's head. She was really quite destructive and being much bigger then me, more than I could handle, so we managed to get her into the I H C hospital in Mangere. There was a great deal of soul searching before this decision was made, but she was 17yrs old and her prognosis was all 'down hill'. We frequently went to Auckland to see her and one Saturday after she had been there for 6 months we got a 'phone call in the morning to say she was being admitted to Middlemore hospital with pneumonia, but to wait about an hour before 'phoning Middlemore to give them time to admit her. Needless to say we didn't wait an hour but 'phoned Middlemore almost immediately to find she had died on admission. She had just turned 18yrs. The day before all this Aubrey said to me, I'm not going to work this morning, I'm going to see Wendy. I replied "but why, we are all going up tomorrow." "I don't know why" said Aubrey, "I just feel I should", She had been perfectly well that day but had a slight cough. So he must have had a premonition of something happening.

Shortly after Wendy's death Aubrey changed his job and went in for selling Flexulum, a covering for houses, and after his sales course asked me to give up my job at the doctor's surgery, and help him. It was very high pressure selling and all Aubrey's team used to meet at our house before work each day, and again in the evenings. I can't say I enjoyed this period, I didn't, it was a worry from beginning to end. His next job was with a Building Society and I thoroughly enjoyed being his secretary. We used to 'skive' off work on a Wednesday morning and go and play golf on the miniature golf course at the Hamilton lake. Aubrey did very well in this job being top salesman for NZ two years running. The Hamilton climate is not the best and having the University 'hall of residence' across the road from us plus the shop next door decided us to move to Te Awamutu. I used to help out in the shop next door when Murray Sstandish, the owner, was really busy or wanted to go to the Bank etc. I was working there when

decimal currency was introduced - what a nightmare at first. Anyway, our move to Te Awamutu was to a home we all loved. It was big and close to all amenities. It had belonged to a deceased estate and required a lot of decorating. As we stripped off layers of wallpaper we were to find some old embossed paper which must have been gorgeous in its day. Aubrey renewed his interest in Scouting and after numerous courses was appointed District Scout Commissioner for Waipa which entailed even more secretarial work and I was destined to remain his secretary and workmate, a job I enjoyed. We eventually moved on to Insurance work and became Insurance Brokers, forming our own Company - Te Avamutu Insurance Brokers. The first time I used my title of Coy. Secretary was on a parking ticket fine. Before we could find offices in Te Awamutu we converted one of the bedrooms at home into an office as all the bedrooms had French doors to the terrace. I found this very trying as we never seemed to get away from work but after about 6 months we managed to get a suite of offices in Chunns buildings in the main street of Te Awamutu. It was a case of out of the frying pan and into the fire, I would never see another soul for hours after the men had left the offices and there was no outlook to the street. Eventually we found the ideal office space on the ground floor, in the main street. The only thing against it was our expanding waist lines as we were next door to a Bakehouse. That was a quietly happy couple of years. We were busy, Aubrey doing quite a lot of evening work, as was usual with Insurance, and me working 9-4 in the office. I was asked by the National Bank Manager to set up a Budget Service, which I did, calling ourselves Te Awamutu Budget Services. I enjoyed that for a while but soon found I was mentally taking the clients problems home with me. Aubrey wanted to change homes again. He was never happier than when he was altering or building on rooms to our homes and we seemed to be living with constant hammering and sawdust. I didn't want to leave that home but we did, and moved to another part of Te Awamutu. We planned a trip on a Russian ship the (Shoto Rastevelly) and 2 days before we were due to sail I broke my left big toe when a large bottle of Lea Perrins dropped on it through the box I was carrying into the kitchen. It made, for me, a miserable trip as the ship and food were very basic and when I walked up and down the stairs - no elevators - I bruised the backs of both legs trying to save my toe and keep my balance in a rolling heaving ship. Aubrey & John enjoyed the trip but both had sore throats due to the air conditioning. Aubrey's developed into 'Quinsy' so he went to see the ships doctor who had never heard of antibiotics and gave him an oblong piece of paper which looked like sandpaper, but turned out to be a mustard poultice which had to be soaked and applied to his neck. Needless to say our first call on arriving home was to the doctor. The food was awful except for our breakfasts of bacon and eggs and Xmas dinner consisted of Hungarian Goulash. Our stop over in Sydney was extremely hot. I didn't go ashore in the morning as I could hardly walk with my poor black and blue legs and toe, so I stood on deck for a while and could hardly see the city for heat haze and smog. Aubrey got a taxi for me in the afternoon and we had a short trip around the city but I was glad to be back

on the air conditioned ship. We all enjoyed our stop over in Fiji but all vowed, on our return home we would never again go on another Russian Ship.

We went down to Whangamata for Anniversary week-end to make sure our bach was OK after having rented it out over Xmas. On the Saturday evening John and I went to the pictures and Aubrey went to the RSA.

Aubrey was playing snooker when he heard a fire engine go past in a great hurry while John and I were watching 'Star Wars'. Aubrey picked us up when the film finished and when we arrived at the bach in the dark we could see the fire engine in the neighbours garden. We were saying "poor Lorraine must have had a fire" when we looked at our place and saw there was only a shell standing. Being Insurance Brokers - like the cobblers family - we were very under insured and didn't have enough money to rebuild, so sold the section and bought a caravan instead.

We joined the Waikato Caravan club and had many enjoyable outings almost every weekend. It was a great way of making more friends and seeing the country. We visited Plummers Point and the Mount but our favourite place was Waignaro Springs. Our last holiday together was a trip down the East Cape, a wonderful 3 weeks. By this time we started to plan for our retirement and decided to leave the very high pressure Insurance world behind us and look for a different lifestyle, it was 1978. We eventually found our ideal spot, in the Hokianga, a General store selling everything from horse shoes to Cambert cheese. The store was very large with extensive garaging and odd little rooms, separated from the house by a small beach. At high tide the whole lot was in the Hokianga Harbour. At low tide you could walk underneath the buildings. It was quite unique. Sadly about 2 years after I left there the shop and storage was burnt down, but that is another story, one for the people I sold the shop to, to tell. The couple we bought the store from stayed with us for four weeks to show us the ropes, after we moved to Horeke, so we had two families living in the one house. We had no idea those four weeks were to be so difficult as we packed all our belongings into a Pantechicon on 31st May 1978, for our journey north. It was absolute chaos unpacking all our furniture from the van the next day. We had spent the night at a motel in Kamo on the outskirts of Whangarei, as the removal people had told us they couldn't do it all in one day, it's a long trip from Te Awamutu to Horeke. The arrangement was our furniture was to be unpacked into the house and the (Smiths, I will call them) Smith's furniture was to be packed into the Pantechicon for the journey back to Auckland. Bill Smith and Aubrey took themselves off to the store leaving Chris, Bill's wife, and I to sort out the ensuing chaos. Bill & Chris hadn't bothered to pack their goods before we arrived, as we were soon to find out, Chris was in a permanent state of well concealed inebriation, and Bill spent most of his time trying to locate the alcohol, hidden in all sorts of bottles and places. Enough to say, the removal gentlemen, and they remained gentlemen, and very helpful ones, didn't leave Horeke until about 6pm. Aubrey came

back from the shop and we managed to get beds made up for the night. Chris showed herself to be a remarkably good cook so after a late meal, with Chris almost falling into her plate, we called it a night and made for bed. Aubrey spent most of our first week there, at the shop, learning the ropes from Bill, while I spent my time trying to get settled in at the house. John started school at Okaihu college and made friends with the others from his 5th form year who travelled in the bus from Horeke. Chris and Bill's daughter arrived for a weeks stay and the first thing she did was search everywhere for the Gin and Vodka. I thought I had found most of it but Chris had hidden it away in Janola, Kerosene and cleaner bottles and stowed it. Her daughter poured it all into the tide giving the fish a treat, but Chris must have had some more hidden as she still kept falling into her dinner plate at night.

The second week I spent most of my time in the shop learning about the bread deliveries etc. and meeting the sales' reps. from Drapery and Stationery Depts. and meeting the customers trying to remember their names etc.. When we made the move to Horeke we changed our Company name to PAN Traders as we knew we would be extending credit to the customers and it would be much easier to ask them to pay their bills if we could tell them it was the Company asking for the money, not us.

At last Bill & Chris left us and on 1st July 1978 we officially took over the business. Our first decision was to get a new cash register as we decided the one we had, had been used by Noah when he counted the animals into the Ark. Having just taken a 'stock take' before Bill & Chris left we knew where everything was and what we had. A 'breeze' we thought. No way, it was very hard work. We were very fortunate in having the Maoris accept us and we soon got to know their little ways, some of them were real rogues, but lovable ones, and gave us many laughs. Neither of us had any experience of shop work so quite a few mistakes were made. Aubrey looked after the Hardware and shoe department while I did all the ordering for the food, frozen food, drapery and stationery departments. Aubrey went into Kaikohe once a week to do the banking and buy the fruit and veg., and eggs, and the days the frozen food was due to be delivered he parked the car outside the shop as the truck driver delivering the goods would phone as he left Okaihau, Aubrey would jump in the car and go like the clappers over the gravel road to meet the truck at Whitecliffes on the main highway. If he wasn't there in time the driver would only wait a few minutes as his schedule was tight and no way would he drive over the road from Whitecliffes to Horeke. When Aubrey got back we would get the ice cream etc. straight into the freezers. The bread and any medications the doctor had ordered for his patients the previous day, was delivered by rural delivery and it was a mad rush to get the bread counted and put into the correct boxes for the customers who had standing orders. Papers and magazines were delivered by the bus and had to be sorted in a hurry, as the arrival of the bus was a social occasion and the village turned out to collect their reading matter, meet their friends for a talk etc. The benches outside the shop would be full and jokes, some in Maori, would fly thick

and fast. When the tide was out the older ladies would be under the store looking for shrimps to use as bait for fishing. If I was in the back office I could hear all they were saying, some of it about us, but most of it quite juicy gossip. Our toilet facilities at the shop are worth a mention - there wouldn't be another toilet like it in the country. It was built on a platform outside the back door, three tin walls and a door facing the shop. Inside was a large kerosene tin with a seat on it and all this was over the sea. It was emptied once a week on an outgoing tide. Only desperation ever got me inside it. We both worked very hard but soon fell into a routine. Aubrey would open the shop at 8am while I tidied up the house and saw John onto the school bus, then I went over to the shop to sort out the bread orders. The only help we had in the shop was Emma Pomare, the daughter of a very large family. Because we employed her and she liked us, meant a lot to our customers. She was a great help to us and was to become invaluable to me. Which ever one of us went to lunch first used to throw the bait catcher over the veranda rail then the other one would pull it up when they went across for lunch. There would be a standing Coco, the shop cat, he always knew when there would be a fish around. He would eat everything, bones, scales and all. He always started at the tail of the live fish but got a great shock one time when a small shark was caught and as he started eating the tail the head came around and bit him. The bait catcher would be put down again. ready for the evenings fishing. I used to go across to the house when the school bus arrived and John got home. I would prepare dinner then go back to the shop to help with the 'cashing up' and sweeping floors etc. The evenings could be quite beautiful, standing on the veranda, fishing lines over the side watching the night sky. Winter was very cold, living as we were, right over the water. Standing behind the counter in the shop was agony with cold feet until we managed to fix up a small heater for our feet, but our hands remained frozen. The customers turned up in many different forms of transport, horses, tractors, front-end loaders, bicycle etc. We had a petrol bowser which I always managed to get out of using. It was kept locked and as I went out with the keys I usually found I had a sprained wrist or something and then the customer would fill the tank of whatever mode of transport they had. Yes! there was a horse trough too - along the road at the tiny post office. One job I really disliked was getting the Mutton-birds out of the barrels of brine. The Maoris used to wait for the barrels arriving during their season and would come into the shop asking for 3 or 4. They were revolting looking and after having put your hand into the brine, up to the elbows if the bird numbers were getting low, you spent all day trying to get rid of the smell. I got quite expert at being very busy doing something else when asked for them, and handed the customer a newspaper and told him to go around to the back shop and help himself. We had only been there a short time when one afternoon, the Manager from 'Foodstuffs' in Whangarei paid us a visit. Aubrey was in the middle of the shop with him and I was serving behind the counter, standing on a coir mat. I turned around to get a packet of cigarettes for Wiki Pomare and next thing I slipped off the mat and fell to the floor with a terrible pain in my left ankle.

Wiki was hanging over the counter trying to help me and calling for Aubrey. 'The indignity of it'. It was an afternoon when the doctor was in Horeke so he bandaged my foot and leg, up to the knee, and said I had to have it X rayed in Rawene the next day. Getting there was another thing. Aubrey couldn't leave the shop, I couldn't drive and there were no buses, but Isobel Blundell from the pub had a broken leg which had been in a very heavy walking plaster. She had to go to Rawene that day too. I have never made up my mind whether that was an horrific or hilarious drive. The road through Taheke was metal one way, winding and up hill. Isobel was a harum scarum driver, her car was falling to bits and every time she changed gear she had to lift her plastered leg up with her hand it was so heavy, then bang the plaster on the clutch. All the time singing out, I am getting this ----- plaster off today so it will be easy driving back. I had visions of a thin withered leg under that cast, trying to change gears. Fortunately for me her plaster didn't come off and my ankle wasn't broken, only damaged ligaments, so I had an Elastoplast bandage put on from toes to knees, which I decided there and then I would take off myself when the time came. I was told to keep my leg elevated so spent the next week in bed, bored to tears until I discovered I could fish out of the bedroom window. The bedroom was a bit odiferous for that week but we had some very good fish dinners, and I was never short of company as the Maoris wandered in and out fetching me bait and cleaning the fish. Laurie Riesterer, one of the locals would go out in his boat almost every night netting flounder. He always cleaned them as he caught them, and they were beautiful. He always gave us 3 or 4 and one time I didn't have time to take them along to the house to put in the 'fridge.' so hung them over the tap of the sink in the back shop. I heard a terrific flapping and slapping and thought those flounders can't still be alive, Laurie cleaned them. It was Coco the cat, in the sink, patting them back and forth having a quick nibble every time they passed his nose. As Christmas approached we were very busy ordering in goods for Xmas presents. We were both working long hours and then mother-in-law insisted she was coming to spend the festive season with us. She duly arrived, accompanied by her 4th husband and we were very glad John had school holidays, he was a great help to us. We were all asked to spend Xmas day with the Blundells, at the pub. They traditionally put down a Hangi every year. When the whole family got together there were 52 of them so 5 more of us were no problem. It was a great day with all the younger ones swimming in the harbour at our doorstep. Aubrey and I were pretty exhausted so sneaked away early for a bit of quiet fishing from the verandah. New Year rolled around and the three of us went down to Whangarei Heads where our great friends the Bluchers were putting the finishing touches to a house they had built. Aubrey spent most of the day painting and by the time we got back to Horeke he said a firm 'No' to the 1st footing the local Maoris had organised, so we went to bed and doused the lights. They were making great ructions outside at midnight as the New Year 1979 arrived. We pretended we couldn't hear them. On 8th January at age still 16 John left from Okaihau to join the Navy as a Radio apprentice. I will never forget his

face looking from the bus window as he left to face his new life. My last 'chick' had flown and Aubrey and I were on our own. Little did I know what fate had in store for us just over 4 weeks later. On 9th February, a Friday, we had a busy day and were completely taken by surprise when a Te Awamutu couple, Bill & Bet Patterson arrived in the afternoon. They were touring around the Hokianga. They weren't close friends of ours and were on the road north when they saw the sign post to Horeke, remembered us and decided to pay us a brief visit. They took photographs of Aubrey and I outside the store after we had shown them around and they had a cuppa before taking off again. That evening was bright and beautiful, there were many stars in the night sky. Aubrey was out on the terrace fishing while I was inside watching television, the doors were open and we could hear one another talking. Aubrey said "this place is so beautiful and close to nature, when I die I would like a happy funeral and my ashes strewn over the harbour". He was pulling in lots of small fish which Coco the cat, was eating whole even before they were off the hook. I joined him on the terrace to look at the beautiful sky before we went off to bed. The next day, Saturday, we were fairly late in 'cashing up' in the store as there was a big 21st birthday party that evening, to which we were going, and the customers were busy buying presents for Ike (who always called me 'Ma') After lunch we set off for Kerikeri orchards to buy fruit etc. for the following week. With the car boot full of tomatoes, and arrangements made to pick up potatoes and watermelons on Tuesday we set off to have a look around Kerikeri shops. Aubrey had joined an electronic organ club and was debating whether to change his Hammond organ for a Kawai so we were searching for the music shop when he said to me, "Nancy, I don't feel well, I have a pain in my shoulder and left arm" I looked at him and asked him to stop the car which he did, I got him out of the drivers seat and into the passenger seat, called to a lady who was mowing here lawn, asking her where the nearest doctor was, she stopped the lawnmower and climbed into the back seat of the car, without any hesitation, and directed me to the doctor's surgery. The ambulance was called and after attention from the doctor, Aubrey in the ambulance, lights flashing, and me in the car behind we set off for Kawakawa, an horrific journey as the ambulance went through every stop sign and I had to cling to its tail-end, driving a car I hadn't driven for a long time. On arrival at Kawakawa hospital I phoned my son Ted in Auckland and asked him to get in touch with the naval base to tell John what had happened, then for he and Alison, his wife, to leave immediately for Kawakawa. I sat talking with Aubrey telling him I would spend the night in the hospital. He told me he had been frightened in the ambulance but felt better now, then he told me to leave his shoes beside the bed as he would need them to use as slippers when he got up, the last words he would say, as he then had another massive coronary and in rushed the doctor with the 'crash cart' - that was the end. I sat with him for a long time then went into the sisters office. They were wonderful to me, phoned the naval base in Devonport to tell the officer-of-the-day what had happened, John still 16 and only 5 weeks in the Navy was told by the officer. Then sister got in touch with the Police to contact my friends Ann

and Jack Blucher at Whangarei Heads - they had no phone. They also phoned the Pub at Horeke for me and spoke to Hilda Blundell, asking her to switch off the coffee percolator I had forgotten was still on, and to pick up Ike's 21st birthday present I had left on the freezer. Ted and Alison finally arrived, what a journey it must have been for them, not knowing what they were to find on their arrival. They spent some time with Ted's Dad, then as I was so full of Valium and in no fit state to drive, Alison drove our car back to Horeke, following Ted in their car. Jack and Ann Blucher arrived first thing in the morning. I got word from the Naval base that John was arriving by bus in Kerkeri and went off to meet him. Whilst I was away he Maoris came to sing their 'farewell' song to Aubrey then on Tuesday for his funeral everything was closed down, school, pub, store everything. The little white church on the hill, a very historic building just moved onto that site a few months before, was packed with all the school children outside and Maoris from the surrounding area, gathering too. They opened up the village hall and I was treated like a queen. Mrs. Joyce, the Maori elder, later asked for Aubrey's ashes to be placed in their cemetery, which I was honoured to agree to, as I realised I could not carry out Aubrey's wish to strew them over the harbour, as it would cause big 'tapu' on the harbour.

Four weeks later Laurie Riesterer, a great friend, died suddenly. His was the second funeral in that church, a duplicate of Aubrey's, but without the school closure etc. Jack Blucher stayed on with me for 10 days after everyone else left, to help me out. I put the store up for sale as I could not manage it on my own and it finally sold on 23rd April. The new owners arrived and I moved out to the pub for 2 weeks, while assisting them with the take-over. John arrived on leave and he and I were well and truly feted. I was even carried around the pub on some of the young Maoris shoulders. Then we slipped away quietly on the 4th May en route for Whangarei and Auckland. The only way I had been able to sell the store was trade it in on the new owners house in Otahuhu, so after a night spent with our friends in Whangarei Heads, John and I set off in pouring rain for Otahuhu. I had never driven in Auckland before and John only knew the City slightly but we found the turn off to Otahuhu and eventually the house - it was awful! I wouldn't even spend one night there. I phoned Alison's (my daughter-in-law) mother, Irene, from the neighbour's house and she arrived saying follow me to my place. Well! that was a hair raising drive as we lost her. We eventually found her again, through asking at dairies etc. and it was decided we should stay with Te & Alison while I looked for a house. I had no money as everything had been frozen for probate, and Company dissolution reasons, all I had was a terrible house in Otahuhu. I did not realise it was going to take 9 months before I could even get a widow's benefit but I went house hunting regardless, buying a lovely townhouse in Devonport on bridging finance. Mother-in-law's 4th husband had a prostate operation in Waikato Hospital while I was still staying with Ted & Alison. He was discovered to be diabetic, after the operation, and did not recover consciousness after the anaesthetic, so he was in I.C.U. I went down to Te Awamutu, then spent a week with Mother-in-law in

Waikato Hospital, she was given a room there. There was no hope for Rowley but (Gran, Mother-in-law) buried her head in the sand and would not discuss anything with the doctors, all she seemed to care about was that she thought I owed her \$800. The priest and doctors approached me for decisions and old Rowley died on 30th May. Gran didn't want a funeral - she hadn't attended her son's either, but still talked of this mythical \$800 I owed her. So for the 3rd time in 3 and a half months I arranged a funeral then afterwards went back to Auckland still owing her the mythical \$800. The house in Devonport was my salvation. I moved in there with the help of my sons, my furniture had been stored in the garage at Otahuhu, and started looking for a job. It was very difficult as I had no phone - it took almost 6 months to get one - but eventually I was interviewed for, and got, a position with the pay office at the Naval Base. Before I started the job, the inevitable happened, I took sick. Barium enemas, barium meals, X rays, specialists, the works. I was very lucky that I had Medicare, but still no money, and the worry of how I was going to cope when the first big repayment of the 'bridging finance' was due was stressful. Somebody upstairs has always looked after me and the house in Otahuhu was sold in time. I still had no money and was managing to stay alive with the cash I had secreted away after opening the store on Easter Friday and not declared it to the accountant. In November, almost 10 months since Aubrey died I spent a morning at Takapuna Social Welfare and was lucky to find a sympathetic gentleman there, who issued a emergency cheques for me then fixed up a repayment of the widows benefit which had been due to me. The accountant - the one Sir Graham Latimer was working with when he got into trouble recently - he robbed me of a lot of money and when I tried to take him to the Society of Accountants in Auckland, as I refused to pay his extortionate demands, he put a caveat over monies still owed to me from the Store and sent Bailiffs to pay me a visit. Fortunately my Solicitor found out about this, informed me, and I paid the money the day before the Bailiffs arrived. I got no satisfaction from the Society of Accountants in Auckland as Kaikohe came under Northland and I would have had to go there to fight him on his own turf. I was in no fit state to do this so he got off with it. 1979 Was not a good year