BOOK 1

Chapter I

Birth and Early Childhood

I was born into this world on 16th of July, 1926, at Wroughton near Swindon, in the county of Wiltshire, England, the second child of my parents, William Arthur and Rosalie Masters. Our first home was a substantial stone building in the older part of Wroughton. Fresh, sparkling water from a spring at the foot of the chalk downs ran laughing down the old stone conduit on the other side of the lane. The water had once turned the wheel of a corn mill which had long since passed into history. By all accounts, our house was haunted and my mother experienced the playfulness of poltergeists that amused themselves by knocking cups off the dresser. My sister, Ellen, often saw faces in the night. They were friendly faces and she found them quite companionable. After I was born we moved to a house in Belmont Crescent, Swindon. The house had previously been designed by my father for a client. It was on two levels and the garden ran down to an old railway track. Trains of the Somerset and Dorset Railway (generally known as the Slow and Dirty) passed two or three times a day on their way to the Old Town station, back of Newport Street.

My father was an architect in private practice. As Diocesan Surveyor, he was very much involved in church

building and maintenance. He also worked in the domestic field and in other more general architectural design. As a Master Mason, his life would have been very much taken up in the study and practice of Freemasonry, working his way up through the various degrees of knowledge to that position of responsibility.

My father remained a bachelor until he was in his late forties. He then found his heart's desire, my mother, the 11th child of a clergyman, who, at the age of thirty, was eighteen years his junior. They were married at St Michael's Church, Highworth, by the vicar, Canon Wrangham, who had been instrumental in bringing them together.

Five years after their marriage, when everything was set for a happy family life, my father suddenly died. He died of Thrombosis on December 3rd, 1928; just one month after my mother had given birth to her third child. My grandmother, who was living with us at the time, suffered a stroke. I was two years old. The shock caused my mother's hair to turn completely white within two months. Some while later, my mother explained to us that we live in this world as a preparation for our future life in Heaven. Sometimes, she said, if we are particularly good people, God will take us away to Heaven early. I was proud to think that my father was seen to be such a good person.

One day, a year or two later, as I was walking with my nanny in the park, I had become very upset by a steady drizzle of rain. In exasperation, I looked up at the grey sky and I called out; "Daddy, Daddy, tell God to turn off the tap"! Immediately, the rain stopped. As a small boy I thought this was a great game and I jumped up and down demanding that the tap be turned on again. Of

course the rain did not return at my demand but from that time on, in my little mind, I knew, without a shadow of doubt, that God was up there in heaven and that my Daddy was up there with him. This story was, of course, recounted by my mother at a later date but I do not believe that the absolute knowledge of the existence of God has ever left me, while, most certainly, other doubts have come and gone.

My mother was now in reduced circumstances and was obliged to sell her home. We moved to a small house at Colehill, near Wimborne in Dorset. My grandmother, who had been living with us, went into a private nursing home nearby. My sisters and I became very much attached to "The Little House" where our mother lived for the next eight years. It was a small, four square, red brick house with a porch. Across the road was a pinewood where sandpits made a wonderful playground, ideal for cycling. A kink in the crossbar of my bike bore witness to my efforts to ride vertically up the trees. We had quite a large garden which ran down the hill to a little wood. A Privet hedge, against the road, sheltered a bare patch of garden which my sister, Ellen and I landscaped with dirt roads to create an imaginary village. The houses were upturned flower pots and jam jars and we knew just who lived in each house and how they spent their days. My ardour for road building, led me to extend a road out of the village, down into the garden. We called it the Sunday Afternoon Walk. There was a large lawn that ran down to the bottom of the garden. I have memories of building a 'ship' which consisted of a folded stepladder, laid on top of an old perambulator, which was propelled by a pair of stilts – rather like a punt. I could move this along at quite a speed. We loved to climb trees too but Ellen could always

climb higher up into the branches than I dared.
If you went to the bottom of the garden and squirmed through the hedge and jumped over a stream, which was great for making beaver dams, you found yourself in an enclosed area of waste land. It was just scrub and tufted grass where you could be all alone with the frogs and the spiders that spun those beautiful webs that hung with little droplets of moisture in the early morning mist. It was a magical place where I could be free and alone. It was "my place".

I loved to get up early in the morning and go out into the garden. I would crawl in the herbaceous border amongst the dry leaves and insects. I revelled in the scent of the flowers overhead. Even now, seventy five years later, if I get that sweet, musky, woody scent of a Phlox flower, my mind instantly races back to the little boy crawling through the dry leaves under the canopy of pink and white petals.

And yet, in the seemingly idyllic situation, I was often a very unhappy and angry young man. I flew into rages and my sister remembers being so frightened of me when I chased her around the house with a hammer.

While I was still four years old, I was sent to a little day school a mile away. It was close to Wimborne Minster. The headmistress had an instrument for maintaining discipline which she called a "ricky-ticky". It was, if I recall correctly, a flat piece of hard material, the shape of the sole of a shoe. It was administered on the palm of your hand. On my first day at school, I screamed and yelled so much that the good lady felt obliged to administer the ricky-ticky to calm me down. I have no clear recollection of this but I know it did not endear me to school life. Boxing was on the curriculum and little

boys of four and five faced up to one another with big soft gloves and we were taught how to hit one another and to defend ourselves. I have never taken to this sport.

I did not like this school. Each morning I had to travel the one mile to school by bus. One morning, I am told, I expressed my feelings strongly by pushing the conductor off the boarding platform. When I first went to school, and before then, I had very great difficulties in learning to read. It would seem that I suffered from Word Blindness or Dyslexia. This is a condition that has created, for me, a lifelong problem with spelling, learning languages, reading music and, in later years, computer language. I don't believe that this condition can, in any way, affect one's intelligence but I do believe that it can open the way to other degrees of understanding.

When I was six years old, my mother thought that I was very much in need of male supervision in my life, which I probably was, and she arranged for me to attend a small boarding school, a mile or two away. She took me there on Monday mornings on the back of her bicycle and I returned home for the weekends. There should have been another boy boarding with me but, for some reason, he didn't turn up. I slept by myself in a room with two beds. The matron, a kind lady who looked after me, would tuck me up and tell me that I would be asleep before I could say "Jack Robinson". I usually was but, at first, my heart felt as cold as a stone. I fell asleep, too lonely to cry, not old enough to know why, counting the days to the end of the week when I could be back home with my family.

It was not long before I was moved to a larger prep' school where there were other boarders. I was happy there. I had friends. I loved to run free in the woods. My life here was uneventful. I did not excel. I have memories

of summer evenings with the sound of rooks, cawing from their rookery in the top of the elm trees and the chimes of the Minster bells wafting gently up from the valley below, timeless sounds of contentment and stability.

I remember too the long gravel drive from the entrance gate banked with the gorgeous blooms of Rhododendron bushes. Behind the new classroom block was a wild and untamed wood that I loved to escape into. I would run and dodge between the trees like a wild thing or crawl through the undergrowth on my hands and knees making pathways. We wore short trousers at that time and my knees were always dirty.

I have no memories of the service, remembering only the musty smell of damp hassocks and gutted wax candles. Some weekends I was allowed to go home and I travelled there and back on my bicycle. There were huge, noisy, steam-driven lorries on the roads at that time. I would sometimes wobble and fall onto the grass verge when they passed.

Since I had a relatively dark skin and curly black hair, I was nicknamed 'The Abyssinian Gentleman'. It was a name that stayed with me for a while. There was a war going on in Abyssinia at the time, so it was much in the news.

When we were at home during school holidays, my mother always insisted on our going to the Children's Service in the local church. I hated this experience intensely. Because I went to a private school, it was assumed that I learned Latin. The vicar, in an attempt to draw me out, or, perhaps, to show off his own erudition, would single me out to ask me questions involving Latin. I was quite unable to answer these questions and felt totally humiliated in front of those irritating children who

were always so eager to hold up their hands at question time. Even now, my heart misses a beat at the sound of those threatening words "Sunday School!" Actually, my mother did not approve of Sunday school because it was usually led by untrained teachers. This was a "Children's Service", led by the Vicar.

For some reason my school closed down and I moved on to another one a few miles away. My mother chose this new school because the headmaster was a relative of a close childhood friend of hers from a strict evangelical family. The headmaster was a very outgoing person. He encouraged sports. He drove a large car at high speeds and, together, we built a swimming pool in the school grounds. I was in my element on the rugger field. I was agile and I felt as if I could run like the wind. My place in the field was "wing three-quarter". There, you wait for the ball to be passed out to you then run like mad for a touchdown. Much of the time the play revolves around the scrum, but the three-quarter has always to be ready and alert. I can never forget that incredible feeling of exhilaration and power as I caught the ball and ran for my life, twisting and dodging as the whole field converged on me. As I raced for the touchline to score a try, I had the feeling that nobody, just nobody, could catch me.

I was only nine years old when our school played against another team of twelve year olds. At that time, I played as scrum-half, a position where one needs to be quick and nimble. This was my element. After the game was over, we retired to the changing rooms to take showers and then made our way to the school dining room for tea. Being much younger than the other boys, I fell behind and missed the opportunity to relieve myself

after taking a shower. The experience is burnt into my memory as, being too shy to get up and go to the toilet, I held on as long as I could until the flood gates burst and I found myself sitting in a warm puddle. I was very much ashamed of myself but thankful that my shame seemed to go unnoticed.

Unfortunately, this school had a darker side. Memories of isolated experiences stick in my mind. The older boy tied naked to a tree, the joy of roasting sweet chestnuts in the common room fire, standing in line in the morning, when you first wake up, waiting for your turn to plunge into a cold bath... and there were the beatings! I only once had the misfortune to receive a beating. My sin was that, having written my letter home, I had neglected to put it out for mailing. I was taken out of bed in my pyjamas and down to the headmaster's study. As a minor offence, I received only four strokes of the cane. It was the fear of the cane that was the most terrifying thing. Beatings were sometimes given in public as a warning and a lesson for others. I well remember one occasion when some unfortunate boy had been caught stealing something from another boy's desk. We were called together in the class room to witness the punishment. The boy was bent across the desk and held by his hands and feet. The rod was thick and long and, as it swung, we all ducked under our desks to miss being struck. Wham! Wham! 'Six of the Best' it was called.

Mr "A" took it upon himself to teach us Latin. I still remember clearly that the Latin class was at four o'clock on a Friday afternoon and he would come into the class armed with his cane. I lived from week to week in absolute terror of the next Friday afternoon.

Any aptitude I may have had for learning Latin

was frozen in my mind. The way in was totally closed. Somehow boys will never speak to their parents about these experiences. It is something that has to be endured. A hurt you cannot express. Fortunately the father of one of the boys happened to be the school doctor and things came to light. The school was closed and our unfortunate headmaster was admitted to a mental hospital.

We had eight weeks holiday in the summer time, when we tried to forget about school. Sometimes, to give my family a break, I would go to spend a week or two with my Aunt Mary in Highworth. To get there by train from Wimbourne, I had to change trains at Andover. My mother would take me to Andover and put me on the train to Swindon, Old Town, where my aunt would meet me in a hired car and take me to her home Highworth. At Andover, I was put into the care of the guard and travelled in the guard's van. It was fun to be there with the flat baskets of racing pigeons, bicycles, Royal Mail bags and other assorted goods. The guards were usually happy to have young company and, as there was no other seating available, other than the boxes and baskets stacked up around us, they would sometimes let me sit in their special window seat. The seat jutted out from the side of the carriage with a small window on either side from which I could look up and down the train and see it lurching from side to side as it sped down the track like a slithering reptile.

Aunt Mary would sometimes hire a chauffeur driven car to take me places. She took me, on one occasion, to a place near Didcot, where the road passed under the railway track that ran from Swindon to Paddington. The Great Western Railway had just built a new steam engine that could travel at 60 miles an hour!

My heart leapt as I watched it thundering overhead, hissing, billowing out clouds of smoke and steam as it sped past - wheels chattering over the rails on its way to London. The "Cheltenham Flier", or one of its class, now stands in pride of place in Swindon Railway Museum.
My mother's paternal grandfather, John Castell Hopkins, was once the Director of a Railway Company in Yorkshire. Perhaps he was looking over my shoulder when I first experienced the thrill and wonder of the railways.

I cannot imagine how painful our situation was to my mother. Her whole life was centred on her children and we adored her. When my father died, his Freemason Lodge paid for his funeral expenses, including his tombstone with the Master Mason emblem carved into the stone. As is customary, they also paid for his eldest child's education. I remember, when my sister first went away to school, my mother broke down in tears. My efforts to comfort her touched her very much and made her laugh. I saw my mother as the most perfect being in all the world. She was so beautiful in my eyes, that everyone else could be seen only as they appeared in relation to her. To me, she was the absolute standard of love and beauty.
During the school holidays, our mother looked after the broader side of our education. An air show came to town and mother took us up on our first flight. I remember only that we flew a mile high! We went to Southampton to see the 'Queen Mary' in dry dock before the official launching. We had a trip on The Bournemouth Queen, a paddle steamer that plied between Bournemouth and the Isle of White. I was thrilled by the shining brass, the blasts of steam and the thunderous sound of the big paddle wheels as they beat through the water like giant egg whisks. Later we heard that one of the wheels had fallen off and the boat

went round in circles like a wounded duck until it was rescued.

We had exciting holidays on the Isle of Purbeck in Dorset. I just loved the long walks along the cliff tops, exhausting other members of my family. Leaping from rock to rock at the water's edge at low tide and gazing into the rock pools, so vibrant with bright colours, sparkling water, tiny fish and other creatures left by the ebb-tide. I remember, on one occasion, we dropped down into a little sandy bay. There was no one in sight so my sisters and I stripped off our clothes and ran into the water in what our mother called our "altogether". From that time forth this little bay was known to us as "Altogether Bay". Mother came in too, in her underclothes. We dried off in the sun and the wind.

Corfe Castle was in the centre of the island. We loved to go there. Ellen and I found places in the perimeter fence where we could squeeze through and avoid paying for a ticket. There were so many places to explore while hiding from the warden. Mother often took us to abbey or castle ruins. They were such romantic places. It was a time when there were very few other visitors around.

We always enjoyed our summer holidays with Auntie Marjorie, a childhood friend of our mother's. She lived at the foot of the Mendip hills in Somerset. We travelled there on a single track railway that ran between Wells and Weston-Super-Mare. The train driver carried a key on a big round handle that he picked up and released at either end of each stretch of single track. On arrival at Westbury-sub-Mendip, we left the train climbed up a twisting road to the house which looked out across the flat expanse of Wedmore.

We stayed in a caravan in the garden and went across to the house to pump water from the well and to attend morning prayers with Aunt Marjorie's mother and her cook. Auntie Marjorie's father had been an evangelical friend of my grandfather Hopkins.

There were exciting caves to be visited at Cheddar Gorge and at Wookey Hole. Mother told us how she had explored these caves when she was a girl. At that time there was no electricity so they carried lanterns. The most exciting thing for us children was the chance to go down potholes on top of the Mendip hills. I remember one pothole near Priddy which had a steel grating covering its mouth. We collected the key from a local farmhouse and Ellen and I lowered ourselves down into the hole. We squeezed our bodies through the gaps between the rock face, taking care to clear our hips and ribcages, and entered another world. Our flashlights illuminated the way as we explored its wonders. How amazing to see where, over millions of years, the running water had worn away channels and formed waterfalls. We could hear the deep down sounds of running water as it seeped down to create the caves far beneath with their stalactites and stalagmites. The stalactites hung "tightly" to the roof of the cave. These large icicles of calcium deposit were formed by the trickling of water from rocks above. The stalagmites that "might", one day, grow to touch and unite with the icicles above formed the most beautiful hourglass shaped columns, in unbelievably rich colours, as they reached up from the floor below. An incredible world of beauty evolved deep below the ground. My favourite poem at that time was Kubla Khan, a visionary dream by Samuel Taylor Coleridge.

In Xanadu did Kubla Khan
A stately pleasure-dome decree;
Where Alph, the sacred river, ran
Through caverns measureless to man
Down to a sunless sea....

A damsel with a dulcimer
In a vision once I saw:
It was an Abyssinian maid,
And on her dulcimer she played,
Singing of Mount Abora.

My mother loved poetry and often quoted poems by heart, but she was totally tone deaf and seemed to have no appreciation of music whatsoever.

Me, aged three with my baby sisters's toes

In 1932, aged six, with sisters, Ellen and Rosalie.

William Arthur Harvey Masters (1876-1928) Architect, Diocesan Surveyor and Master Mason. My Father served in the Territorial Army, Artists Rifles, in WWI at Woolwich Arsenal.

Rosalie Marion (née Hopkins), (1894-1978. My mother

The Three Lights of Freemasonry

The Square (Body)
Symbol of morality, truthfulness and honesty.

The Compass (Mind)
Symbol of restraint, skill and knowledge.

The Letter 'G' (Soul)
The Initial of God, Grand Geometrician of the Universe - sometimes a volume of sacred law - The Bible or other.

BOOK 1

Chapter II

Testing Our Wings

1937 came as a turning point in my life. An older stepbrother of my mother, Uncle Jim, who was quite wealthy and had connections, was able to enter me at a public school. I was always a little in awe of my Uncle Jim. He used to visit the school sometimes. I would be summoned to meet him on those occasions and he would shake my hand and leave a half crown in my palm. We had no other communication.

I was entered as a pupil at Kings School Bruton. At eleven years of age, I started in the Junior School which was run by the House Master and his wife. The atmosphere in this school was so completely different from what I had been accustomed to. I cried a lot when I first went there. I was so highly strung. It was difficult to control. I can recall clearly how, catching a glimpse of myself in the mirror, I burst into tears because the face I saw reminded me of my mother. Fortunately, I soon overcame this emotional reaction and settled in happily.
As a young boy, I very much enjoyed wrestling, a sport I much preferred to boxing. At this time, I had developed a strong dislike for bullies. They were often heavy set boys who took pleasure in dominating smaller or weaker boys.

I liked to challenge these bullies to a fight and put them in their place. It became quite a crusade. After about a year, I was moved up into the Senior School. I entered "The Old House".

Our religious observances were traditional C of E with morning and evening prayers held in each house. On Sundays, we attended Mattins and Evensong in the Parish Church. Before the war, we had to dress up on Sundays with stiff Eton collars and Windsor suits with black jacket and pinstriped trousers. We also wore boaters, which were hard flat straw hats that could be propelled like frisbees. A game that was very much discouraged. The dress code was discontinued after the outbreak of war.

As a treble, I sang in the church choir, neatly dressed in black cassock and white surplice. I enjoyed the singing which lifted up my spirit.

On special occasions, we might sing an anthem. Our shrill treble voices, together with the male voices of alto, tenor and bass, would be lifted up by the melody, carried forward by the great volume of sound from the organ and wafted up into the loftiest heights, echoing and reverberating through the rafters and filling the church with music. It expanded the soul. We were part of something so much greater than ourselves.

As a counter to these exhilarating experiences, I learnt, at an early age, to turn off my mind during boring sermons. Although it provided an opportunity for more interesting dreams, it probably reduced my power of concentration when that was rarely needed.

In March 1938, when I was twelve years old, World War II broke out in Europe. I was at home at the end of the summer holidays. My mother had moved house to a place only seven miles from my school at Bruton. We were

attending the morning service at the village church, when someone came in with a message for the minister. When he announced to the congregation that war had broken out, my first reaction was of excitement. I knew nothing of what it meant. A number of older members of the congregation, who had bitter memories of the suffering of the First World War, 1914-18, broke down in tears. This was the beginning of seven years of terrible pain in Europe, and later in the Far East, which brought the end of an era. At first it didn't seem to affect us too much at our school, tucked away in the countryside. Some of the younger members of the staff disappeared as they were called into the services and older staff members stayed on after they were due for retirement. We experienced the "blackout" when all windows had to be covered, street lights were extinguished and vehicles travelled with very much reduced lighting for fear of being spotted by enemy aircraft. We were issued with gas masks and some of our playing fields were dug up to grow potatoes. Otherwise, for us, life went on much as before.

It must have been in that first winter of the war that I felt, one evening, a very strong urge to go to the church to pray. I slipped out from the school house and walked over to the church. There was no moon, no street lights. I made my way in almost complete darkness. The path from the gate to the west door of the church passed through the churchyard. Along the side of the path there were a number of sarcophagi – that is box graves standing above the ground. I had remembered that some of these had fallen into disrepair. The sides had caved in exposing an inner blackness. How is it that one can remember these things so clearly so many years later? I opened the west door and slipped inside. The stained glass windows were

completely covered with blackout and inside, the building was in absolute blackness. I knew the place well and walked the length of the nave feeling for the pew ends, up the chancel steps and eastward to the altar rail. There I dropped to my knees on what I remembered to be soft red cushions.

I had no words to pray. I just wanted to be there with God and to feel his love, to unburden my pain and to open my heart. My tears flowed freely. I cried and cried. There was no need for words but as I knelt there I was enveloped by an intense feeling of inner warmth and love – I was at peace. I don't remember the walk back to the school but I know that I stepped out with a lighter heart.

I suppose it was inevitable that I should develop an interest in religious things. After all, both my grandfathers had been ministers in the Church of England. So also were two of my great-grandfathers, a great-great grandfather and two great-great-great grandfathers. Added to this were uncles and cousins. I remember especially my mother's favourite brother, Uncle Arthur. He was such a dear person. Due to an accident in his youth, he never grew to more than four feet tall. He had been a missionary in the Melanesia Islands in the South Pacific. I heard the story of how he had been chased by a band of cannibals and of how he had stood up in his canoe and faced them and how they had turned around and paddled away. He humbly refused the offer of a Bishopric, feeling that he was inadequate for the position. As an old man he used to visit our family at Christmas time and bring a hamper full of all kinds of good things to eat. I remember looking under the table and seeing a pair of shining black shoes parked neatly under his chair with no legs attached. As he couldn't reach the floor, he sat with

his legs crossed on his chair. He was such a gentle and kind person. We loved him very much as did our mother.

After dinner, Nunky would go and visit a friend next door. A short while later, Father Christmas would appear, dressed in his red coat and big white beard, and he would hand out presents from the sack he carried over his shoulder. Then he would leave before Nunky could return from his visit next door.

In his old age, he became very deaf, a condition that made it necessary for him to use a hearing aid. Sadly as a small boy, any conversation I may have hoped for with Nunky froze when a flexible microphone was thrust in my face.

When we were around fourteen years of age we were prepared for Confirmation. We were taught the catechism and received instruction on religious doctrine. Part of this preparation included making a confession of our sins. In parts of the Anglican Church, as in the Roman Catholic Church, confession would be made through a priest or a minister. My mother's father was an evangelical minister who taught that the Pope was the 'Anti-Christ' and would have strongly opposed confession through a priest. I, personally, had no wish to confess my sins to some stuffy old clergyman, so I opted to make my confession direct to God.

Around this time, I became very confused by the many different beliefs and interpretations that existed within the Christian faith – especially in the broad teachings of the Anglican Church. I got together with a small group of like-minded boys. We prayed and studied the Bible and talked about these things. It became clear to us that the most central and basic thing that Jesus taught about was love - God's love for us, our love for Him and

for each other. Love must be the very central point of our lives. A short while after we started our discussions, I was summoned to the Headmaster's study. The Headmaster had heard that we were holding prayer meetings. "The school", he said, "provided very adequate instruction in religious matters so would we please put a stop to our extramural activities". We stopped meeting in the little group, but we had established in our own minds the very basic ideal which remained with us. Love is the most basic ingredient of our faith.

My Aunt Mary, my father's sister, played the organ in the village church and was also a cellist. She was anxious that I should take up the instrument she loved and so she gave me her cello, which was kept in a large black wooden box, and she paid for my tuition. The first cello in the school orchestra was my Housemaster. He played with great gusto but I felt deeply his embarrassment at the discordant sounds that, from time to time, erupted from the number two cello. After about a year, my aunt died and so did the tuition fees. The cello, in its black wooden coffin was retired to the attic. It had become very much a part of me as we travelled on the train together at the beginning and end of each term, with my bicycle, trunk and tuck box. I loved to hear the sound of a well played cello and often wished that I had kept it up but my ear was not finely enough tuned and I had great difficulty reading music.

One day, around this time, a friend of mine, with whom I had a close friendship, suddenly left to go home before the end of term. Soon after, as I was trying to find out what had happened to him, I was told "Oh, didn't you know, he has gone home to celebrate the Passover with his family". I was dumbfounded. Why had he not told me

that he was Jewish – that he was of a different faith? Was he afraid I wouldn't be his friend if he told me? We had always got on well together. He was so much cleverer than I, but we were buddies. It was as if a heavy shutter had slammed down between us. We were different. In my sheltered life I knew nothing of the frightful things that were going on in Europe under the Nazis. I knew nothing of the pain he and his family may have suffered. This was, for me, a time of awakening to the real world. I had no concept of anti-Semitism. This was, for me, a totally foreign thought and yet, it projected a feeling of fear deep down inside.

A certain proportion of the boys that passed through the public school system were expected to go forward to a career in the army. To prepare for this we were all required to become involved in the O.T.C. (Officer Training Corps). At the outbreak of war, the name was changed to J.T.C. (Junior Training Corps) to conform to major social changes that were then taking place.

We were introduced to army discipline and training and we took part in annual manoeuvres and the like. What I enjoyed most was being part of the marching band of drums and bugles. I was second bugle. My proudest moment was being called on to sound the Last Post on Armistice Day to commemorate those who had fallen in World War 1. I stood at the Cenotaph overlooking the town square, my brass bugle shining like burnished gold from hours of polishing, black boots, white belt and shining buttons and buckles catching the light from the soft November sun. The plaintiff notes rang out across the square to reverberate around the town while the townspeople stood with bared heads for two minute's silence to remember their loved ones who had laid down

their lives in that recent Great War. These are memories that make a great impression on our young minds - memories that can never be erased.

One exciting memory I have of the time we were living in north Dorset, after the outbreak of war, was when Mother took us on our bicycles, one bright moonlight summer's evening, to visit the gardens at Stourhead. We hid our cycles out of sight from the road and climbed over and through the perimeter fence. The gardens were formed around a serpentine lake with fine stone bridges, classical temples and grottos set among rhododendrons and other exotic plants. We crept around silently to avoid attracting the attention of any custodian that might be around. I particularly remember creeping down a pitch black passage into a grotto which looked out across the lake. The chamber was bathed in an eerie green light as the moon shone through a round hole in the roof, passing through a canopy of green leaves. This was the kind of experience our Mother loved to share with us.

In winter time the lakes froze and we rode our bicycles over the ice as it heaved and creaked like a living thing. Athletic sports were always a very important part of our school activities and of our education. In the junior school I took advantage of my long legs and broke the school record for long jump, high jump and 100 yard sprint. I received a cup as the all-round sportsman of the year. I have to say that it was a very small school and the accomplishment only lasted one year, but it was good for my ego.

My mother's father went to Rugby School where he would have played the game. He later rowed for Oxford in the boat race of 1861. Oxford won. He subsequently transferred to Cambridge and read for his Master's Degree

and cut back on his athletic activities. I believe that I inherited my affinity for athletic sports and particularly rugby, from my maternal grandfather.

I loved playing rugby because I was good at it. Cricket, on the other hand, was another matter altogether. My eyesight was such that it was very difficult to catch a fast moving ball or to strike it accurately with a bat when it was thrown at me. I hated, more than anything, standing out in the hot sun on the playing field for long hours waiting to avoid a fast moving ball that might come hurtling at me when I knew that, in the young poplar trees that had been planted around the playing fields, I could find the eggs and caterpillars of the beautiful Poplar Hawk moth. Saturday afternoons were most difficult as there were cricket matches against other schools and we had to be there to support our own team. How much more fun it would have been exploring the country lanes on my bicycle or going on expeditions with my friend Peter to discover new varieties of butterfly and explore their habitat. When I was younger I collected beetles and I remember creeping out after dark to search the grassy banks for glow worms.

BOOK 1

Chapter III

Discovering Our Roots

As in other public schools, when boys come to their final years in the 6th form and prepare for advanced level exams, they receive certain privileges. They become 'prefects' and have the use of private studies. I left school before I became eligible for that privilege but, as with all the younger boys, I passed through the experience of being a "fag". To be a fag means that you might be called on to run errands for the prefects or to carry out some menial task for them. The prefect simply had to open the door or window of his study and call out "fag" and the nearest fag had to make all haste to carry out his bidding. I remember, on one occasion, at a time when we were very much occupied with digging up part of the playing fields to grow potatoes for the war effort, that I had a call to bring five forks to the prefects' study as quickly as possible. I ran to the cloak room where the garden forks were kept and, gathering up five of them in my arms, staggered upstairs to the study to present them at the door. When the prefect opened the door his mouth fell open. He was laying the table for supper and these were not the kind of forks he had in mind. Fortunately, he had a sense of humour. I always had such a fear of punishment for inadvertently doing the wrong thing.

At the beginning of each term, boys would always start off with a certain amount of pocket money to spend. My mother was not able to give very much so I made an arrangement with the other boys in the dormitory. In the centre of the dorm' was a table containing a row of wash basins and a large jug. Twenty minutes before the wake-up bell clanged, someone had to go down the winding stair to draw the hot water and carry it up for the other boys when they woke up. We had a rota for doing this chore but I found that the other boys were quite willing to give me a shilling at the beginning of term to do their chore for them.

At school we had a tuck shop where we could spend our pocket money. Sweets were rationed during the war and we could only buy them with coupons. I knew my mother especially enjoyed eating sweets so I would often save up my sweet ration, as well as my pocket money, and take the sweets home for her to enjoy.

Naturally, there were many times when I behaved badly at home and needed to be punished. For this my mother had a swishy bamboo riding crop which she kept hanging on a nail behind the front door. When my behaviour called for this, I would be asked to fetch the cane and bring it to her. She would summarily administer the strokes of the cane on the palm of my hand. It stung but I was aware that my mother suffered very much more in administering the punishment than I did in receiving it. I hope that I was suitably contrite.

During one school holiday, in my early days at Bruton, my mother had to spend some time in hospital. As we were not able to go home, Ellen and I went to stay with our maiden aunt. Aunty Mary was always ready to take responsibility for her brother's children and we were

made welcome in her genteel home.

I was, at that time, in a very emotional and highly strung condition and was a great worry to my sister who felt responsible for me.

I hated having to stand with my sister on Sundays at my aunt's knee, singing hymns to the accompaniment of her harmonium. I fought against any restrictions. I was an angry young man. I expressed my frustrations one evening by jumping out of my bedroom window and running away. I ran out of the town and into some fields where we had walked during the day. I was determined to build a little house in the hedge and sleep there.

My aunt's housekeeper found me there and took me home. She scolded me telling me that I had an evil spirit with me. This angered me even more. I have no further recollection of this visit. I hope my aunt was not too deeply offended. As my father's sister, she always did her very best for us out of her love for him.

At an earlier visit to Stonecroft, I had been sent to play in the "motor house" – a large hall-like building built to house a motor car. My aunt did not have a car so the walls of the motor house were used to hang the family portraits in their gilded frames. It was, of course, an accident that an arrow from my toy bow pierced a hole in a painting of a venerable great aunt. My Uncle John, in whose ownership they rested, chose to ignore the matter. The portraits, some of them three hundred years old, were all sold or otherwise disposed of after my uncle's death.

It was always my mother's hope that I would follow in my father's footsteps and become an architect when I grew up. For as long as I can remember there had always been a large portrait of the famous Victorian architect Augustus Welby Northmore Pugin, hanging over

my bed as I slept. Pugin was largely responsible for the development of the pure Gothic style of architecture in the Victorian era of the 19th century and he personally designed, in minute detail, many famous buildings of the time. These included the Palace of Westminster, otherwise known as the Houses of Parliament, in London, under Sir Charles Barry.

At age eighteen, Pugin had converted to Roman Catholicism, a conversion that filled him with a fervent desire to express his faith through architecture. My grandfather was a great admirer of Pugin and his work and this copy of his portrait was a proud possession that he wished to pass on. Pugin lived a short but intense life. He was ruled by two passions, Gothic architecture and the sea. He dressed as a sailor and, but for his hatred of beer and tobacco, he might have been taken for one. He suffered a breakdown from exhaustion and died at the young age of forty. This was the austere figure of an intensely passionate man that loomed large above my bed during my childhood years. As the only male heir of my father and grandfather, it was hoped that I would follow in my father's footsteps as an architect in that tradition.

For the duration of the war, all young people were conscripted into the services. My 'call up time' would be in September 1944 after my eighteenth birthday. In order to get started in my architectural career and to increase my chances of getting a grant when I left the services, my mother took me out of school as soon as I had taken the School Certificate 'O' level exams, and entered me at the Architectural Association School of Architecture in London. My exam results were not great but I had achieved good results in the two subjects that mattered – English and Mathematics. I did not continue on into the

sixth form or take the advanced level exams.

I always enjoyed studying history and had developed an interest in archaeology. In the school library I had discovered a large red bound book by Sir Arthur Evans on the excavation of the Minoan Palace at Knossos in Crete. I was totally fascinated by Sir Arthur's reconstruction of the palace as he imagined it to have been 4,000 years ago in the ancient Minoan culture. From Sir Arthur's reconstruction I had made a simple cardboard model of the palace.

I had a lot of enjoyment at that time measuring our house at Highworth or the school buildings, in order to make cardboard models from cereal packets. Our school house buildings had been built up over the centuries with an interesting arrangement of roofs. To get a better picture of the layout I would shin up a rainwater downpipe, under the cover of darkness, and clamber over the roofs. I did not have such a good head for heights but, in the dark, I felt so much safer as I couldn't see how far it was to the ground.

When, later, I went to the AA School for an interview I had no drawings or paintings to show. I simply took suitcases full of cardboard models of buildings I had made. The school Principal was so impressed with the model of the Palace at Knossos, made from cornflakes packets, that he offered me a place in the school on the strength of it. I remember, so well, running with my suitcases across Bedford Square to where my mother was waiting and throwing my arms around her in a victorious embrace. My future was sealed.

When my father's sister, Aunt Mary, died in 1942 at the age of sixty-nine, she left her house in Highworth to her nephew and three nieces. It was quite a large house

that had been converted from two cottages, by my father, some years before. The motor house no longer contained the portraits but the attics were full of boxes containing many of my grandfathers and father's books as well as my aunt's paintings and art utensils. The loft over the stable contained wicker baskets filled with my father's architectural drawings which were riddled with 'woodworm' and turning to powder at the touch. The drawings no longer had any value so we had no alternative but to burn them. The books, on the other hand, appeared to be in good condition. They were mostly architectural with many illustrations of gothic ornaments, heraldic symbols and artistic designs. They had been kept for me but as a teenager I did not see any great value in keeping them. After holding back a few of the larger, more ornate books, I donated the remainder to the library of the Royal Institute of British Architects, of which my father had been an Associate Member.

I had an interesting experience some thirty-five years later. I happened to be walking past the offices of the RIBA in Portland Place, London (I was then an Associate Member of the Institute myself) when I felt strongly that I should visit the library. Near the entrance there were some card index files. I walked up to one, opened the drawer and selected a card. It happened to be a book on Gothic ornament and on the bottom of the card was typed "A gift of Henry Arthur Corbett Masters" with the date when the gift was made. I was astonished at this and asked at the desk how many books the library contained. I was told approximately 21,000. A chance of 1 in 21,000 that I should select that card! I felt the spirit of my grandfather very close to me and that he was trying to say something to me to remind me of his hopes for me.

Stonecroft became our family home for the next few years. It was the place where Mother lived and where we, her children, came home to. Mother was closely connected to the parish church at Highworth where she had been married. I remember, when we came home for the Easter holidays, we would accompany our Mother to a service of preparation every evening of Holy Week, culminating in Good Friday. On Good Friday we fasted until noon and then attended a deeply moving three hour service contemplating the three hours that Jesus hung on the cross. On one occasion I felt so pent up with the experience that, as soon as we got home, I went outside and taking up two galvanised dust bin lids, I beat them together like giant cymbals breaking through the dreadful horror of the experience. Matthew's gospel tells us that, as Jesus yielded up his spirit, "behold, the veil of the temple was torn from top to bottom, and the earth quaked and the rocks were split and the graves were opened: And many bodies of the saints who had fallen asleep were raised".

My mother was one of those people who could sense the supernatural. When she was alone at Stonecroft, she complained that some mischievous spirit would pull a towel out of her hand as she stepped out of the bath. She was not afraid but rather irritated by it. She would sometimes hear a lady in high heel shoes walking hurriedly down the upstairs passage. She seemed to know that it was a certain lady who had previously lived in the house. At the end of the passage was a toilet. Mother told us that while she was alone in the house, she had sat on the pot looking down the passage and she had exorcised the spirit, politely telling it to go away. She had no further trouble.

When we were away, Mother sometimes let out

rooms. One elderly lady, living in the house, was also aware of someone coming and tucking her up in bed. It was a very benign spirit.

I have pleasant memories of the garden at Stonecroft. The front garden was surrounded by a high stone wall which closed it off from the bustle of the world outside. There was a large Yew tree at the far end of the garden. It was a great haven for starlings that ate the red berries and made a lot of noise. There was a little shed in the corner where a hedgehog lived under a pile of dry leaves. A sunken courtyard, leading to the motor house, was almost taken over by Lilies of the Valley, which filled the air with a most gorgeous fragrance. A little wooden door, hidden under a Bay tree, led out into the lane. I developed a familiarity with every stone and plant in this little secluded haven. We kept pet rabbits in an empty greenhouse. The purpose for keeping the rabbits was to augment our meat ration but I cannot remember anyone actually getting hungry enough to wring their necks. Years later I revisited the house and found that the motor house was gone and the garden was reduced by half to allow for street widening.

Although the war brought many restrictions, Mother always took us on exciting holidays. She took us walking in the Lake District – an area she knew well when she was young. I loved the challenge, the beauty, and the exhilaration of the mountains.

We covered a lot of ground on our bicycles, too, exploring the country when there were no tourists and almost no cars. One year we went camping in the Cotswolds with trailers behind our bicycles. We set up our tents wherever we ended up at the end of each day. I especially remember travelling at high speed downhill

with a slop bucket tied to the back of the trailer swinging from side to side and making a wonderful noise. We were exuberantly free.

Around this time I began to develop a fascination for lands in the extreme north. Iceland was an island that particularly gripped my imagination and although I never went there, I studied all I could find out about it.

I think it was the primordial nature of the place that most appealed to me. Far from modern civilization, it was a beautiful country of mountains and glaciers, of volcanoes and hot springs. A country where new islands were still growing up out of the sea, where there is an abundance of fish and where eider duck produce the soft feathers that fill our eider-downs. I had dreams of building great domes of glass where we could build new cities warmed by the hot springs that abound on the island. I always dreamed of places where we could get away from the world and start anew.

When I was a small boy I thought that I would like to be a farmer, a very down-to-earth and satisfying lifestyle. I thought too, that I would like to be an architect, like my father, because this was what was always expected of me. Thirdly, I thought I would like to be a clergyman, like my grandparents, so that I could stand up in the pulpit and say funny things that would make everybody laugh. In a sense, I became all of these, although the latter was rather less humorous.

My father had a great influence on my life. I was strongly encouraged to follow him as an architect and often found myself becoming involved in the things that interested him. Although I knew nothing about Freemasonry until many years later, it was clearly a very important factor in my father's life. I understand that no

one can apply to become a Freemason. However, it is clear to me that those who are invited to join the Society are understood to be upright, public minded and tolerant people. The teachings of Freemasonry, as I understand it, are mostly conveyed through symbolism. The ceremony is centred on the Supreme Being who may be referred to as Almighty God or the Grand Geometrician of the Universe or even the Supreme Architect. There appear to be no barriers of race or creed within the Fraternity.

The three great lights of Masonry that are engraved on my father's tombstone are 1) The Sacred Law, which can include the Bible or other Holy Book. 2) The Mason's square, which symbolises morality, truthfulness and honesty. 3) A Compass (for measuring) which symbolises restraint, skill and knowledge.

As in the Bible, the Masons pay a lot of attention to the symbolic numbers 3, 4 and 7. The number 3 relates to the three estates of mind, body and soul which I see as a very important factor. I feel that by studying the teachings and the ideals of Freemasonry, I can better understand the heart and ambitions of my father who is otherwise beyond my reach.

I don't know what I inherited from my grandfathers. Although they were both clergymen, they were totally different characters. My grandfather Masters stayed in one parish for 40 years. Grandfather Hopkins never stayed more than 4 years in any parish and moved constantly up and down the country as his parents had done before him.

William Masters buried himself in the study of Gothic Architecture and Heraldry. He wrote a book entitled "Some Notes on The Ancient Church of St. Leonard, Stanton Fitzwarren, Wilts.; And Otherwise". He

was an antiquarian and an accomplished wood carver. He richly decorated the church with his work. I am told that he often wept when preaching from the pulpit. He adored his wife and commissioned a stone bust of her, for which we later constructed a special alcove in our new home. Soon after she died, he retired to Bristol. He was an Honorary Canon of Bristol Cathedral where he occasionally preached.

William was educated at Magdalen College, Oxford. Among the objects I inherited from him, by way of my Aunt Mary, was a large, gold-framed, picture of Mary Magdalene. Her hair flowed freely in the conventional style of a harlot. I find it rather difficult to reconcile this picture with my grandfather. My father was given the name Arthur which he passed on to me as my second name. This is a name that conjures up dreams of medieval romance.

Harry Gordon Hopkins, whose first name I inherited as Henry, was born in Yorkshire. He went to Rugby School in his teens, shortly after the reforms were carried out by Dr, Arnold. He, too, attended Oxford University, Corpus Christi College, where he rode in the inter-varsity boat race and was very much involved in sports. He left Oxford in his second year and moved to Cambridge where he studied for and received his Masters Degree. He became a Master at Repton School for a short time, after which he was ordained, entered the priesthood and married his first wife. After bearing nine children, his wife Emily died, and he married my grandmother, some seventeen years his junior. My mother was the second and youngest child of this marriage.

I really know so little about Harry Hopkins. My mother once let slip that he liked to kiss girls. An elderly

lady acquaintance, who knew him in her youth, liked to tell me that he was the handsomest man in Yorkshire. I have no reason to believe that he was anything but totally upright in his moral behaviour. I understand that he was strongly evangelical, proclaiming the Pope to be the anti-Christ, and that he, Harry Hopkins, would sometimes give gypsies a shilling if they would have their children baptized.

As his youngest daughter, my mother helped her mother to care for her father in his declining years. She was not free to get married until she was thirty and, even then, she brought her ailing mother into her marriage.

The Masters family had, for several generations, been farmers in the little village of Martock, in Somerset. Their name having been derived from Master's, the son of the Master. Around 1760, William, the second son of the Master at that time, decided to leave home and to seek his fortune in London. This he did, we are told, by marrying the daughter of the wealthy innkeeper of the 'Ship Inn' in Greenwich. After bearing him two children, she died. At the age of fifty, William married again to a wealthy widow, Ann Smallman. They took up residence at Shrewsbury House, Shooters Hill. He died five years later, leaving a son John, aged three, and a younger daughter. He also left a considerable fortune with land in Greenwich and Shropshire.

My great grandfather, John Smallman Masters, appears to have been a rather quiet, serious person. I have reason to believe he had inherited a little Jewish blood from his mother. His common-place-book, which he wrote in his formative years, is written in a small neat hand and covers a wide variety of subjects that interested him. He was educated at Jesus College, Oxford, where he received

his Masters Degree, and was subsequently ordained as a minister. He built his own red brick church, Christ Church, at Shooter's Hill, where he officiated. John left a diary of his travels in France when it was dangerous to travel on the highways without an armed guard.

John did not marry until he was forty when he took to wife a rather stern looking lady. Elizabeth Ann was the daughter of an Inspector of Hospitals, Army Medical Department. Her family, which had earlier connections to the medical profession, (Sometimes referred to in earlier generations as 'sawbones') came from Ulster in Northern Ireland. They had lived for several generations in Ulster after having been 'planted' there from Scotland by Oliver Cromwell. They were staunch Protestants.

John Smallman Masters died at the age of ninety-eight, having preached his last sermon when he was ninety. My grandfather was his second son and inherited nothing of the fortune which passed to the eldest son.

I have a history of the Hopkins family from an 'autobiography', written in her own hand, by Agnes, my mother's grandmother, for the edification of her children. Agnes was born in 1805 in Northumberland where, as a child, she led a very free life of riding, fishing, gardening and climbing trees. Her family had come from across the border where her mother was considered the best horsewoman in the country. She was known to have ridden forty miles into Edinburgh to dinner. Her father was a Rutherford 'of that ilk' entitled to wear the tartan of the clan. Agnes writes about her husband, my maternal grandfather, whose name was John Castell Hopkins. His parents lived in Dublin, Ireland, where his father was an

inspector of taxes. John's parents both died when he and his sister were very young and they were brought up by his father's half brother and his wife. When John was about sixteen, he went to Trinity College, Dublin, where he was 'found' by the Duke of Roxborough to be a 'lost sight of' relation, on his mother's side. He went to live at the Duke's home, Floors, and was sent to Cambridge University. He remained there for some time 'doing a little study and not a little amusement'. At twenty-two he married the Duke's natural daughter who died after giving birth to a little boy. After the death of his wife, John returned to Floors with his baby son, Jamie, who was then cared for and educated with other members of the family.

Although John Hopkins was "a general favourite in the neighbourhood", he and Agnes fell very much in love and made up their minds to get married. The next day, she tells us, he came in his jig and took her up to the castle where she was formally introduced to the Duchess, Lady Campbell, and others. At that time, the old Duke was no longer living. Lady Campbell afterward told Mr Hopkins that he was going to marry a silly girl with a pretty face. They were married quietly at the English church at Kelso on March 4th, 1824 and set off in a 'splendid thunderstorm' in their old carriage with four horses. They passed through North Wales and crossed from Holyhead to Dublin to meet with John's family where they received much hospitality. Among others, they met with an old aunt, who was what Agnes called a 'Romanist', and Sunday was spent in a way she was not used to. The couple then travelled for several months in France and Italy and stayed for a while at Sorrento, in the bay of Naples, where they went out sailing. On their return to England they moved around the country and

their family began to grow. My great grandfather, Harry, was their youngest son who was born in 1839.

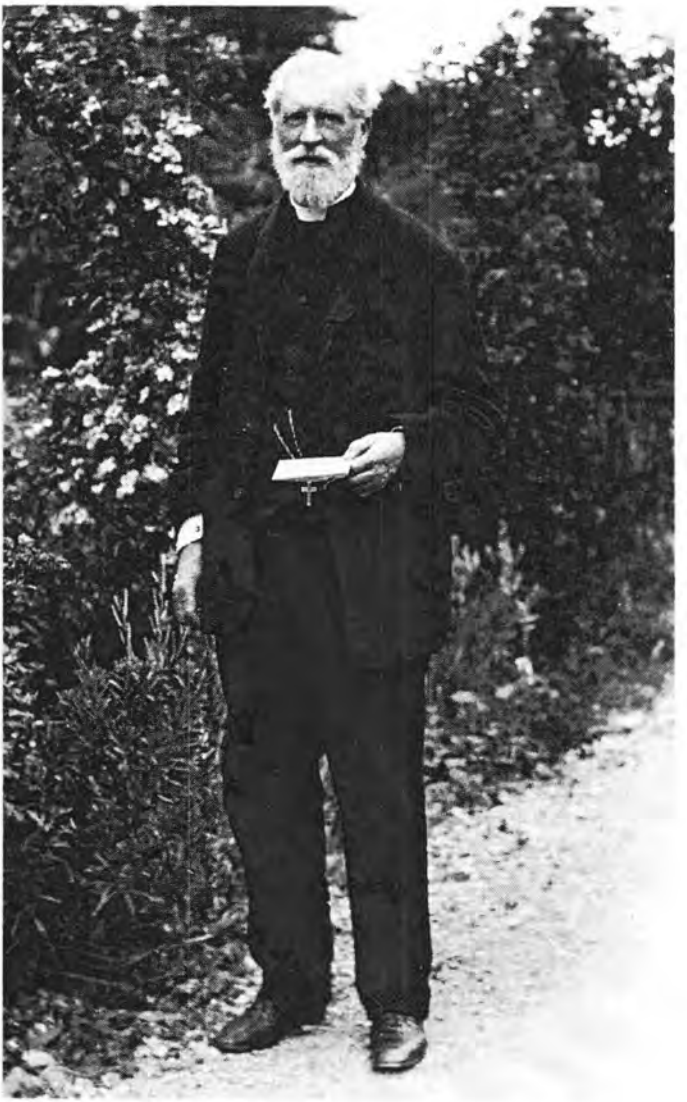
The family later returned to Edinburgh where they learnt that the Duchess, who had married the Duke in his old age, had given birth to a son and heir. John was 'disappointed' in being cheated of a considerable fortune and the couple found that they were not as well off as they had supposed. John decided that he must have something to do, so he invested money in the Darlington Railway and became the Director of the company. As an 'ironmaster' and industrialist, he was responsible for much of the railway development in the area and was much respected. He became an active member of the Unitarian Church.

In my father's family the Trenchards followed their ancestry back to the Norman conquest of 1066 when Pagnas Trenchard settled in the Isle of White.

In my mother's family the Corbetts followed their ancestry back to 1066 when Sir Hugh Corbett held lands in Shropshire. The family holds that Sir Hugh was descended from a Gaul called Corbus, the Crow, who fought against the Romans (Corbett being the diminutive form of the name - Little Crow).

Trenchards and Corbetts both take their lineage back to King Edward I, a Norman king descended from Charlemagne, the Holy Roman Emperor appointed by Pope Leo III in 800 AD. History does not always throw up the most loving and lovable characters that we might hope for in the royal lines.

William Caldwell Masters in 1870 with his future wife, Ellen Ashfordby Trenchard and his sister, Mary Ann, in the forefront.

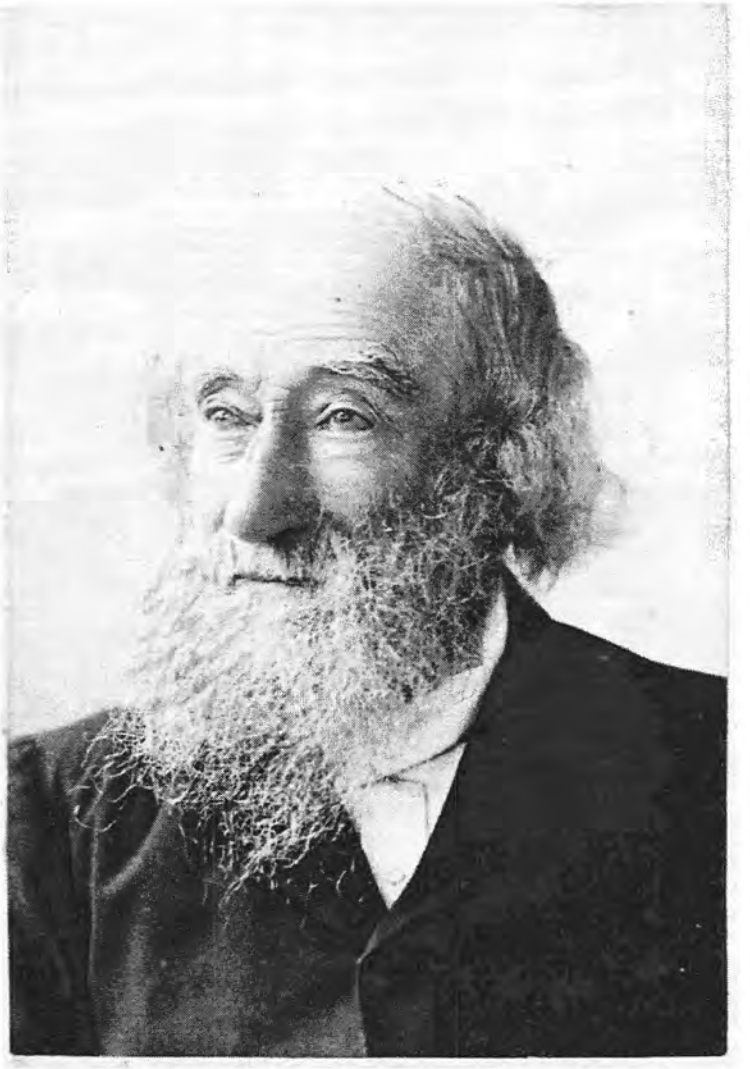


Rev. William Caldwell Masters, MA. Canon of Bristol, my grandfather, in the Rectory Garden, Stanton Fitzwarren.

Rev. William Caldwell Masters' wife, Ellen, my grandmother, in the Rectory Garden, Stanton Fitzwarren.

Canon W.C. Masters, surrounded by his wood carvings in the sanctuary at St. Leonard's Church, Stanton Fitzwarren, 1913.

Agnes Hopkins (née Robson), (1805-1886) wife of John Castell Hopkins (married 1824). On her knee, Henry Gordon Hopkins - my grandfather, born 1830.



Rev. John Smallman Masters, MA. (1801-1899).

Elizabeth Ann, his wife, of Shewesbury House, Shooters Hill, London..

BOOK 1

Chapter IV

Taking Flight

In September of 1943 I entered a new stage in my life. I was enrolled in the Architectural Association School of Architecture and left behind the protected life of a public school. The AA had been evacuated from London to the relative safety of Barnet. The school occupied a large Georgian house overlooking Hadley Common. I shared digs with another young man, Hugh, at the house of a "war widow" and her thirteen year old daughter. Many of the students at the school lived in a communal establishment. I found it very difficult to make the sudden transition from the all male existence of a boys' boarding school to the very worldly atmosphere of this co-educational lifestyle. I was desperately shy and awkward in the presence of so many emancipated young ladies. I pushed myself to attend the occasional school dance but felt very ill at ease. Hugh and I went our own rather separate lives at our digs and attended school on weekdays.

At weekends I often took the underground train to Central London. I witnessed the terrible devastation that had been caused by the blitz and the continuous bombing of the City. Whole areas had been flattened and craters,

where buildings had once stood, resembling cavities, where teeth had been extracted. Flying bombs were still coming over at night but only occasionally were incendiary raids made in the suburban areas. On those occasions we huddled together with the family, under the stairs, for protection.

I occupied myself on Sundays by visiting various different churches to see how they conducted their services – Roman Catholic, Baptist and Christian Science. One day I attended a church that called itself Catholic Apostolic, which was very unusual. The place of worship was arranged like the choir of a larger church with the seats on each side facing inwards. On either side of the altar, sat a man and a woman dressed in white robes.

I was very much attracted to this church. The people there were very warm and welcoming. My interest, however, was rather more superficial in nature and I resisted their invitation to become more personally involved. Although attracted to the warm spirit, the setting and the people there, I hurried away when the service was over, resisting any attempt that might have been made to draw me in.

More than half a century later, I have been looking into the origin of the Catholic Apostolic Church. It would appear that it came into being in the first half of the 19th century as an ecumenical movement that believed in the imminent arrival of the Second Advent. The leader was seen as a John the Baptist figure. Early leaders of the movement, who were very much led by the spirit, were Anglican clergymen, lawyers and even members of Parliament. The movement spread over northern Europe, Canada, Australia and New Zealand. Although considerably reduced after 1901 the movement is still

active.

In September 1944, while the war was still very much in progress, my turn came for call up and, after attending a medical examination at the recruiting office in Bath, I received orders to proceed to Blackpool, to undergo my Initial Training. Thrown together with young men from all walks of life, we were to have our corners knocked off. We were housed in a former holiday camp. The huts provided little protection against the sand-laden northwest winds that blew in from the Atlantic and created little sand dunes inside the ill-fitting doors. Six weeks of intensive physical training, including a ten mile route march in full kit, with backpack, kit bag and rifle, prepared us for a whole new lifestyle.

As an architectural student, I was drafted to the Royal Engineers Training Centre at Aldershot, where we underwent basic training. We started with basic infantry training – drill, where you learn how to obey commands, bayonet practice and the use of all kinds of deadly weapons. As "engineers", we learnt about the use of explosives, about road building and bridge building and how to lay and clear mine fields. We also spent time on a lake, learning about "watermanship". This included knots and lashes and the propulsion of small craft. For me, one of the most painful experiences was to sit on the flat deck of a pontoon and with the aid of a rowlock at your side and the teamwork of the other galley slaves, to propel the monster to it's destination as part of a bridge.

Those of us who had been students were then required to take part in a further Cadre Training, after which we were sent before a War Office Selection Board to see if we were of the right material to receive a commission. By that time the war was coming to an end in

Europe and I had no ambition to become an officer. Needless to say, I was not selected. I was returned to Aldershot where we spent time transferring rubble from bomb sites from the railway wagons to the lorries, using hand shovels.

Our final training course was in jungle warfare, which we underwent in Norfolk. We learnt how to squirm along on our stomachs. We learnt how to find and diffuse Japanese land mines. We learnt about the malicious and devious side of the Japanese mind – how they set booby traps under mines so that the mine would blow up in your face as you lifted it. How to detect booby traps in evacuated buildings – trip wires – toilet flushes – opening doors etc. Our responsibility would be to make an area safe before the infantry moved in.

We stalked through dense undergrowth, with Sten guns at our hips, delivering continuous fire at grinning Japanese faces that popped up all around us. We were being trained to face the enemy in the Burmese jungle.
We were then sent to a holding centre at Halifax in Yorkshire, the Black Country, to await our departure to the Far East. One day we spent carrying rocks from the bottom of a quarry to the rim. At the end of the day, we threw them all back.

Earlier in the year I had volunteered for a training course in mountain warfare. This would have been for a planned invasion and liberation of Norway from the German occupation. As it happened, I was too young to take this training and now I was going in the opposite direction to the steaming tropics. The war in Europe had ended on May 8th, 1945. After the H-bombs were dropped on Hiroshima and Nagasaki, the Japanese surrendered on August 15th. We set sail from Southampton in September

on route for Bombay, India.

Although we had grown up during seven years of the most terrible and devastating war in history, we young people really had no concept of the magnitude and horror of the times or of the horrendous atrocities that were perpetrated around the world.

We emerged from childhood with a consciousness that this was life and we faced the inevitable with a certain youthful optimism. We were called and we had no option but to go forward together.

Victory had been won, and bonfires were lit in every street to celebrate the end of the conflict. We had Victory, but at what a terrible cost.

We were now setting off on a new adventure – my first time at sea – on a Dutch passenger liner, the Johan van Oldenbarnivelt, which had been converted into a troop ship. We slept in hammocks slung like sardines in a tin. I preferred to sleep on deck, when the weather permitted, but had to rise early before the crew washed down the decks. We passed through the Straits of Gibraltar, the Mediterranean Sea, the Suez Canal, the Red Sea and the Indian Ocean. It was like a three-week holiday cruise with so many fascinating things to see. The Red Sea was extremely hot but the sight of red sunsets, made more intense by the red sand from the African coast, made it worthwhile, as did the sight of flying fish that leapt out of the water around the ship, appearing to fly over the waves. Thankfully, there were no torpedoes around anymore.

We arrived at Bombay and, after a short spell at Poona, where we received our immunisation for the plague, yellow fever, malaria and other infectious diseases; we were shipped by train to Hyderabad, Deccan,

in Southern India. Our garrison was situated at neighbouring Secunderabad, where we stayed for a while to become acclimatised and to "get our knees brown". The climate was extremely hot and I remember at least one occasion when we were taken to a stretch of river where there were pools of cool water between the rocks, where we could bathe.

Most of the soldiers preferred to stay inside the garrison when they were off duty. They would simply lie on their rope beds and cool themselves under the slowly rotating fans suspended from the high ceiling of the barrack room and dream of their girlfriends back home. They were afraid to venture out into the alien world outside. They just didn't want to know.

I, for my part, felt totally intoxicated by the sounds, the smells and the hustle of the world outside. I wanted to be a part of it and I would slip out to the nearby village and hire a bicycle and ride off along the dusty roads to explore, following the big round footsteps of a passing elephant or carefully navigating around a sacred cow which had free rite of passage wherever it wished to go.

I went into the villages and nobody ever made me feel that I was not welcome. I was accepted when I watched the ceremonial killing of a goat. The throat was cut and the blood spurted out into a bucket while the goat remained standing with glazed eyes. It reminded me of a carving I had seen in our church at home where the Lamb of God was being sacrificed and the sacrificial blood flowed neatly into a dish.

I was not unwelcome when I watched the cremation of an old lady. Her body was placed in a sitting position on top of a bonfire and whenever the body began to fall to one side or the other, there were men with long

poles, perhaps her sons, who would push her back up.

Hyderabad is situated on a plateau strewn with huge boulders, sometimes piled one on top of another, in a very dramatic way. Left by a melting glacier in some distant age, they looked as if they had been placed there by giant hands.

I met an ancient goatherd on one of these little hillocks. He was clothed simply in turban and loin cloth, his sun-blackened skin clinging to his bones. We ate lunch together. He gave me delicious sweet-apples that grow there and I gave him my American K-ration. He appeared to enjoy the spam, processed cheese and crackers quite as much as I did the sweet, white flesh of the native fruit.

I had come across a little picture of an Indian lady, which I treasured very much. She had a veil over her head and the trappings of a married Hindu woman – the red spot on the forehead, an ornament in the nostril and a ring on her toe. She had the serene look of one who had suffered much. She had a face of compassion and warmth. One night, while I was on sentry duty, patrolling the perimeter of the garrison, I became enchanted by the exotic sounds and aromas of an Indian night. I composed a poem which I called 'Mother of India'. I could see in those eyes the eyes of my own mother but, at the time, I saw her as the mother of 600 million people.

I had always thought that, perhaps, I had a little drop of Indian blood in my veins. As a boy, my curly black hair and dark colouring had sometimes caused people to question my ancestry. My mother, while visiting cousins in Canada, as a young woman, had been mistaken for a Red Indian by a little girl while she sat beside a lake, after bathing, with her long black hair falling down her sun bronzed back. My mother's mother sometimes said,

jokingly, that she had gypsy blood in her veins. She also spoke a little Welsh, which she found useful when visiting Brittany with my mother after my grandfather had died. Anthropologists tell us that the Celtic people, who long ago made their way across Europe to settle in the British Isles, were closely related to the people who moved eastwards into India. Gypsies are also of the same Indo-European stock who moved westward at a much later time. I have often noticed a certain semblance between the Indian and the Welsh cultures.

My grandmother's father, Rev Robert Tailor, appears in the family tree as having been educated at Cambridge but with no date of birth and no named parent. This is rather unusual and leads me to believe that he might perhaps have been the son of a mixed marriage who was sent back to England for his education. It was not uncommon for such marriages to take place among the servants of the British East India Company during the latter part of the 18th century.

I have often observed in the eyes of older Indian women, a look, a sparkle, a sense of recognition that warms my heart. I see in those eyes, my own mother's eyes. It is perhaps because of this that I have developed a sense that Indians are my brothers. During my travels, I began to see all people as my brothers be they black, brown, yellow or whatever. I became deeply aware of the 'brotherhood of man'. This very much affected my thinking from this point on.

I went, on one occasion, to visit a mosque. I was met at the entrance by a young man. He did not invite me into the mosque but offered, instead, to take me on a bicycle tour of the city of Hyderabad. The city was apparently out of bounds to the military. It was, what the

army called, a brothel area. I was unaware of this restriction as my guide took me through busy markets where one could buy the most delicious sweet cakes. It was so incredible to be able to integrate into the bustle of an Indian city. During the time of the British Raj, The Indian Princes were still very much in evidence. I remember seeing the Nizam of Hyderabad, who was reputed to be one of the wealthiest men in the world, drive past in his small coupé - a rare thing to be seen on the streets of the city.

Soon after this, it was time for our unit to move on to Calcutta. It was a three-day journey by train through the magical Indian countryside. The carriages allotted to us had hard slatted seats. We slept on the slats at night and were obliged to take our rifles under the blankets with us. Uncomfortable bed mates but a necessary security measure. Whenever the train stopped at a station, the 'charwallers', or tea sellers, rushed to the front of the train to draw boiling water from the engine to make tea. Tea was always very important.

We had to transfer to a different train at one point where the rail gauge changed.

In Calcutta we were taken to a large military transit camp which had been set up in Central Park. After the war ended, the Congress Party were agitating for in-dependence from Britain and posed something of a security risk. It was necessary for the ration trucks to be armed with machine guns on the roof.

There were certain recreational facilities available in Calcutta – even a swimming pool at the American Base that we were allowed to use. I myself was drawn to explore the streets of this great city of Calcutta. I walked alone for miles. I wore my uniform but was no threat as I

carried no weapons. I was always greeted respectfully from the open-fronted shops and houses of the people. I visited the Black Hole of Calcutta where a group of English families had been suffocated to death at the hands of the ruler of Bengal, 200 years before.

Walking through the streets, I saw that the pavements and walls were painted red with the spittle of those who chew betel nuts. The air hung heavy with the aroma of spices and incense.

I was so happy to be able to go freely amongst these people. Perhaps, because my skin bronzed more easily than most and my hair was dark and wavy, they felt I was one of them. I didn't go pink in the sun like many fair skin English people.

During my walks I came across a Jain temple. I took off my shoes in the street and walked delicately down the white marble pathways to the temple, taking care not to tread on any living thing that strayed onto the path. My shoes were waiting for me when I returned, surrounded by all sorts of different kinds of footwear. Shoes were not usually worn by ordinary people.

While we were in Calcutta a small group of us were posted to a place on the Assam border. We travelled by train to the railhead on the Bramhaputra river where we transferred to a paddle steamer. This carried us downriver for a few hours to our destination. It was a strange flat world of distant horizons. The river so wide you could not see the other bank. Little villages of huts perched on raised banks. This was part of the great delta of the Ganges and Bramhaputra rivers where people live such a perilous existence, exposed to annual floods during the monsoon season.

On arrival at Chanpur, a swarm of 'porters'

clambered on board, eager to carry our kit for us. I was determined not to let my belongings go out of my hands and insisted on carrying my own. We were taken on from there by train to Comilla from whence we were moved to a small hutment in a jungle clearing. We slept in small huts built of bamboo matting where the doors swung loosely. The beds were made of split bamboo which was about as comfortable as a sheet of corrugated iron. Jackals howled outside and we heard them sniffing at the door during the night.

Nobody seemed to know why we were there, so, as a sapper, I was given the job of drawing up a map of the camp. With no instruments except a pencil, some paper and my legs, the exercise did not bring very satisfactory results. We were soon sent back to Calcutta.

Mother of India

Mother of India

Come woman, tell us
your story,
Tell us about the life
that you lived.
Let us hear of your family,
your offspring,
The men that made India
now what it is.

BOOK 1

Chapter V

Discovering Other Peoples

Back in Calcutta, a small group of us, who had travelled together from Halifax, in England, learnt that we were to be attached to the Royal West African Frontier Force. This was a colonial force made up of natives of the West African Colonies with European commissioned and non-commissioned officers. We were promoted to the rank of Corporal, the lowest rank for a European in the Force, and issued with bush hats and other items of clothing to distinguish us from the British army or the Indian army. We were then sent to join our new units. I was to join the 14th West African Artisan Works Company, part of the Gold Coast Regiment, in Bihar State, north of Calcutta.

The railway system in India was under a great deal of strain. There were usually twice as many passengers as there were seats. Consequently, many people in loin cloths and turbans clung to the outside of the carriages and on the roof. I was the only European to travel on that particular train and an empty compartment had been reserved for my use. I was soon persuaded by a couple of respectably dressed gentlemen to allow them to share the compartment with me. In return, they made sure that no one else intruded. I was grateful for their company,

although I knew that I was acting against official regulations.

The 14th West African Artisan Works Company was encamped on a dried up paddy field several miles from Perugia in Bihar State.

The company was made up of some three hundred Africans recruited in the Gold Coast and about ten European officers and NCOs. Some of the Africans were educated – my platoon sergeant, Sergeant Sam, was a sanitary inspector in Accra in civilian life and spoke good English. Others came from tribes all over the colony and spoke a number of different dialects. Most of the men had tribal markings on their faces and one fellow, whose language was understood by only a few, had his teeth ground to points. He had quite a winning smile when you came to know him. Teeth were always a great source of pride to these African people and they spent a lot of time polishing them with pieces of wood until they shone like beautiful white pearls which they flashed on and off in friendly smiles.

Now that the war was over, there was not so much work for the Company to do while they waited to be returned to their homes in Africa. To maintain morale, we kept up strenuous activities like ten-mile route marches in full kit under the blazing heat of the sun. We barked ourselves hoarse on drill parades and occasionally took lorry loads of men on outings to neighbouring towns. After a few weeks we returned by train to Calcutta. My European platoon sergeant, who was an architect in civilian life, had a pet monkey who went everywhere with him. Bugs, the monkey, disappeared at one station where we had stopped for char. He was recaptured later in the market and he and his owner followed on the next train.

In Calcutta we were segregated with areas for African Other Ranks (AORs), Indian Other Ranks, European Other Ranks and Senior and Junior Officers. The Africans liked to have us accompany them when they visited the bazaars as they felt that they would otherwise be swindled by the Indian traders. The Africans were always so trusting and childlike and gentle.

Before long we, as a company, boarded a steam ship and steamed out into the Bay of Bengal, down the coast of Burma to the mouth of the Irrawaddy River and then north to Rangoon. Our transit camp was situated in a rubber plantation. Little tins were attached to the trees to catch the latex which drained out of the cuts made in the bark. There were a lot of snakes around that would pass through our tents in the dark. We were extra careful to tuck in the edges of our mosquito nets to keep them out. I remember seeing a large python silently slither across the jungle path that led to our latrine pit on a neighbouring hill. He went about his business, and I mine. Our company was able to do some useful work here as we set up a more permanent transit camp. It was such a joy to see these men working with so much spontaneous rhythm as they covered a roof with sheets of corrugated iron. One man would lead a high spirited song while the others, armed with hammers, maintained perfect rhythm as they punched in the nails. They would move in concert to the next row of nails until the roof was completed. There was a very special kind of harmony here. I witnessed the same kind of performance in Africa in the months to come. A group of men were assigned the job of cutting an area of long grass. The leader kept up a high pitched song while beating time with a rattle. The rattle had the additional purpose of frightening off the snakes. The leader was

followed by a line of men stepping lightly forward as they swung their scythes in time with the rattles, while accentuating the rhythm with a throaty chorus.

One day I was assigned to escort one of our men to a detention centre for some malefaction he had committed. After handing him over to the African guard, I was shocked to see how hard the jailer could be to one of his own people. Actually, I saw no physical violence, only verbal abuse.

I very much enjoyed trips into Rangoon where I liked to visit the beautiful golden Shwedagon Pagoda. Shaped like a bell and encased in gold, it reaches up into the sky from a wide flat platform thronged with saffron robed monks and pilgrims.

I found the ordinary people in Rangoon to be friendly. They were trying to recover from the horrors of the war. I happened to visit the city one day when they were holding their water festival. It was spring time, a time of rebirth and cleansing. They took the cleansing part very seriously. As I walked down the street, someone came up behind me and tipped a bucket of water over me. It came as a shock but I tried to take it in the happy spirit in which it was given. Lorries toured the streets armed with stirrup pumps and buckets of water with which they "cleansed" whoever was around. This was a happy experience under the hot tropical sun.

There were many people squatting by the roadside, in the villages and in the city, selling chunks of sugar cane or beautifully decorated pineapples or offering more personal services like cleaning your ears with little spoons.

Whether I was with the people of India or Burma or the African soldiers with whom I worked, I always felt

a tremendous sense of brotherhood. It didn't matter whether we were black or white, yellow or brown, or whether we were Christians, Moslems, Hindus or Buddhists, to me, we were all one family. We worked together, we played together, we fought together; we were brothers. Those terrible long years of war were over and we were going to build a new world of peace. The nations of the world were coming together to build the United Nations Organization to maintain peace and prosperity. There was a great sense of euphoria as we moved forward into a new world.

It was while I was entertaining this kind of thought, as I walked down a relatively empty street in Rangoon, that a lorry drew up beside me. The lorry was carrying some thirty Japanese prisoners of war – little men in strange military uniforms. Thirty pairs of cold, expressionless eyes stared down at me, and from each pair of eyes I felt such an intensity of anger and hatred engulf me. The truck moved on but the black feeling stayed, hanging over me. Could I ever think of those young men as my brothers?

I had two cousins who served in the army during World War II. The older brother was killed at Dunkirk. His brother was taken prisoner in Burma. When the younger brother was released at the end of the war, he was nothing but skin and bones. He never spoke of his experiences and spent the rest of his life in Kenya. He never wanted to come home to England except for short visits. He eventually retired to Australia to be with his sister's family.

Finally the day came when we could leave Southeast Asia and take our charges back home to West Africa for demobilization. The evening before our

departure, we boarded the ship in Rangoon harbour and slept the night on board. In the morning, when the tide was right, the ship began to make its way out of the delta towards the sea. At first we were immersed in a thick fog but as the fog started to disperse, I went out onto an upper deck to say goodbye to the Orient. Looking back toward the city and into the distance, I saw a great sea of white. Little islands of higher ground peeped up here and there out of the whiteness and then, as the rising sun threw brilliant rays of light across the landscape, I saw the golden Shwedagon Pagoda, surrounded by smaller pagodas, reaching up out of the whiteness, gleaming brilliantly against the clear blue sky. Now, sixty years later, I can remember the sight as if it were yesterday.

The ship was loaded to capacity with soldiers returning home to the British West African Colonies – Gambia, Sierra Leone, Gold Coast and Nigeria. There were as many different languages as there were different temperaments among the peoples of West Africa. Although we, as Europeans, had the luxury of cabins on the upper decks, we had to go below to supervise meals and other activities.

In June the sun beat down with such intensity over the Indian Ocean and the Red Sea. Below deck it was so extremely hot that 'prickly heat', an irritating rash, broke out over our bodies. Tempers became a little frayed in some quarters but everything remained under control. Of course we had no weapons to defend ourselves in case of trouble but if there were trouble makers, they were brought in line by their own NCOs. One man died of fever during the four-week journey. The body was wrapped in white linen, a few words were said and the parcel slid down a plank into the waves.

After traversing the Red Sea and the Mediterranean, we passed through the Pillars of Hercules and turned south down the west coast of Africa, stopping briefly at Las Palmas in the Canary Islands for refuelling. We called in at Gambia and at Freetown, Sierra Leone, for units from those countries to disembark and then at Secundi-Takoradi, the port for the Gold Coast. The harbour was rather shallow so we were carried on pontoons from the ship to the landing stage and, after marching up the winding road from the harbour, we arrived at the army camp. At some point, we assembled on the parade ground and were greeted by the Governor in his ceremonial uniform complete with ostrich plumes. It was customary in the Frontier Force for each European to have a personal steward boy to attend him. The boys' responsibilities were to make the bed, clean quarters, clean shoes and do the laundry. They were always on call when needed. I was given a boy called Kofi. Later, when I was in Accra, he wrote to me asking if I would help him to enter a school to learn secretarial skills. I gave him money to help him get an education. (Kofi Annan, the Secretary General of the UN, 1996-2006, was born in Kumasi in 1938, the son of a local chieftain. He was eight years old at the time I was there. His name, Kofi, is a common one which refers to the day of the week he was born.)

From Takaradi, the Africans were returned to their homes and Europeans went by rail to Accra, the capital city, further along the coast. Here we stayed for a short time at Achimota College, sleeping in little round mud huts with thatched roofs. I remember picking a very large grapefruit from a tree on the campus; it was so incredibly sweet and juicy!

From Achimota, I moved to the headquarters

cantonment at a place called Labadi, a few miles to the east of Accra. I was promoted to sergeant and had responsibility for the distribution of rations and for supplying the four messes: Senior Officers, Junior Offices, European NCOs and Warrant Officers, and, away at the other end of the camp, the African mess.

Each morning we received the menu from the chopmaster of each mess and our responsibility was to provide the meat and other rations needed from our store. We also had to go regularly to the 'Mammy market' to bargain for fresh fruit and vegetables. The Africans ate dry fish (I called it stink fish), cassava and yam.

From time to time we took the lorry up country into the bush to buy fresh eggs from the villages. As we drove into a village and I stepped out of the lorry, there would be a great shriek, hens would fly in all directions and the mammies would run into their huts and pull the doors to. Soon the doors would slowly open one by one and curious eyes would peep from behind them. Stealthily, they would come forward with baskets and bowls of eggs for sale, giggling and chattering ten to the dozen.

It was a very easy and laid back life. I worked from 6.00 in the morning to 1.30pm. The afternoon was free. The gates of the camp opened onto the coast road where ramshackle buses, crammed full of mammies and their bundles of produce, made their way to the markets of Accra. Across the road, close to the village of Labadi, was an expanse of sandy beach that stretched as far as you could see in either direction. You could buy bananas there at eight for a penny. I loved to watch the fishermen as they dragged their heavy wooden boats down from under the palm trees to the water's edge and pushed them out into

the waves. They jumped in, grabbed their paddles and pulled away like crazy to carry their boats out over and through the breakers onto the open sea. The coxswain led the song in an urgent high pitched melody and the crew supported him with a deep-throated chorus as they thrust their paddles into the foaming, salty water. When they returned, the bottoms of their boats flapping with fresh fish, the mammies would be there to carry away the catch in baskets on their heads.

I loved to surf in these Atlantic breakers. We had little flat, plywood surfboards. The sea was very treacherous. There was an undercurrent that would draw you under and, once you were out beyond the breakers, the barracuda were waiting to take great bites out of your flesh and there was no way back. We would go out until we felt the sand being drawn out under our feet and then leap with our boards onto a breaker and be carried at breakneck speed back to the shore. It was a very exhilarating sport.

I hear that now, in the Independent State of Ghana, the village of Labadi has been replaced by a large Hilton Hotel where very important people stay.

Life at the camp was relatively uneventful as we sweltered in the heat. West Africa used to be called the 'white man's grave' but medical science had made it a safer place to be, as long as you remembered to shake the scorpions out of your shoes before you put them on.

In order to maintain good discipline among the African soldiers, it was deemed necessary to have regular drill practise on the parade ground. The role of the drill sergeant often fell to me and I developed a way of throwing my voice in a commanding manner. To my shame, I also developed the vocabulary that went with it.

At the headquarters we had a number of African clerks, a group of men who had some education and considered themselves to be greatly superior to the men from the bush. They clearly resented having to leave their office chairs and to submit themselves to being drilled. Inevitably, they bore the brunt of my vitriol. On the other hand, I deeply resented seeing Africans unjustly treated. I recall an evening when we all gathered to watch an open- air cinema show. At the end of the performance, everyone rose and stood smartly to attention for the National Anthem. One poor fellow, who probably didn't understand much English anyway, had fallen asleep and remained in his chair. A military police officer, a Major, who happened to be standing nearby, strode over to the sleeping man and threw him to the ground. The attitude of this officer made me very angry.

I had not received any leave since we left England more than a year before so I asked permission to go up-country to Kumassi the capital of the Ashanti, a gentle and kindly people. Their king was known as the Ashantini. This was the most northerly place that could be reached by rail. I stayed at a barracks there but with the temperature at 102ºF, and high humidity, I found it difficult to raise myself from my bunk and its mosquito net. I did however make an expedition to a lake that I had seen on the map. The lake was circular and appeared to have no outlet. I took a Hausa boy with me. The Hausa are a fine, handsome people from northern Nigeria. We took the train to a town that was nearest to the lake, rented two bicycles and cycled over some thirty miles of dusty roads through cocoa plantations to the rim of the lake. The lake, we found, had formed at the bottom of a very large crater. Once there, we scrambled down the steep incline nearer to

the water's edge, clinging to the vegetation as we went. There was just no air movement and it became intensely hot. Round the edge of the lake we saw some of the local fishermen at work. They did not appear to have any recognizable boats. Totally naked, they sat astride squared off logs and threw out circular nets which settled in the water. As they withdrew the nets we could see that they were full of leaping fish. I was puzzled as to how the lake had been formed and assumed that it must have been by a meteorite striking the earth in some far off time.

When we arrived back at the small town, I was desperately thirsty. We had neglected to bring enough drinking water with us and I knew that I should not, on any account, drink the local water. The only liquid we could find was locally made whisky. To quench my thirst I downed a tumbler full of this beverage and remembered nothing of the journey back. I have no idea how we negotiated the dusty road back to the railway station or of the time on the train; I was just so grateful for the companionship and loyalty of the trusty Hausa boy.

On the whole, life in Africa slipped by uneventfully. I allowed my twenty-first birthday to pass unnoticed and finally it was time to sail back home to dear old Blighty, for demobilization. We spent a short spell in Aldershot where we occupied some of our spare time with drill practice. Here I could sharpen some of my skills but once on English soil, I became very much aware that I now had to carry my own baggage. Fortunately, I was able to hitchhike my way home for a visit before the demob process was completed. There were not many cars on the roads because of the fuel shortage but anyone, whether he was a naval officer or a farmer going to the market, would pick you up if you were in uniform, and take you for the

next stretch of your journey.

After a week or two at the camp, we were issued with grey striped suits and our demob papers and sent on our way home. It didn't matter that the chocolate I had been saving to take home to my mother had turned white and tasted like soap. I was home with my family at last - a changed person in a changed country.

Water festival in Rangoon.

Shwedagon Pagoda,
Rangoon, Burma

Our 14th West African Artisan Works Company at work

Takaradi Beach

Left and below -
Takaradi Beach. Off duty, on horseback - palm trees and surf.

This is a short distance from Christianburg Castle where slaves were shipped to the Americas. Fifty years after these photos were taken, a first-class Hilton Hotel was built close to this spot to accommodate important guests visiting the area.

Labadi Beach, Takaradi.

"Make No Worry - Sea Neber Dry"

- West African Proverb from the Gold Coast

BOOK 1

Chapter VI

Coming into an Inheritance

England at the end of 1947 was a very drab and grey place. Gone was the euphoria of victory. Everything that had been built up for the war effort, with such patriotic zeal, was being converted back into civilian use. We still had food rationing, clothes rationing and shortage of fuel. We were trying to find ourselves again in a new world. My sisters had left home to train for their chosen occupations – teaching and nursing – and my mother was sharing her house with two elderly ladies. She later provided accommodation for the curate and his mother.

I went back to school at the Architectural Association, which had returned to its original home in Bedford Square. I started again in the first year at the beginning of another five years of study. It was difficult to adjust. There were quite a few students who, like myself, had served in the armed forces and had returned with government grants. There were also a lot of young boys and girls straight from school. At first I found it very difficult to adjust to the lifestyle of a student and to settle into the new environment. At times I wondered if this was where I really wanted to be.

I shared digs with another student of my own age,

John L., in Lewisham, in the care of Mrs Piggot, a London bus driver's widow. We often worked until two in the morning on our studies and travelled back and forth to school on the crowded Southern Electric trains to Charing Cross. My memories are of endless grey, drab Victorian villas. Sometimes the fog was so thick that you had to feel your way to the railway station in the morning. Post war London was a sorry place.

We did sometimes manage to lighten the gloom by resorting to childish pranks. I recall the day when we were travelling up to Charing Cross on a very crowded train during the rush hour. The compartment was packed tightly with sitting and standing passengers trying to read their tightly folded newspapers. John had boarded the train with a secret weapon in his pocket. He surreptitiously dropped a small glass file on the floor and crushed it under his foot. The compartment immediately filled with the most disgusting smell of rotten eggs. Everyone looked accusingly at those nearest to them and, at the next stop, hastily vacated the compartment and ran for the next connection.

It took time to adjust to the life of a student. Most of our time was spent in fulfilling various design projects to develop our creative ability and our skills in presentation. Every day we attended lectures on a wide range of subjects relating to our intended profession. I enjoyed the history lectures very much and this later became the subject of my thesis. Unfortunately, I quickly sank out of my depth in structural engineering and mechanics. These lectures were given by a very talented gentleman with a thick central European accent. I made copious notes from the blackboard and felt gratitude toward those structural engineers who would one day

shoulder this aspect of our work. The important thing was that we should have some understanding of every specialist component of the buildings for which we would one day be responsible, without, necessarily, being experts in everything.

We developed an understanding of the nature of the materials and of the way the forces worked within a structure of a building. We looked at form and colour and above all, I think, how the spaces within buildings and between buildings related to the needs and emotions of the people who were to experience them. Architecture has a very human and a very spiritual aspect that can relate to people in many different ways.

I developed a strong interest in landscape architecture and garden design as part of the experience and took an extramural course at University College in this subject. We spent some time during the summer visiting famous gardens. One garden to which I felt particularly attracted was Kew in Kingston upon Thames. In later years, I discovered that part of the inspiration for Kew Gardens came from a distant ancestor of my maternal grandmother's family. James Stuart, Third Earl of Bute, had developed an interest in the sciences while living on his Scottish island. Perhaps because of this, he was appointed tutor to the young Hanovarian Prince who was to become King George III. Soon after King George came to the throne, the Earl of Bute became his First Minister, or Prime Minister. I understand that the Duke had quite some influence with Charlotte, the Queen Mother, and encouraged her to found Kew Gardens where plants from all over the Empire could be brought and studied. (I have to say that my ancestor was no longer in power when King George III fell out with the American Colonists!)

During one summer holiday students were required to prepare a measured drawing of a building of their choice. I chose Hannington Hall, a country house close to my home, which had been built by two brothers of the Freke family in the 17th century. The most striking feature of the house is an inscription carved in stone, stretching across the main facade. The wording, which is in Latin, is taken from the opening words of Psalm 133, a song of David: 'Ecce quam bonum et quam iucundum est habitare fratres in unum', 'Behold how good and how pleasant it is for brothers to dwell together in unity'. These are words that had a very special meaning and remained in my memory.

We were inspired by the works of modern architects – Mies Van De Rohe, Le Corbusier and Frank Lloyd Wright. I was particularly inspired by the work of Frank Lloyd Wright who came over from America to speak to us.

In April 1949 my uncle, John Masters, died and I became the heir to the family Estate at Stanton Fitzwarren in Wiltshire. I became the Lord of the Manors of Stanton Fitzwarren, Stanton Fitzherbert and Stanton Hungerford - a title that no longer has any real value. I also inherited the Advowson, or Right of Presentation to the Benifice – the Patronage of the Church. My ancestor, John Organ, yeoman, had purchased the manors of Stanton Fitzwarren and Stanton Fitzherbert and the Patronage of the church for 'six hundred and three score pounds' (£660) in 1575 in the 19th year of the reign of Queen Elizabeth I.

It is interesting to note that, during the patronage of one Richard Organ, the Clerk of Stanton Fitzwarren Church was the Rev John Woodbridge. John Woodbridge had two sons, John and Benjamin, who both emigrated to

New England. Benjamin Woodbridge, who had matriculated at Magdalen Collage, Oxford, went on to become the first on the list of new students at Harvard College, Boston, when it opened in 1642. Benjamin later returned to England and was, for a short time, Chaplin to King Charles II.

John Organ's two sons died without children so, on their death, the property passed to his daughter's husband John Hippisly.

John Hippisly was one of a line of Barrister-at-Law at the Middle Temple, London, who owned lands in Somerset that had been purchased from the Crown at the Disillusion of the Monasteries under King Henry VIII. John Hippisly's mother was the daughter of Sir John Horner of Mells Park in Somerset who was descended from the famous Little Jack Horner of the nursery rhyme. "Little Jack Horner sat in the corner eating his Christmas pie. He put in his thumb and pulled out a plum and said 'What a good boy am I'".

Jack Horner had been the Steward of Glastonbury Abbey at the time of the Dissolution of the Monasteries under King Henry VIII. The plum refers to something that he acquired when the lands were being distributed. He is an interesting ancestor to claim.

John Hippisly passed the land at Stanton to his third son, Robert Hippisly, who became the High Sheriff of Wiltshire at the time of Oliver Cromwell. He was later referred to as one of Cromwell's creatures. His memorial is a black marble stone in the floor of Stanton Church. In 1702 the property had passed, by inheritance, into the Trenchard family who secured it, together with their existing property at Abbots Leigh, in a 'male tail'. This meant that the properties passed solely to their male heirs

who became 'tenants for life'. The property was in the hands of trustees and the 'tenant for life' could not dispose of it to any other person of his choice. When I inherited the property in 1949, I became the last in line and was, from then on, free to dispose of it as I pleased. The property had passed, in this way, through ten generations over a period of four hundred years.

Although I knew that one day I would inherit the Estate, my Uncle John, who had no son of his own to whom he could leave the property, did not consider it necessary to prepare me, in any way, for my future responsibilities.

My earliest memory of Stanton was when my Aunt Mary took my sisters and me for a picnic at a quiet spot beyond the lake. The embankment of a branch railway line which, at that time, wound its way across the property, shielded the view of the village. We were in a warm sunny place with only the woods and trees and fields around us. A gentle breeze danced through the meadow grass. I remember a feeling of awe welling up inside me as I was told that this magical place would one day be mine.

Many years later, I learnt that the very spot where we had had our picnic was the site of a Roman villa that would have been a place of importance some 1600 years earlier.

I remember, on one occasion, going to have tea with my Godmother, Laura Agar, who lived at Stanton House. Her family had taken a fifty-year lease on the house. At that time the entrance drive led down from the gates at the North Lodge, passed the Church and continued round a large spreading Cedar of Lebanon in front of the house. It was a Georgian style house. The front was covered with a beautiful climbing Wisteria, hanging

with purple flowers. After tea, my Godmother invited us to go out through the French doors on the other side of the house into a formal garden of Box hedges. Beyond the formal garden there was a sunken wall, a ha-ha, and the land fell away across the park to a lake surrounded by rushes and more Box bushes. There was a romantic stone ruin on the other side of the lake – a Gothic window removed from the church when it was extended to the west. The smell of Box hedges has always transported me back to that scene and place.

My Uncle John had to sell the mansion house and park after inheriting the estate from his cousin in 1929, in order to pay the heavy death duties required by the government. The property had changed hands three times in twenty-three years. Shortly before World War II the best farm, situated in a neighbouring parish, was compulsory purchased by the Air Ministry for the construction of an aircraft factory and airfield. The Spitfire fighter plane was built here during the war, and later the Concord was developed in the facility.

As a student of twenty-two, in London, I had very little understanding of my legal responsibilities or of the management of the Estate. However, the trustees, who were a firm of solicitors at Grays Inn, guided me through the legal side of things and the estate agents, who had acted for my uncle in his old age, continued to look after the tenancies, the employment of estate workers and the maintenance of the woodlands, until I was able to take over the management myself.

My responsibilities as Patron of the Living traditionally gave me the right to appoint the Rector of the parish. This brought me into the affairs of the parish church and I was soon elected Vicar's Warden.

Stanton parish was very small and had recently come under the care of the vicar of the neighbouring parish of South Marston. Canon C F Harman, who thus became the Rector of Stanton Fitzwarren, had been a somewhat controversial character in the Diocese. He held strongly to the teachings of St Paul and chose to remain celibate. He was very much aware of the existence of the spiritual world and was often called in locally to perform exorcisms to send evil spirits on their way. He also promoted spiritual healing and was active in its practice. Canon Harman was a very dramatic character and followed a more High Church or Anglo Catholic style of ritual than would normally have been used in rural parishes. He believed strongly that the persecution experienced by the early Christians, brought them closer to the teachings and heart of Jesus than could have been understood in the later, established church. His interest in the early church, somehow connected him to the ideals of communism and, because of this, he became known in the locality as the 'Red Canon'. Of course, he was not in any way condoning Marxist Communism, but I believe he saw, in the appalling persecution of the Christians under Marxism, the spark that would re-ignite the fervour and passion of those early Christians who so willingly gave their lives for Jesus and the promise of the kingdom. In time, I found myself very much inspired by Canon Harman's enthusiasm, although much of his words fell on otherwise deaf ears.

As he had two churches to look after and there was a need for two services to be held in each church on Sundays, he asked me to help him out by leading the service in one church while he performed in the other. Of course I could not officiate at the Eucharist but I was

expected to give a sermon. I felt it such a great privilege to be able to occupy a pulpit that my grandfather had preached from for many years, frequently shedding tears. My great-grandfather Trenchard and his father before him had preached from this same pulpit.

I had no training and very little inclination to take on the duties of a lay reader, but I entered into it out of a sense of duty or responsibility. I was totally inept at speaking in public but forced myself to take on the challenge. I took ideas from published sermons and spent hours each week preparing to speak for ten minutes. I think my little sister was the only one to receive inspiration from my efforts, but it did encourage me to look more deeply into the theology of my Christian faith as a springboard for a much wider search.

BOOK 1

Chapter VII

Discovering the Purpose of Life

My studies at the AA school were for a period of four years followed by a fifth year working in an architectural office, getting practical experience before qualifying. I had taken a separate short course in Landscape Architecture, which I had enjoyed very much. My final theses reflected my particular interests. The history thesis was entitled "The Effects of Social History on Domestic Architecture". My design thesis was the design of a modern farm house and farm buildings layout which I carried out with the support of a local farmer, Mr Ted Dibble, on part of his land. This linked with my growing interest and involvement in farming.

Our student holidays were inspiring. One year I went with two other ex-service men to Italy. We went with a serious agenda to visit the architectural wonders of Italy. We spent time in Florence and Tuscany and also visited Venice and Rimini on the Adriatic, where we could see many examples of Byzantine architecture. Although the country was still recovering from the ravages of the war, we were very much inspired by the old and new buildings in Italy. The towns, the landscapes, the people and, not least, the wine, gave us three weeks in heaven.

The next year I went to Scandinavia with John L. on a cycling tour through Norway, Sweden and Denmark. We stayed at youth hostels. Cycling across Norway from Bergen to Oslo proved quite a challenge. Downhill into the fjords was great but for the climbs up into the mountains, we hitched ourselves onto the back of lorries, pulling up alongside from time to time to pass cigarettes to the drivers. Although it was August, the snow was still falling in high places so we took the train for the last part of the journey.

In Sweden we discovered smorgasbord breakfast in the hostels and at Stockholm we stayed on a sailing boat which had been built in England in 1888. The boat had been converted into a Youth Hostel. There we found that we were to share our cabin with two German lads. They greeted us by clicking their heels and bowing stiffly. Although five years after the war, it still came as quite a cultural shock. I was inspired by the cleanliness and openness of the new Swedish buildings. I noticed that the Swedish people did not draw curtains across their windows. When you walked down the street after dark, it was as if you were drawn into everyone's living room.
After a few days in Copenhagen, we cycled across Denmark in three days to catch the ferry home. I ate rather too much Danish Blue Cheese on the way and lost most of it in the choppy waters of the North Sea.

My first job, after completing my school studies, was found for me by the AA School. I was admitted into the Architectural Department of the London County Council. I was totally unprepared for the discipline of employment in a local authority office and found the work rather uninspiring. My first assignment was to provide improved toilet accommodation at an LCC Children's

Home. It was an interesting experience to lunch from time to time in one of the 'family' houses. A house mother looked after a group of children as a family in each house.

When I had no work to do in the office, I disgraced myself by spreading a newspaper on my drawing board. This was very much disapproved of as one was supposed to look as if one was working, even if there was nothing to do. As a consequence of this, I was called before the Chief Architect, a very charming person, who kindly suggested that I was not altogether suited to this kind of work and that it would be better if I found employment elsewhere. I then went as an assistant at a small private practice in Sloane Square. Here again there was very little work to be done. However, while I was there, I was able to do design work of my own and I learned the fundamentals of running a private practice.

After completing my year of practical experience, I was duly elected on the 17th day of June, 1952, an Associate of the Royal Institute of British Architects and in October received an Architectural Association Diploma. This qualification would be equivalent to a Bachelors Degree in university. I could now set up in practice on my own.

While in London, I lived in Pembroke Gardens, off Bayswater Road. A room with a small cooker and a sink, sharing the bathroom across the corridor with sundry others. At weekends I took the train from Paddington and stayed with my family in Highworth. From here I could see to matters concerning the Estate and attend church.
The Estate had become rather run down and I was working, together with the land agents, to improve the standard of the farm holdings to make them more efficient and profitable for the tenants. By laying out money on

new buildings and equipment, we could make the whole enterprise more profitable. We also did a lot to improve the facilities in the cottages, work which was very much overdue. The woodlands too had become rather neglected, and we started a program of tree planting.

Around this time, we had to sell Stone Croft, our house in Highworth. The old Mill Cottage at Stanton had become vacant, so we carried out repairs and improvements and made it an attractive little thatched cottage for my mother and sister Ellen to live in.

Having been brought up in boys' schools and having spent three years in a strictly male branch of the army, I was hopelessly shy and awkward with girls, especially the young and attractive ones. I was vulnerable and inexperienced and I suffered a lot of pain and anguish.

When I was in Lewisham I had taken lessons in ballroom dancing to equip myself for the world. My teacher was a Maori man from New Zealand and, I have to say, I felt distinctly uncomfortable capering around the floor with a male partner! I thought of it as an essential part of my education and I managed to master a few of the basic steps.

When a wealthy family friend invited me to escort her daughter to a couple of Society Balls, I found them to be interesting experiences. There was lots of champagne, which I did not particularly enjoy, but on the second occasion, the young lady made it clear that she was thoroughly bored with my company - especially so when I kept treading on her toes. I think we were both relieved when a chauffeur driven car arrived to take us home.

In the summer of 1950, I wanted very much to visit Florence again. We made up a small party, my sister Ellen,

my future business partner, Trevor, and, to make up a foursome, we invited Avril Jeeves. Avril and I had known each other for many years and had always got on well together. We used to go to each other's homes for Christmas parties and the like and often played together as children. Avril's father was the tenant on one of the farms. He was also the People's Warden at the Church. She was happy to accept the invitation and, in order to raise money for the fare she sold a pig she had been raising.

During the holiday, romance developed between us. I began visiting Avril quite frequently at the farm and she would come up to London and we would spend the day together. On one visit we were having a meal at the "Salad Bowl" at Lyon's Corner House and I asked her, quite casually, when we were going to get married. It was made clear to me that this was not the right way to propose! A few days later we were travelling back to Victoria Station on a Southern Electric train, after a visit to Hampton Court, when I got down on my bended knee on the dirty floor of the third class carriage and pled my troth. This time it was accepted and, after arriving at Victoria Station, we went directly to the nearest church that we knew, to offer thanks to God for our engagement. As we entered the red brick Westminster Cathedral, just off Victoria Street, the door closed firmly behind us, shutting off the bustle and noise of the street outside. We were immediately enveloped in almost total darkness. The windows had been blacked out since the war and, over the years, smoke from candles and incense had blackened the brick vaulting and rafters. There was a small light shining away in the distance and someone was playing softly on the organ. We knelt and tearfully gave thanks to God for

this great blessing.

We were engaged in February. We married on 23rd August, 1952, in the little parish church at Stanton Fitzwarren where we had both been baptized twenty-six years before. Avril's father had also been baptized there by my grandfather, a generation earlier.

Our wedding reception was held in the rustic setting of the old Tithe Barn at North Farm. The tithe barn had been moved from its original location, opposite the church, when the park had been developed 150 years earlier. It had been used for celebrations and community events for generations. The bare stone walls were decorated with sheaves of corn, a symbol of fertility. The bridal couple and guests alike threaded their way through the rick yard to join the festivity. It was a joyful occasion. We spent our honeymoon at Killarney in the South of Ireland under the shadow of the MacGillycuddy's Reeks. We had travelled by train to Fishguard and spent our wedding night in the cabin of the ferry to Waterford. We woke at dawn and, peeping through the porthole, watched the morning mist rising from the surface of the water. We found Ireland to be such an enchanting and magical place and I felt my mother's Hopkins ancestors were there to greet us and to share our time of discovery. At the time that King Charles I was imprisoned in Carisbrooke Castle, in the Isle of Wight, awaiting execution, Sir William Hopkins mortgaged his property to his brother and spent all his money supporting the King, both at Carisbrooke and at Sir William's own home on the island. After the King's execution, Sir William's son, George, fled to France and Holland with the King's son and heir. When Charles II was later restored to the throne he rewarded George with a grant of forfeited lands in

Ireland together with a considerable sum of money. Over some five generations, the family moved from Blessington, Co. Wicklow to Cork, Limerick, Tipperary and Dublin before my great-grandfather moved to Scotland to seek an inheritance. Although we knew nothing of these ancestors at the time, I am sure they connected with us emotionally and spiritually.

After we were married, my mother told the story of how, when I was just two years old, my parents had been to visit Avril's parents at the farm. At first sight, I had chased after her trying to kiss her. She was three months older than me and I couldn't catch her so I had to wait another twenty-four years for that kiss. Apparently, at the time, my father had jokingly suggested that maybe we would get married one day. He died within the year. My sister, Ellen, thinks that it would have been more in character if I had been trying to pull her hair rather than to kiss her - but that is as may be.

Our marriage was such an incredible blessing. We came from different backgrounds, with different experiences in life. Our characters and even our physical appearances were in contrast and yet our love for each other deepened and strengthened through the years. After we were married I felt such a lift in my life. The doubts and tensions, the inadequacies of the last years were lifted from my shoulders and I felt so much more positive and happy and ready to face the challenges of life - challenges that we could face together.

We moved back to Bayswater, moving down the corridor to a double room. It had a gas fire, a gas cooker and a sink. I remember we kept a bunch of eucalyptus on the mantle shelf to keep away the germs. It was very foggy that year in London and animals were dying of

suffocation at the Agricultural Show. Our collars and cuffs would always be black from the smog when we went out. Avril got a job working at Harrods for the Christmas period but this had to be terminated when she discovered that she was pregnant. We then moved back to Stanton and stayed at North Farm with Avril's parents. We had two rooms to ourselves and shared everything else.

Then in June, while Avril's brother, Desmond, was telling a naughty joke, the waters broke and Avril was rushed to the nursing home in Swindon for the birth of our first child, Rosalind. Unfortunately, it was not the policy of the nursing home at that time to allow fathers to be present at the birth. I was sent home to leave Avril to the mercy of the midwife at a time when we most needed each other; happily this policy was later modified. Rosalind came into our home as a most precious gift – adored as well by two grandmothers.

When I had first inherited the estate in 1949, one of the first things that had to be seen to was the payment of the inheritance tax. This was a tax that considerably reduced the size of the property with each succeeding generation. I was obliged to sell one of the farms as well as and ground rents that I now owned in Brixham, South London. It seemed very unlikely that the property could survive another round of taxation at my death.

The Estate had become very run down and rents were ridiculously low. It was clear that a lot of improvements needed to be carried out in order to bring the farms up to date and allow us to charge acceptable rents. To pay for these necessary improvements and to cover the cost of a new family home meant raising a considerable sum of money. To provide this, we took out a loan from an insurance company which could be paid

off over twenty-one years. The land was the security. It was quite a shock for the insurance agents when the client turned up at their offices on a bicycle and offered around woodbine cigarettes.

When we came to build our dream house it was already seven years after the end of World War II. Planning regulations had become much stricter and you could no longer build where you wanted to on your own land. The permitted size of the building in the years after the war was also very restricted. We were very fortunate in finding a site close to the centre of the village but set back behind existing buildings. It was on a raised shoulder of land which, in all probability, was part of a small Roman settlement. It had a wonderful view to the west across the valley to the woods and fields beyond. The site provided an extensive view to the north that stretched across the Thames Valley to the Cotswold Hills on the far horizon. Although partially screened by the trees in the park, there was also an extensive view to the south reaching to the edge of the chalk downs with their prehistoric settlements and forts.

To build the house, I used a stone coloured brick so as to be in keeping with the existing stone walls and buildings of the village. The outward appearance of the house, I tried to keep simple and clean, reflecting, in a sense, the buildings I had seen in Sweden a couple of years before.

We used floor heating that was beginning to become popular at that time. This was re-introducing the concept of the Roman hypocaust system of under-floor heating that had actually been used in the Roman villa, now hidden below ground but almost within view of our windows. It also happened to be traditional heating

system for houses in far-away Korea.

Although the building was small, I tried to develop a feeling of spaciousness with an open plan and split level. I wanted to create a visual flow between the house, the garden and the landscape beyond. We wanted to build an ideal home in which to bring up our family. Our family was to become so precious to us. Rosalind was born in June 1953, while the house was being built, Priscilla in April 1955 and James in January 1960.

Having moved to Stanton, I followed in my father's footsteps by opening an Architectural practice in Swindon, starting in a couple of rooms above a tailor's shop in the Old Town. Within a few months I was joined by a fellow student from the AA School, Trevor Cooper, and we set up in partnership. As Trevor did not drive and our work covered quite a large area of the local countryside, he spent rather more of his time at the drawing board whereas I spent more time supervising the work and carrying out surveys and meeting with people. Our clients were from a wide spectrum, but by far the most important to us were the Bristol Diocese and Arkell's, the local brewery. The Diocesan work included the inspection and repair of medieval as well as more modern churches, designing vicarages and other church connected buildings. This, of course, brought us in touch with many of the local clergy. On one occasion, Avril and I had the privilege of shaking hands with Her Royal Highness Princess Margaret when she opened a Youth Hostel that I had been working on.

My family's connection with the Arkell family had existed for several generations. When we were in our early teens we often met up with the younger members of the family during school holidays. I remember going down to

the Thames on our bicycles and swimming together in the river below Hannington Bridge. In some places the water was clear with river weeds waving gently in the stream but further down, where the cows came to drink, the soft mud oozed up between your toes in such a delicious way.

Now Arkell's, in the hands of a new generation, were investing in the modernization of their houses. We were taking the rather drab old drinking houses and, by creating more interesting spaces with the careful use of materials, colour, lighting etc., we tried to create places where people would feel at home and would want to go to socialise and even to bring their families. We were catering for all levels of society. The work was challenging but enjoyable.

As time went by, I became more involved in farming. When my father-in-law retired, his son, Desmond, was unable financially to take over the tenancy. I therefore took the farm 'in hand'. As my father-in-law was crippled with arthritis, he had had to rely very much on Desmond to keep the farm going. When I took the farm over, it was natural and essential that Desmond should continue to manage it. He continued to live with his father in the farmhouse and we worked together to develop the farm and bring it up to date. I did not have time to get involved so much, physically, but was very interested in the development and running of the farm and dealing with the accounts. As a member of the Country Landowners Association and the National Farmers Union, I read up on all the latest ideas and developments. I was also interested in developing a co-operative scheme for grain drying to include the other farm tenants but they did not share my enthusiasm and nothing came of it.

Avril and I inevitably became involved in local

organizations as well as the church. Avril led the local Women's Institute and I started a Youth Club in the village which met once a week in the Village Hall. As time went on, Avril was appointed a Justice of the Peace, a "JP" She sat on the bench with her fellow Magistrates to deal with minor crimes. As a woman she had special responsibility for domestic and juvenile cases. I was appointed a Commissioner of Taxes. Most tax problems were dealt with by official Tax Inspectors who administered the tax laws. There were, however, many small business people, particularly small farmers, who were very competent in their field but were quite unable to keep proper accounts, beyond making notes on the back of cigarette packets.

It was the responsibility of the panel of Commissioners to make an independent assessment. I cannot recall anyone ever challenging our assessments.

As a magistrate, Avril's responsibilities included visits to prisons and correctional establishments which were often very enlightening. These appointments were made by the Lord Chancellor and were unpaid except for 'out-of-pocket expenses'.

Another committee that I found myself on, as an architect, was the Management Committee of a girls' hostel that had recently been built by the Girls Friendly Society under the auspices of the Church of England. The hostels were primarily provided as a safe place for young girls who were working or studying away from the protection of their families.

One thing I found rather disturbing about the hostel was that there was a 'quiet room' which was, supposedly, set aside for quiet prayer, study or meditation. The girls were not permitted to take visitors to

their rooms but the supervisor kept the key to the quiet room and could give it out to girls who wanted to entertain guests. They could then lock themselves in and would not be disturbed!

Leaving the church and on the way to the reception.

Wedding reception at the Old Tythe Barn.
On the left of the bride - Mr Hewer (veterinary surgeon); Uncle Louis Hopkins, who began his ministry as a missionary in India; cousin Joan Bode, who had worked for many years as a missionary in Africa.

Picking our way through the Rickyard after the reception.

Avril Jeeves - she caught my fancy when we were two. Who could resist?

Reginald Jeeves - Avril's father.

Rose Jeeves (née Godwin) - Avril's mother.

Avril.

BOOK 1

Chapter VIII

Consolidating Our Lives

Despite our busy lives, our chief joy and hope for the future was our family. When our first child, Rosalind, was born, she became the pride and focus of both sides of the family. Whenever I went out walking (and I walked a lot in the fields), I carried her on my shoulders until she was big enough to walk herself – or my back became too weak. Then one day, a terrible thing happened as she was sitting in her high chair eating a banana. We had not thought it necessary to strap her in but while we were temporarily out of the room, she attempted to climb down. Her hand slipped and she landed on her head on the hard floor. She began to have fits. We called the young doctor who was standing in for our local GP and he drove over straight away in his car and took the three of us to the emergency department of the Swindon hospital. We held her in our arms as her little body continued to convulse. We waited at the hospital where she was sedated and tests were carried out. We prayed like we had never prayed before. The kind young doctor then drove us back home. He told us that there was only a fifty-fifty chance that she would survive the night. He gave us very strong sleeping pills and told us to telephone the hospital in the morning.

When we called we were told that Rosalind had come through successfully and that we could fetch her home. Subsequent tests over the next year or so showed no permanent damage. The young Welsh doctor came to our aid like a guardian angel. We maintained a close friendship with him and his family for some years.

I have always enjoyed reading poetry and one of my favourite poets at that time was John Betjeman. I had his book 'Summoned by Bells' and I remember Rosalind sitting on my lap and being totally absorbed by the rhythm and music of the words as I read aloud to her.

Our second daughter, Priscilla (or Scilla as we call her), was born at home. The midwife delivered her swiftly before the doctor could arrive. She was always a very gentle, good natured and loving child without a trace of malice. We always knelt down with our children when they were small and offered a goodnight prayer. The only time I remember being angry with Scilla was, to my shame, when she was fooling around and would not take her prayers seriously.

Unfortunately, as is often the case, there was a certain amount of jealousy between the girls. There was never a time when I could have both of them sitting on my lap at the same time.

When they were old enough to go to school we sent them both to a Catholic convent school at Lechlade where we felt they would get a good foundation. We took them each day by car or shared the daily run with other parents.

When they were twelve or thirteen we sent them away to boarding schools. Each to a school that we felt would suit them best. My sisters had both been to boarding schools, and my parents before them. We

wanted to do whatever would give them the best start in life. Every two or three weekends we would drive down to Somerset to take them out for the day. It was quite a difficult journey before the age of motorways.

Our son James was born some five years after the girls. He was delivered by the midwife at home while I played scrabble with the doctor downstairs. Scilla was the first to hear the baby cry and was so happy to have a baby brother to care for. James, like his father, was born with a mild form of dyslexia or word blindness. I know all too well the frustration of those early days at school when you are trying to learn the basics of reading and writing.

We had decided to send James to the local state school where he could find his place in the world with the other boys. It seems however that he did have a difficult time from the start, from ragging on the school bus. He hated going to school and found every reason for not going on the bus.

In addition to this setback, he was born left-handed. Apparently, it was the policy of the school, at that time, to encourage a child to change over to being right-handed. This caused him to develop a stutter which he has retained for the rest of his life. In view of the difficulties he was experiencing at the local state school, we felt that it would be better for him to go to a nearby preparatory school when he was eight, as a weekly boarder, until he was old enough to go to Kings School, Bruton, where I myself had been most happy.

During these years when our children were growing up and receiving their education, I found myself very much occupied with my architectural practice, looking after the Estate, the farm and Church affairs as well as our other public responsibilities.

My hobbies were principally centred on the natural world. I kept several hives of bees which I found very fascinating. Honey on the comb is very delicious. I made wines from wild flowers and fruits – beautiful golden wine from Dandelion flowers – effervescent wine from Elder flower. I found that red wines from hedgerow fruit were too strongly flavoured but were much improved by blending. I had a special place in my heart for wild flowers and listed more than three hundred different species in their various habitats in the parish.

Over the years, I had developed a strong sense of responsibility in taking care of all the things in which I had become involved or had undertaken. Caring, not in a possessive way, taking everything for myself but, rather, as a steward. I had developed a sense of stewardship.

It was around this time that the Bishop of Bristol asked me, as well as another member of the laity, to address groups of clergy within the Archdeaconry on the subject of "stewardship". We were given a set of slides and spoke from these. I was totally unprepared for the response that came from some of the clergy there. It was as if I was speaking to a trade union meeting, and I mean no disrespect for the trade union movement. What came out was a sense of disillusionment among many of the clergy and a lack of any sense of stewardship or taking responsibility for those in their care. Of course this was a particular group at a particular time, but it affected me very much and burst in me a certain bubble of idealism.
It was during this period that I read a small book by John A. T. Robinson, then Bishop of Woolwich, called "Honest to God". This book had become popular reading, but it seemed to me to be taking God out of our faith and this was coming from a prelate of our church!

I began to feel that our faith was becoming strangely diluted and that the church, to which I belonged, was becoming little more than a genteel social club with a tolerance that had no limit. I had always been interested in the beliefs and practices of other denominations and faiths and Avril and I began to expand our reading into other spheres.

The current Rector of our parish was not a person I could relate to seriously. To him, everything seemed to be a big joke. He was very much open to the existence of the spirit world but I felt that he played with psychic phenomenon as one might experiment with fireworks. Our relationship was often strained.

A book that gave me food for thought at that time was by the Jesuit priest Teilhard de Chardin. His writings were banned by the Catholic Church but "The Phenomenon of Man" helped me to relate to the Theory of Evolution by reflecting upon the evolution of the spirit. We were also reading books by Bonhoeffer and others. We were searching. Our reading also extended into Buddhism and other oriental faiths.

I was always very interested to see the way in which changes of emphasis in our faith, changes of liturgy and musical instruments, were reflected in the design and furnishing of our churches at any particular period of time. In 1971 I had the opportunity to give a lecture on this subject at the 13th century church of St Michael, Highworth, where I had worshipped in my teenage years. I could now stand before the chancel arch and demonstrate to those sitting in the pews, how the edifice had grown and developed and changed with the evolution of our faith over a period of six or seven centuries. The lecture was well received and I very much

enjoyed giving it.

When our children were in their teens, we made extensions to our home. We built a dining room to the south with large windows where we could sit and enjoy the view of the garden and beyond. I called this the Thunder Room, as it was a great place to experience thunderstorms. It was also a place where we could better entertain our guests. Above the laundry room we built a new bedroom and toilet facilities so that the girls could have separate rooms. Rosalind had the opportunity to choose her own furnishings and colour scheme in her new bedroom and we ended up with purple walls. This room shared the view over the dining room.

The girls both did reasonably well at their separate schools. Rosalind had a musical talent. She played the piano and as a second instrument, the bassoon. She also played guitar, and we sometimes sang together in the holidays. We bought her a piano which was a prized possession. At school she practised two hours a day. One year she was picked to play at the Junior Bath Festival. As proud parents we rushed from concert hall to concert hall to hear her playing in the various competitions and we were totally bowled over by her performance. However, she did not want to make music her career and did not continue seriously with the piano after leaving school.

We always enjoyed family holidays together, exploring the coast of Pembrokeshire or working a canal barge from Birmingham into North Wales. This experience gave the children a lot of exercise opening and shutting lock gates. Another year we navigated the Shannon River, in Ireland, in a fibreglass cruiser, visiting places of interest. These were all great fun. We toured in Brittany and went camping in the Loire Valley in France. We

explored Portugal and developed a taste for Port wine.

As our children were away at school much of the time, we treasured so much those times when we could holiday together as a family. Rosalind however, a rather more gregarious and outgoing person, yearned to go off on holidays with young people of her own age. Perhaps we were too possessive but we had to let her go and we missed her company. Her effervescence and enthusiasm affected us all.

We were not anxious that our children, especially the girls, should go to university as we suspected the moral standards of those institutions. We would have liked Ros to go into a profession or follow a career in music, if she had the talent. At first she was thinking of joining the Police Force where she would probably have done well, but, in the end, she chose to move to London where she would live with friends and attend a Secretarial College. We were confident that she would do well in whatever course she might take.

Our three children: Priscilla *(left)*, James *(middle)* and Rosalind *(right)*. AND BELOW, Hossil Lane (our home) after the cedar-clad, wood-framed extension had been completed, 1981.

BOOK 1

Chapter IX

A New Awakening

After a few months in London, Rosalind told us that she had met a young lady in Oxford Street who had introduced her to a group of young people calling themselves "The Unified Family". This group, it seems, was run by a very spiritual American lady and her husband, of whom she thought very highly. A little while later Rosalind came home and told us "The Messiah is on earth"! We took this lightly, wondering what in the world she had been hearing. She had never expressed much interest in any religious faith. Maybe this was a change in the right direction. She then said "You are no longer my parents! I have True Parents now." These words were not uttered in jest but with a cold certainty. It hit us so hard. It was as if we had been stabbed in the heart with a splinter of ice. We knew nothing of this Unified Family that she had become involved in. We had never heard of the movement's Korean founder with the unlikely name of Sun Myung Moon. This was a smack in the face. It was almost as if our precious daughter, for whom we had so much hope, had died and been taken from us. We went into shock. We felt that the bottom of our world had fallen out. I shed so many tears in the days following. We had

almost lost her after her fall when she was young. Were we going to lose her again?

Then, to our delight, Rosalind came home to spend Christmas with us. Christmas was always a very special time when our families came together at our home. Avril had prepared a wonderful Christmas dinner for all as we celebrated this special time, a joyful time when traditionally families come together.

Rosalind had brought with her a book she wanted to share with us. It consisted of type written sheets in a spiral binder and was entitled "The Divine Principle". The author of the book was a Korean lady – a Miss Young Oon Kim. Because of the deep love and concern that we had for our daughter, we wanted, desperately, to understand what it was that had captured her imagination and was, seemingly, taking her from us.

At first Avril was too busy preparing for the Christmas festivities to become involved in what Rosalind had to show but I could not wait. Rosalind and I began to read and we continued to read together for the whole of the two days she was with us. I simply could not put the book down. I sat down to the Christmas dinner with the family and carved the turkey but I could not eat anything. Rosalind too fasted with me that day. We had not finished reading the book when it was time for her to leave, so she left it with us saying only that we should not read the end before we got to it. Of course we did, but it in no way detracted from the message. Avril and I continued to read together for the next few days.

By no means do I remember the full content of this book but I do know that it had a very profound effect on us both. It spoke so positively about all the things which were most dear to us. It spoke about the centrality of love

in our lives, about the importance of family and the sanctity of marriage. It touched on stewardship and about having a clear understanding of our relationship with all living things, and our responsibility for the Creation. It also spoke so clearly about the reality of the spirit world. The book told of the longing and hope of all people to be able to build a better world – a Utopia – a Kingdom of Heaven on Earth. A hope that is expressed by Jesus Christ in the Lord's Prayer, 'Thy Kingdom come, Thy will be done, on earth as it is in Heaven'. But I think that the concept that moved us the most at the time was the idea that, because man was created in the likeness of God, then God, like man, must be able to experience emotions. God could experience not only love, anger, and joy, but also sorrow and pain. It touched us very deeply to think of the painful heart of God as he sees our ignorance of Him and our disobedience to His will. The section on the Mission of Jesus also moved us deeply. We realized that these revelations were not the work of any ordinary person; they were truly inspired and deeply insightful.

We were invited to attend meetings at Rowlane Farm House – a 'centre' outside Reading. Here we heard lectures on different aspects of the Divine Principle and we received books that we could take home to study. We visited Dorney Cottage where the leaders lived and we attended Sunday services there. Sometimes we would meet Rosalind there.

Our parents and other members of our family joined us on occasions when we visited the centre and were happy to meet the brothers and sisters who were always very warm toward them. Their connection was on a lighter plain.

As we began to study more deeply and to converse

with our new-found friends, we found ourselves becoming more open to the spiritual world around us. I remember clearly walking down the street in Swindon and feeling that I was moving six inches above the pavement. I felt people turning and looking at me as I passed. I found myself walking down a footpath or across the fields and sensing the grasses reaching out to touch me. I could walk into a field where birds, which would normally scatter at the presence of a man, remained on the ground undisturbed.

As we studied the Divine Principle and listened to lectures, we tried to see things with an open mind. The long section on the History of Restoration was interesting but it was a long time before we could understand the full significance of what it revealed. I was fascinated by the Principle of Creation which presented such an inspired new philosophy of life and opened up a whole new way of thinking.

We were very moved by the life history of the Master, Sun Myung Moon. Born into a Confucian family in what is now North Korea, his family converted to Christianity when he was eight years old and they became Presbyterians. At sixteen he climbed a mountain near his home to pray. Here he underwent a very deep spiritual experience where Jesus appeared to him. This totally changed the course of his life, a life which was to become one of incredible hardship and suffering. Persecuted by Christians and Communists alike, he was thrown into prison several times. There he survived beatings and starvation to the point of death by the power of his faith and determination to fulfil his God given mission.

The original teachings of Jesus had, I thought, gone through so many different interpretations during the

course of history that this would surely be a time when Jesus, The Messiah, could come again to put us right on all the misconceptions and bring new light to believers. If this was to be the time of the Second Coming, then who could be more prepared and more inspired than the Master to fulfil this task and this mission.

We felt that some force in the spiritual world was trying to say something rather powerfully to us. Avril and I both prepared ourselves to see how we were led to go forward. We thought to ourselves, "If Jesus at his second coming were alive on earth at this time, how should we behave toward Him?"

Since childhood, I had always been confused by the many different expressions of the Christian faith. Convictions held by opposing groups even drove them to torture and murder their brothers who held different interpretations of the Gospel message. It was my belief that Jesus came into this evil world – was sent by God – to show us how to change our perceptions so that we could work to build a better world centred on God's love. This is why he taught us to pray those words, 'Thy Kingdom come, Thy will be done on earth as it is in Heaven'. This was the hope. Sadly the forces of evil were too great and Jesus was put to death in a terrible way. Jesus said that he had many things still to tell us and that one day he would come back to complete his message. This is perceived by many as the Second Advent.

Our minds were spiritually very open after reading Miss Kim's message. We were amazed at the vision of the Master, Sun Myung Moon, echoing Jesus' desire to build a better world through changing people's hearts. To many Christians, the concept of the Second Advent is serious and imminent. Somehow, to us, it had been beyond our

serious expectations. But now, if this was to be the time, how should we react?

Jesus had told the rich young ruler that it was easier for a camel to pass through the eye of a needle than for a rich man to enter the Kingdom of God. He recommended that the young man should sell all he owned and give it to the poor but the young man was unable to do this. We felt an overwhelming impulse from the spirit world to offer to God everything we had in absolute submission. We felt compelled to give not only our property, our home and our livelihood, but also our children and one another. A total offering of all that we loved most dearly was the least that we could give. We were convinced that our family would be totally with us in this. Our eldest daughter, Rosalind, was already a conscientious and dedicated member. We had already arranged for our second daughter, Scilla, to have a grant to follow studies in the profession of her choice but she decided to stay the course with us. We paid the remaining school fees for our son, James, in advance, so that he could complete his education at Kings School, Bruton, where he was happy. This was with the understanding that he would continue to live at the farm which he loved and to be cared for during the school holidays. He entered enthusiastically into the farm activities and united conscientiously with all other activities. Later, after leaving school, he was to receive training at an Agricultural College and, in time, take over the management of the farm at which he was very capable.

In April of that first year we had an invitation to go to the United States to attend a special Holy Day, the Day of All Things, and to meet Father and Mother Moon at their home at Belvedere in Tarrytown, New York. We

arrived there after midnight and were given a room on the top floor with two mattresses on the floor. We went downstairs for breakfast in the morning. Father was sitting at the head of a long table with Mother at his side. We were given seats at the foot of the table. Father greeted us as we sat down and, understanding that we were involved in farming, he said simply, 'If any animal is sick, you will know what is wrong with it'. I took this to mean that we would develop a special relationship with the created world. This was, after all, a special day of celebration, The Day of All Things.

Later, we were invited to attend a special Holy Day celebration in the converted motor house on the Belvedere estate. Flags from around the world hung from the ceiling and the stage was bedecked with beautiful flower arrangements. On this occasion we were able to make our presentations to Father and Mother. Avril presented a table cloth that she had embroidered and I presented a small scroll on which I had drawn a map of the Estate. Father shook my hand enthusiastically while Mother bathed us with a beautiful smile. Some years later when the 'True Parents' had moved to a more auspicious home at East Garden in Irvington and we were privileged to live in a little room in the roof at Belvedere, we found the table cloth on the table beside Father's bed.

During those few short but heady days that we were with Father and Mother at Belvedere, there were moments when I was overcome by feelings of cold fear as I rolled on the floor of that little room in the roof in horror and despair. There were forces that did not want us to follow the course we were taking. My beloved wife Avril was a great comfort and quickly restored my confidence. I believe I was able to be of comfort to her on similar

occasions. We came through it together.

After we had made our commitment to join the Movement, we continued to live at Hossil Lane for a while. During that time, Father came to visit the property but would not enter the house, preferring to use the toilet in one of the cottages. Later, two of Father's earliest disciples came to stay for a few days. Won Pil Kim and Young Whi Kim. We moved into a spare room and offered them our room. Soon after they retired to bed we heard a terrible noise coming out of the room. They were shouting at each other. Koreans express themselves loudly and we thought they were fighting. On our concerned enquiry the next morning, we were told that they were simply discussing who was to sleep in the double bed and who to take the floor. Later, the widow of another early disciple, Mrs Eu, came to stay. We were quite unprepared with Korean food but Avril discovered that they did enjoy oxtail very much.

For six months I continued to work at my office in Swindon. My business partner, Trevor, was interested to read the books I showed him about the Divine Principle, but he did not feel committed. When I left I gave over to him all my interest and assets in the partnership.

My brother-in-law, Desmond, continued to manage North Farm and when the lease of a second farm, South Farm, was terminated, on the retirement of the original tenant, we were preparing for Desmond to take on the management of the two farms together. Unfortunately, it soon became very clear that there was no way that Desmond would be able to work together with the members of the organisation and I was obliged to terminate his employment. This was very painful and I was deeply sorry for the hurt this caused. Desmond had

always been such a wonderful support over the years. My father-in-law continued to live in North Farm house until he died and Desmond lived with him while working elsewhere. When my father-in-law died, we offered Desmond a cottage in the village which had recently been modernised. He felt unable to accept this and subsequently moved elsewhere.

I continued to worship in our local church for some months. When I received the communion I felt that I now understood the heart of Jesus with a new and greater intensity. The Divine Principle was coming like a breath of fresh air clearing up so many anomalies and unanswered questions. I could not discuss these things with our Rector. He was not the sort of person to whom I could open my heart. When the time came for our ways to part, he was very upset. He accosted us in a public place in a most abusive manner. He wrote very insulting letters and enclosed, in one, a white feather – a symbol of a traitor or one who is false and disloyal to his religion.

Shortly after this, I was walking around the outside of the church when I noticed that the stone cross, which had stood over the west gable since my great-grandfather had erected it 150 years earlier, had broken off and lay fallen on the ground. A small plaque by the south door of the church now testifies to the re-erection of the cross some time later.

It was very reassuring to receive a letter, a short while later, from the vicar of a neighbouring parish to say that if ever we changed our minds, there would always be a place for us. This letter was expressed in a very different tone and reminded us of how far we had already come since the days when people had to suffer terrible torture and death for the sake of their faith, whichever way they

went.

We suffered a lot of persecution at this time but knew that this was to be expected and was nothing compared to the terrible persecution Father Moon had received from his fellow countrymen and others in Korea. Perhaps the most difficult situation that we had to deal with now was to learn that our daughter, Rosalind, who had led us to the Movement, had left.

Neither the leadership nor Rosalind herself has been able to give us a clear picture of what happened at that time. So much has been wiped from our memories and, I believe, from hers. Only pain remains. Indeed, I can never forget those periods during the time when I later attended the training course in New York. There were times when I could not stop crying at her memory and at our separation. I have recollections of sitting alone on a chair in the middle of the room. The lecture was finished and all the other chairs had been stacked. I cried so many tears. People tried to cheer us up by saying that she had so much merit that she would surely come back and, in the end, we believe she will.

In March 1974 I had been invited to attend a 120-day International Leadership Training Course at Belvedere in Tarrytown, New York. The course that I attended with a group of young people from around the world consisted of an intensive series of lectures on the Divine Principle and Unification Thought as well as attending to other practical activities. It was difficult to maintain the high spirit of the other young people, half my age, but I found that, at forty-eight, I could at least hold my own in a sprint around the grounds.

During the time we were there, Father took a group of us down into the wooded area behind the estate and we

gathered under a large beech tree. Father spoke to us about his plans to develop Ocean Church and called for anyone who had any experience with boats and fishing, to step forward. I had had some experience with watermanship in the army and boating with my family but I was brushed aside. The Master had other plans.

After the three months of the course I was asked to stay on to help look after the grounds, under a Japanese gardener, for another two months. I was to undertake my own course as servant of servant. My job was to take the garbage to the dump and I spent a lot of time on my hands and knees under the blazing July sun, clipping the grass edges of the roads around the estate. David Kim, who was responsible for Belvedere at that time, was kind enough to give me a sun hat for which I was deeply grateful. At some time during this period, Father again took a small group of us into the wooded area behind the estate and he asked me to make a pathway down to the Hudson River at the foot of the hill. Together with my helpers, I mapped out a gentle scenic route following the contours and ending at the river's edge. At the end of the day Father came to inspect our day's work. He followed the scenic path without saying a word and then, together with the thirty odd members he had brought with him, he walked in a straight line through the undergrowth to the top of the hill. The lesson was taken.

Some years later I was surprised to discover that this waste piece of woodland that Father had purchased had once belonged to a relative of mine. Around the turn of the century, 1900, my mother's eldest step-brother, John Randolph Hopkins, had emigrated to the United States and settled in Atlanta, Georgia. He became an attorney and made his fortune by selling patent medicines, in

particular a well-known mouthwash. His son, Russell Hopkins, inherited the business and became a millionaire. Russell moved to New York, bought land by the Hudson River and built up what was to become the largest private zoo in the United States. Apparently the zoo was later closed and the house burnt down in the 1960s. Several concrete slabs on which the cages had stood, still remain, as well as an artificial pond where a large turtle lived. This property was later sold by the Church, as the purpose for which it had been bought was no longer relevant.

Around about the time that I was on the training course at Belvedere, Father had purchased a Catholic Theological Seminary at Barrytown in upstate New York. The seminary had been built in 1926 – the year I was born – and had become very run down. A lot of work needed to be done to bring it back into use as a seminary for our future leaders. We trainees spent a week or two at the Seminary having an intensive course in Unification Thought and helping out in the restoration work. I remember very well joining in a special condition of scraping the walls of one of the halls for a period of twenty-four hours without sleep. We did pause to eat. Our lecturer at this time was a Jewish Presbyterian (or Presbyterian Jew). He had a very profound understanding of philosophy but he had to bow to my superior knowledge when it came to scraping and painting walls. It was equally difficult for all of us to deny ourselves sleep for a whole day while continuing to scrape.

On July 4th, American Independence Day, Father held a big celebration to which he invited the local people of Tarrytown. Father spoke, there was singing and music and, as a finale, there was a great display of fireworks filling the sky with lights and colour. The grounds were

filled with people.

My job, the next day, was to go around with black plastic bags and pick up the empty beer cans, cigarette buts and spent fireworks. I extended the courtesy to the neighbouring estate where many of the spent rockets had landed.

One day, when I was labouring under the hot sun, on my knees, clipping the grass edges of the drive at Belvedere, I was told that I had been invited to go fishing with Father the next day. On my forty-eighth birthday, July 16, 1974, I went to East Garden, where Father and Mother were then living, to have breakfast with True Parents. As it was my birthday, Mother gave me an extra helping of ice-cream. Dennis Orme and I travelled in Father's car to the harbour at Freeport. The Japanese driver was Dikon who, at that time, was responsible for the fishing activities. We were told that Dikon was so dedicated that when he slept, he had his trousers held up with string so that, whenever he was summoned, he could immediately leap into them and run to answer Father's call. He was a Veterinary Surgeon before he joined the Movement. In Freeport we boarded Father's boat the "New Hope", a 40-foot Pacemaker built in New Jersey. During the day we fished for tuna and Father took a very active part in the proceedings. At lunch time I was encouraged to join Father where he was eating alone in the cabin. I knelt down opposite True Father and he indicated that I should help myself to the Korean food on the low table. At that time Father did not appear to speak so much English so there was no conversation.

When evening came and it was time to return to Freeport, we switched over to trolling for bluefish. While others where resting, I joined Father in the cockpit at the

stern of the boat. We stood side by side at the transom, after the sun had gone down, trailing our lines in the wake of the boat, in the gathering twilight, pulling in the occasional bluefish. Suddenly our lines got tangled. Without saying a word, Father took my rod, disentangled the lines and gave me back my rod. I felt so terribly inadequate. We eventually arrived back at East Garden at two in the morning having mounted the verge more than once as the driver lost his concentration. Father remained completely calm on these occasions. When we arrived back at East Garden, at 2am and drew up to the front door, I was very touched to see Mother standing waiting for Father with his slippers in her hand. What an example!

Four years later on July 16th, 1978, my fifty-second birthday, I was again fishing with Father. This time it was off the south coast of England. Unfortunately, I was the only one to catch a fish – a poor thing. It is the custom to throw the first fish back into the water as an offering, which I did.

Rev. Sun Myung Moon - establishing a Holy Ground in Kensington Gardens, London in 1965.

Celebration of 'The Day of All Things', April 1973 at Belvedere, New York.

BOOK 1

Chapter X

Finding Exhilarating New Challenges

In February 1974, shortly before I left to attend the training course at Belvedere, Father visited England. He stayed at the main centre, Rowlane Farm House, near Reading where a marquee was erected so that he could speak to the members who had gathered from around the country and from Europe. During this visit Father was taken down to the farm at Stanton so that he could establish a 'Holy Ground'. Normally, Father did not make Holy Grounds on private property, and the estate had not yet been conveyed to the new owners, but on this occasion, he agreed to allow us a special blessing. The site chosen was a south facing slope on a hillside across the valley from the village. It was a wet and muddy time of the year when Father came. He was presented with a brand new pair of Wellington boots and the party set off in a pony and trap. The trap soon became bogged down in the mud and the party was unceremoniously transferred to a flatbed trailer, drawn by a farm tractor. Six young English Oak saplings were brought along. They were to form a grove, planted in the shape of a cross. Father himself planted the first tree, under which he would have placed some stones from the homeland of Korea. He then marked out seven paces

to the north, east and west, where trees were planted by three Korean leaders, Colonel Bo Hi Pak, Mr Cho and a Mr Moon. Another tree to the south was planted by the English National Leader, Dennis Orme, and then, one more tree was positioned fourteen paces to the south of the centre point. I had the privilege of planting this sixth tree at the foot of the cross. Unfortunately the trees where later damaged by vandals, who lit fires under them, and by general neglect. Sadly, only two trees were able to grow to any size and, forty years later these are the only trees remaining – the tree planted by Father and the tree at the foot of the cross. It is, perhaps, significant, in view of later developments, that the symbolic shape of the cross was modified. Many churches have, over the years, taken down their crosses in recognition of the realization that Jesus did not come to die on the Cross. Rather the cross is a reminder that must continually bring pain to God's heart.

It was around this time that Father wanted to build up a herd of deer at the farm. He was interested in developing a herd of Père David's Deer which were purchased from the park of one of England's stately homes. The Père David's Deer, we understood, had been popular in the parks of the wealthy Chinese Mandarins. When the Communists came into power, they destroyed all the Père David's Deer they could find because of their association with the Mandarin class. As a consequence, the breed was in danger of extinction. Father wanted to reintroduce the breed, perhaps because of its anti-communist association.

Deer are creatures set apart. In China deer still symbolise immortality and nobility. In Shamanism, the deer is associated with gentleness, caring love, sensitivity,

graceful beauty, innocence and keen observation. In Celtic mythology, the deer is a magical creature, able to move between the worlds. The stag represents fertility, rejuvenation and rebirth. He is the 'Lord of Beasts'.

In later years, Father has often asked about the deer when English leaders visited him. Sadly, the true significance of the deer was not fully understood by those who had responsibility for them and the herd was allowed to die out. The commercial value of deer is in the medicinal properties contained in the powder from the young antlers. The methods used for harvesting the powder are not acceptable by law in England, and breeding for venison alone is not profitable.

In September 1974 Father came again to England to attend the second International Conference on the Unity of the Sciences which was held at the Lancaster Hotel at Lancaster Gate in London. It was a successful event attended by professors from the major universities. During the time of the conference, Father stayed at our London centre, a three-bed suburban house in Wembley. I was privileged to be Father's driver during his stay in England and each day we travelled to the Lancaster Hotel to attend the conference. My own sleeping accommodation at the Wembley centre was a bunk in the garage. As the garage was flooded with two inches of water, it was rather difficult to get into bed with dry feet. My wife, Avril, and daughter, Priscilla, had the privilege of helping to serve Father on this occasion and gained experience in Korean cooking and etiquette. When Father first entered the Wembley centre he stood in the hallway, looked around and said "So this is the London Centre!" The house was clearly inadequate as our main London centre and Headquarters.

We subsequently searched for and found an infinitely more suitable centre at Lancaster Gate. This was an ideal spot because it was not only close to the Lancaster Hotel, where we were holding events, but it was as near as we could get to the Holy Ground that Father had established in Kensington Gardens during his world tour in 1965. A London plane tree, which was chosen for the Holy Ground, was, I felt, a very symbolic choice. A Plane tree sheds its bark from time to time to cleanse itself of the city soot. The fruit and the flowers hang together on the tree until the fruit bursts and sends out the seeds, each with a little parachute, to be carried far and wide on the wind.

The new Headquarters in Lancaster Gate had previously been a nurses' home as well as the Norwegian Consulate. We worked hard to raise the money to buy this property and I remember the conditions that were made to this end. Every morning, for forty days, we prayed and sang Holy Songs from four o'clock in the morning until eight, before going to work. Great efforts were also made in other cities around the country until we could achieve our goal. I was one of the first to move in to the Lancaster Gate property to establish our presence there.

I remember a very vivid dream I had at the time. In the dream I was building a very large church that was to be built almost entirely of glass. The church was situated in a busy area of the city with many people milling around outside. The acoustics were so arranged that the people outside could hear the music and the sounds of the service within, while the worshippers inside could hear nothing of the noise and bustle without. It was a vision of the future where we could have a bright and welcoming place of worship that would attract people of

all faiths.

There was a tendency in the earlier years of the movement in the West, especially among young members, to view Father as a divine being, totally separated from this world. He could never be unwell and one could scarcely associate him with any of the normal bodily functions. So it was somehow reassuring for me when Father, after speaking to a group of our members at an hotel near Wembley, visited the men's toilet on his way back to the car. At that particular moment, I, alone, was responsible for Father's security. I had no alternative but to follow him into this public place. My need was as great as his and I found myself standing before the flat sounding-board of a stainless steel urinal, side by side with the Lord, sharing with him that intimate, yet totally worldly moment of relief as the small room filled with a duet of sound. It was a precious experience to remember. In the following year, a new charity was established – the Sun Myung Moon Foundation. At precisely 6pm. on the sixth day of the sixth month of 1975, just 400 years after the property at Stanton Fitzwarren had come into the possession of my ancestors, I signed papers transferring the property to the SMMF. In the Divine Principle, 400 years is given significance as "a period of separation from Satan". It is an important period of time that forms part of the process of restoration from the fallen world of Satan. This process re-occurs throughout the history of restoration.

It is a sobering thought to realize that the situation was already set up 400 years ago whereby this offering could be made. The important thing is whether or not we can recognize and act upon the call when it comes. If we can make a Foundation of Faith, can we follow through to

make a Foundation of Substance?

We are exhorted, in The Divine Principle, to follow in the footsteps of past prophets and saints who were called, in their time, to carry the cross of restoration.

During this period I was given the task of travelling to a different city each week, from Plymouth to Aberdeen, to deliver a public lecture on some aspect of the Divine Principle. Arrangements were made by the local fundraising and witnessing teams. Very few members of the public ever came to the lectures so the only audience would be a line of fundraisers sitting in the front row. They fell asleep as soon as I opened my mouth. These were difficult days. I have heard, however, that at least two young students joined the movement at that time. They joined, not because of anything I said, but because I was a respectable older person who gave credence to what they had already heard.

When I was in Glasgow on one occasion, the local centre leader took me to a spiritualist meeting. The medium called me out to receive a message from someone in the spirit world. He described this person as a Christian minister who was very small in stature. I took this to be my Uncle Arthur who was scarcely more than four foot tall and who had been a missionary in the Melanesian Islands. Through the medium, my uncle told me that what I was doing was very important but that I should work to develop a much stronger personality. I knew this to be true as Father Moon had given me exactly the same advice. I have always found this advice difficult to achieve.

I travelled a lot at this time, involved in the purchase of new centres around the country and giving my support to various developments. Avril was kept busy

with a number of different responsibilities including looking after the parents of members, leading a mobile witnessing team and generally working in a motherly way. Scilla was mostly involved in various kinds of fundraising and was, at one time, Centre Leader at Dundee and Aberdeen in the north of Scotland.

At some time in 1975, Priscilla was sent to Australia to support the missionary there. She went together with an Australian sister who had joined in England. After a period of about six months, she received an invitation to go to Buckingham Palace to receive her "Duke of Edinburgh" Award, which she had won while she was still at school. She flew back home and we went together to the Palace. Somehow, we found our way into the Throne Room. We stood together in front of the two thrones and offered a prayer in the name of the True Parents.

After taking his 'O' Level exams at Bruton, James was sent to stay at our centre near Reading where he attended a local grammar school and studied for his 'A' Level exams. Although he passed the exams that were required, it was a difficult time for him. He was happy to return to his home at Stanton and attend a course at the Agricultural College in Cirencester.

In New York, Father was expending such a tremendous amount of effort to catch the attention of the people. When Father first went to New York, he was so saddened by what he saw of this great city that, as he stood on the sidewalk in 5th Avenue, observing the noise, the dirt and the bustle, he wept.

Now, in 1975, he was going to be seen and heard. New York was plastered with pictures of Reverend Moon. Wherever you looked Reverend Moon was looking out at

you from the billboards. He then held a banquet at Madison Square Garden and invited everyone to attend. When Father stood up to speak after the banquet, the booing and verbal abuse was so great that he could not be heard. So Father began to sing and he sang until the noise abated and the trouble makers left the stadium. Father was then able to give his message to those who had ears to hear. Father has had to stand up against persecution throughout his life. The greater the persecution is, the greater his determination to give his message to the world - a message of love and peace.

In the spring of 1976, Father held a great rally at the Yankee Stadium in New York. Many of us from Europe and other parts of the world were invited over to help with the preparations. We were issued with white overalls with insignia on the back and with brooms. We were then set to work sweeping the streets of Harlem to clean up the city. Posters and leaflets were distributed everywhere and preparations were made for the event.

Avril and I were both there. There was word that, after the event, Father might hold a blessing for previously married couples. As we took our seats near the front of the Stadium, the sky was beginning to darken and very few spectators were arriving. The Go World Brass Band took their place in the arena and began to play. Then, as the sky became darker, a tremendous wind swept down and picked up all the balloons and other stage paraphernalia and blew it way up into the sky and away. Then the sky became totally black and the rain began to fall. It came down in torrents. The band, who had stood their ground in the downpour, struck up the melody 'You are my sunshine'. We stood there, totally drenched and began to sing: "You are my sunshine, my only sunshine; you make

me happy when skies are grey. You'll never know dear, how much I love you, please don't take my sunshine away". We stood there, drenched to the skin, singing this song over and over until the rain stopped and the sun came out. Then Father came out onto the stage and spoke to the few spectators left occupying the covered seats.

The event was literally a washout and the organisers were totally devastated, but Father had no remorse, he simply put the wheels in motion for another much larger event. This time it was to be in Washington DC, at the foot of Washington Monument, to commemorate the 200th anniversary of American Independence. It was to take place in two months time. We returned home.

There was a great mobilization in the United States to publicize and prepare for this important event and a group of us went from Europe to give our support during the final twenty-one days. My responsibility was to travel around with the Go World Brass Band to give the young people 'spiritual support'. The band was split in two and I travelled with one half. We went around to squares and open spaces of the city to stir the hearts of the people with patriotic music. I stepped forward from time to time with a loudhailer and exhorted the citizens to attend this important event. Perhaps my English accent gave more poignancy to the call. On one occasion, the sole of my shoe began to peel off as I marched out and it felt as if I were doing the goose-step.

On the day, 22nd of June 1976, I was given the responsibility to look after a small group of parents of English and other European members who were there. This meant that I could sit in a small enclosure close to the stage and could see True Father's face as his voice was

carried out to the 300,000 spectators around the Monument and rattled the windows of the White House. Father was ecstatic as he proclaimed America as the 'Third Israel'. The performance was followed by the most spectacular display of fireworks that filled the sky with light. People came in buses from all over the eastern seaboard and True Father could proclaim this as a great victory in God's providence.

Following the victory at Washington Monument, the way was now opened for True Parents to hold a blessing ceremony for previously married couples. Avril and I, together with Brian and Marjorie Hill, travelled from England to take part in this 35 couple blessing at Belvedere on December 22nd, 1976. This was a 'conditional' blessing which was, in some way, related to a previous providential blessing of 1,800 couples that had been held in Korea.

As a condition for receiving the blessing, it had been necessary for us to live separately and to remain celibate for a period of three years prior to the blessing.

We had been married for twenty years before we joined the Church, and during this period we had almost never been apart for more than a day. Now we were to be together again with the blessing of the True Parents - "Oh happy day!"

There was never any doubt in my mind that Father would, at the appropriate time, bless us together as husband and wife. Avril, however, had been led to believe that it was by no means a certainty that we would be blessed together and she went through a very anxious time. We both knew, of course, that we would need to go through a period of separation in order to prepare ourselves for the blessing.

Father teaches us that, because of the fall of man, we have inherited a certain lineage, which we can in no way shake off. He is now able to give us, through the Blessing, the opportunity to lift ourselves out of our fallen state and to take on the lineage of the restored Adam.

We believe that this was an inheritance that was lost by our first ancestors. Love is the most precious component of our life and conjugal love is an extremely important aspect of love. The misuse of conjugal love brings such pain to God's heart and has been the cause and source of so much evil in the world in past history and in this present age.

Father teaches us that we must practise what he calls 'absolute sex'. We must cut ourselves off from the inappropriate use of conjugal love and should keep ourselves pure within our blessing. We can then build up a lineage of goodness and purity through our children and grandchildren. True Parents are expanding the Blessing to millions of couples worldwide giving an opportunity for the Kingdom of God to develop and grow in this fallen world. We are committed to work to this end and our True Parents have demonstrated that they are prepared to die for it, as was Jesus 2,000 years ago.

My personal story of how I have striven to unite with our True Parents, relating with them often on a personal basis while travelling in other countries in very different parts of the world, is the subject of the following two books.

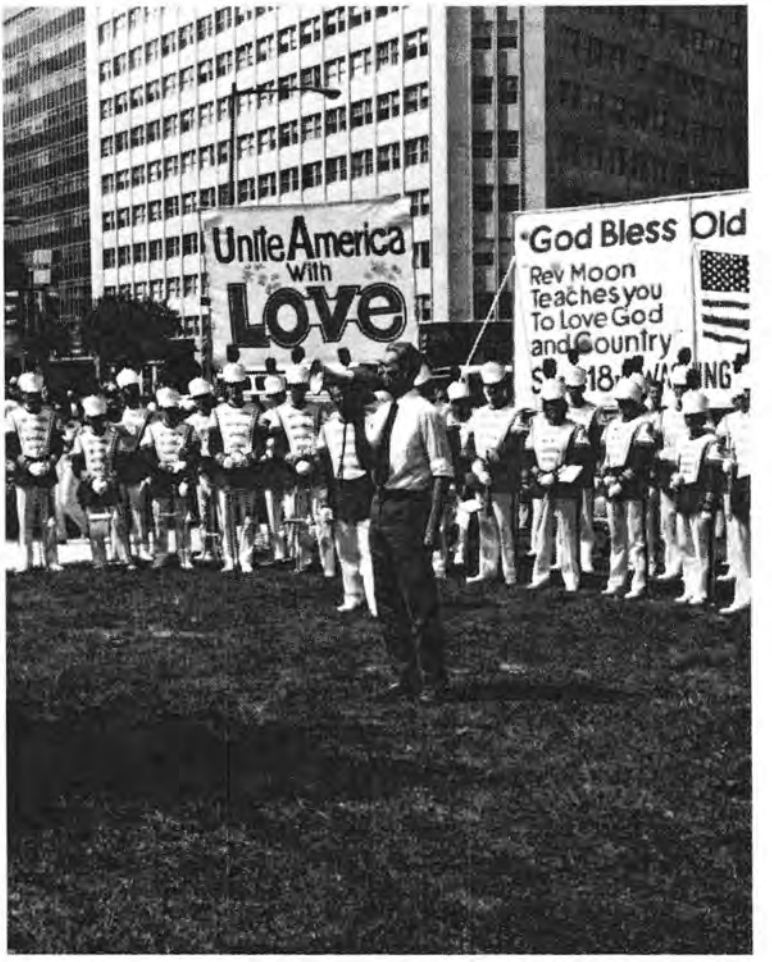
Father at the Tree Planting - February 1974.

James at the Holy Ground, Stanton Fitzwarren - Early 1980s.

Père David's Deer in "Hossil" - early 1980s

Taking Ye Jin Nim and In Jin Nim for a trip on the Thames.

Holy Blessing of 35 Couples - 22nd December 1976



Inviting the people of Washington DC to the Bicentennial celebrations at the Washington Monument, June 1976.