

John Armstrong Hubert (1900-1972) and
Magdalene Rawson (O'Dell) Hubert (1908-1989)

Life Notes – Part 1 – Before World War 2

These life notes were compiled in 2016
by their daughter Anne Freeth Molver

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John and Mag at their wedding in London on 15 Nov 1929

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Introduction

The compilation of these Life Notes has depended on a number of sources. Family photographs, memories, diaries and letters have helped considerably. Much of the information has been gleaned through and/or supported by various internet searches and genealogy studies. The most important reference source has been the book *"Solah Punjab – The History of the 16th Punjab Regiment"* by Lt. Col. JP Lawford MC and Maj. WE Cato, published by Gale and Polden (Aldershot) in 1967. Quotations from Peter come from his book *"A Farmer's Life in Zimbabwe"* which was self-published in 2004 and contains memories from his early childhood in India.

John's military career was as a British Officer in the Indian Army, largely serving in the parts of northern India that became Pakistan during the Partition of India (1947). It has been quite difficult to source military records of these British Officers who made such an important contribution to the development of the Indian Army prior to Partition.

Structure of these Life Notes

John and Magdalene (always called Mag) had complex and interesting lives with constraints of place and time. Although they were devoted to each other they were forced to spend much of their time apart. These Life Notes attempt to paint a picture of their lives and of the people and places they encountered and the times they lived in.

This document comprises Part 1 of the Life Notes – covering the period from their births in 1900 (John) and 1908 (Mag) up to the outbreak of the Second World War in 1939.

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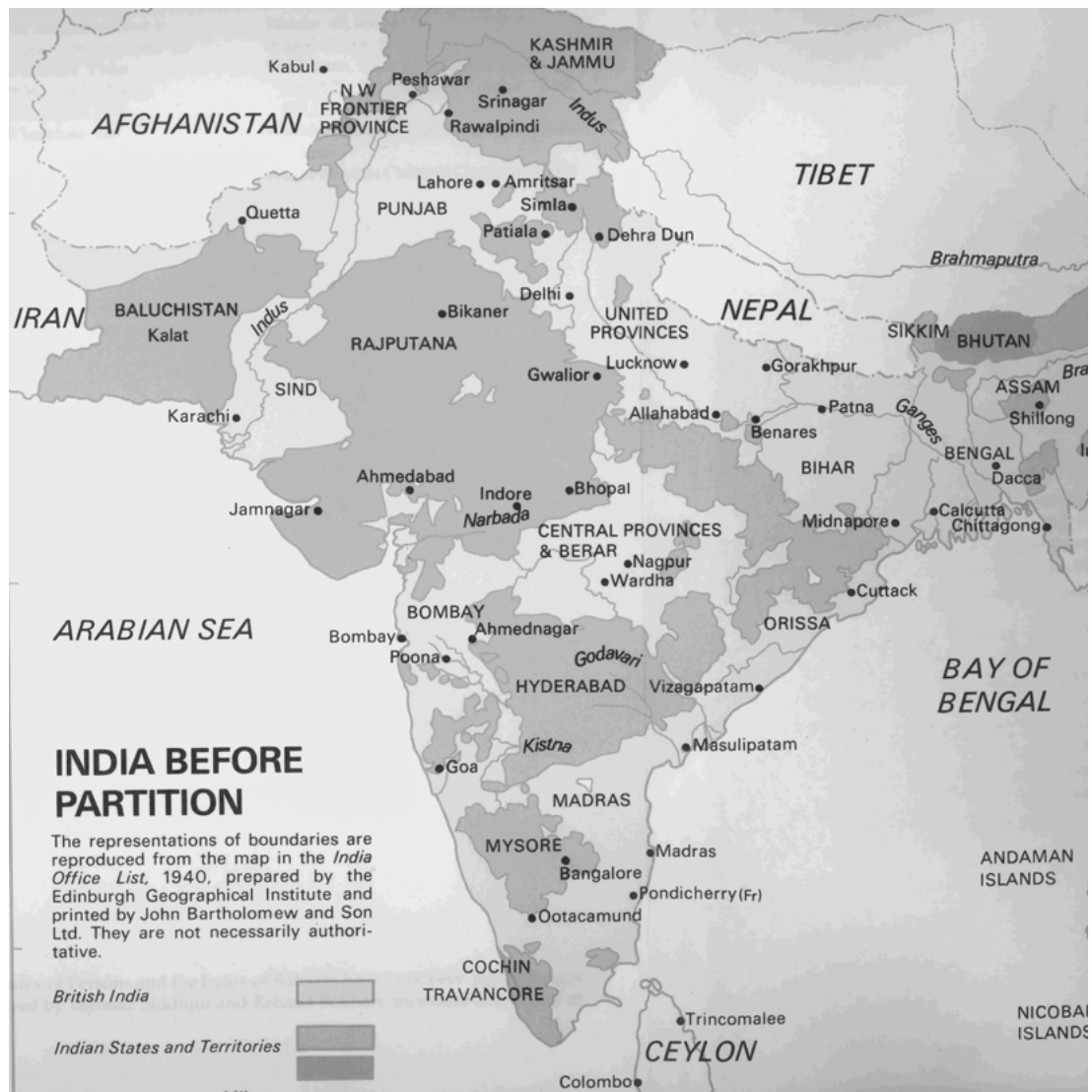
Subsequent documents cover the remaining parts of their Life Notes – from the outbreak of the Second World War in 1939 until their deaths in 1972 (John) and 1985 (Mag).

Life Notes – Part 2 – Beginning of World War 2 through Partition of India up to retirement from the Army

Life Notes – Part 3 – Farming, retirement, Malta and John's death, Mag in England and Australia

India before Partition – locations of places referred to in this document

Throughout this document the term “India” refers to the whole of British India prior to August 1947 when it achieved Independence from Great Britain. Partition, on largely religious grounds, resulted in the formation of modern nations of India and Pakistan. East Pakistan became the independent nation of Bangladesh in 1974.



Map of India before Partition, from India Office List, 1940, Edinburgh Geographical Institute

Life Notes – Part 1 – Before World War 2

1.1 John Armstrong Hubert (from birth to marriage)

John's life was full and eventful, in his mind always overshadowed by family responsibilities coupled with his ambition and drive as an Indian Army soldier. He always felt himself considered to be inferior to his older brother Donald (his hero) in whose path he followed, as he tried to make up for family expectations and Donald's tragic end when he was killed by a sniper in 1917.

The reality was that he was successful in whatever he took on – as a soldier in India and the Middle East and later as a farmer in England.



John Hubert (right) with older brother Donald (left)

1.1.1. John's Ancestry

The Hubert family was centred on the island of Jersey, the line being traceable to around 1610. The population of the island were primarily agrarian and of necessity fishermen and sailors. The countryside was split into small Parishes with residents moving from one to the other as the families evolved. Those that thrived became astute businessmen, skilled professionals, property owners, master mariners or in the shipbuilding industry. From the 17th century many Jersey people began to explore and help populate the world.

1867. By that time, he was supporting a wife and three young children whom he only met about once a year, and was part operator with three other Jersey men of their own vessel, the "Fort Regent", a two-masted square-rigged brig of 450 tons.

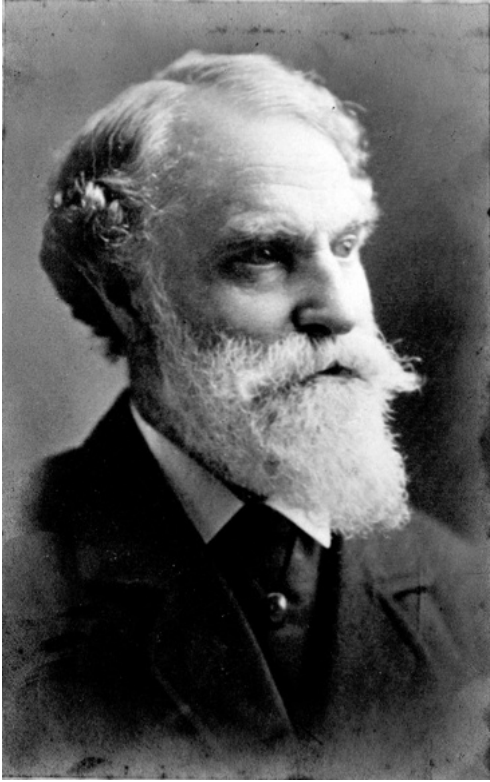


Elizabeth Jane Bichard (John's paternal grandmother)
(on the left with son Horatio and daughter Clarie and on the right with daughter Adie)

His young wife, Elizabeth, was loving and resourceful, coping with life without her husband for long periods whilst he was at sea. Hard times struck the little family when John died, and she survived for only another seven years, leaving Clarie (a 12-year old) to bring up her two siblings – John's father Horatio aged 10, and younger sister Adie born the year her father died. Their uncle Horatio Bichard, Elizabeth's young brother, acted as a guardian. The three orphans kept in touch with each other throughout their varied lives.

John's father, Horatio, was a scholarly child, steeped in the classics, interested in music and in the sciences of the day. He was a very accomplished musician particularly of the piano and violin. He became the organist at St Simons, then St Helier's Parish Church, followed by being a conductor of the Jersey Choral Society. He was also Singing Master of Victoria College in St Helier and finally the Conductor of the Philharmonic Society of Jersey. At the same time, he studied for a Degree in Music by correspondence and wrote many musical works.

At 25, Horatio married Blanche Delia Freeth, the youngest child of General James Holt Freeth of Guernsey who came from a line of distinguished members of the British Army, and Margery Louisa Armstrong who was born in Canada where they were married.



Major General James Holt Freeth and Margery Louisa Armstrong (John's maternal grandparents)

1.1.2. John's Early Life



Marjorie, John and Donald
with their mother Blanche
(early 1910's)



Blanche (later in her life)
showing how one gets under a gate

Horatio and Blanche had three surviving children – daughter Marjorie the oldest, son Donald a year later, and John was born in July 1900. The two older children appear to have been exemplary students, intelligent, well-adjusted, strong-willed

and happy, who formed musical trios with their father and were leaders at school.

John, nicknamed “Hootie”, was five and six years younger than his siblings. He was a rebel against discipline, hated school work, loved horses and his animals and friends, always full of fun and a trial to his father.



John with his toys (~1905)



Victoria Crescent, St Helier,
where John grew up

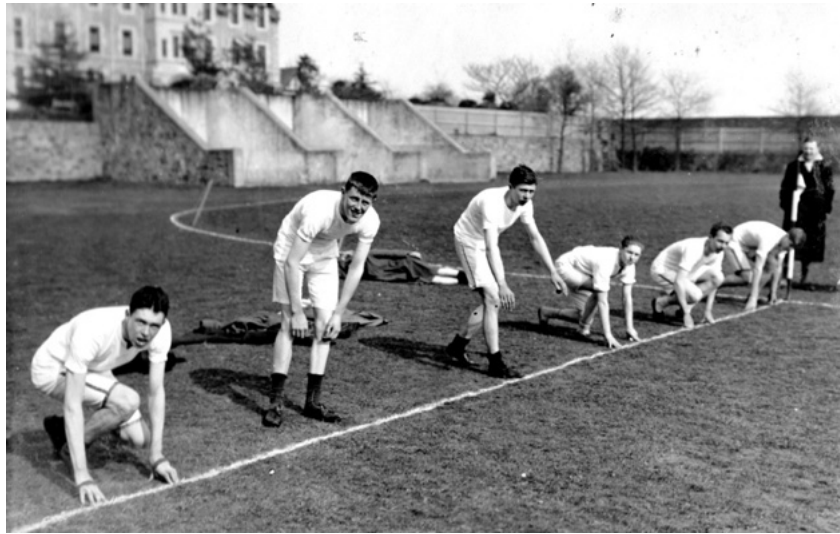
It was said that John had the Freeth stubbornness, which could be an asset or drawback! By the time he was growing up his father found it difficult to relate to this child and have the patience required, and they had a ‘stand-off’ relationship as John always seemed to court trouble.

Two of his memories highlight this – as a young boy John used to be mortified while attending the compulsory Church service, when his eagle-eyed organist father watched his offspring, ensuring they did not turn East with the rest of the congregation (his father at that time was a strict Methodist). On the other occasion John was called into his father’s office to explain why he had “broken his vase” after a very poor school report. However, he excelled at school sports, becoming a champion in sprinting and was in the school cricket and hockey teams.



John at start of cross-country race (4th from left) (1917)

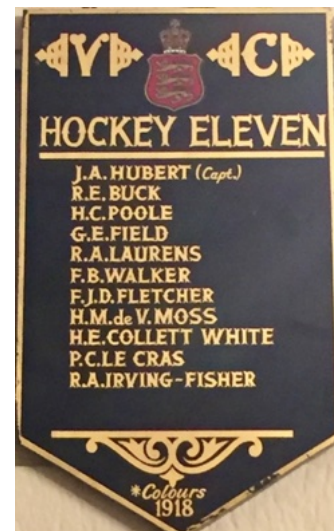
The death of John's older brother in 1917 had a profound impact on the family. John seems to have taken life more seriously, following that tragic event, playing the drums in the school band and becoming a keen member of the school's Officer Training Corps (OTC).



John at start of 100-yard race (next to far end) (1917)



The main façade of Victoria College



1918 Hockey Team with John as Captain

Academically he applied himself at Victoria College and was sufficiently well educated to be able to gain entry as a cadet to the Royal Military College at Sandhurst, where he did very well, passing out in 1920.

He applied to become a British Officer in the Indian Army, and was destined to join a Punjabi Regiment. His name was gazetted in London on 24th December 1920 as a 2nd Lieutenant unattached, in the Indian Army.



John (far right) in Victoria College band on route march with Royal Guernsey Artillery, about 1915

John's Report from Royal Military College, 25 Jan 1920



Blanche and Horatio (centre) with Marjorie (far left) and John (next to Horatio) together with 2 unknown friends and the inevitable dog (Jersey 1920, before John left for India)

1.1.3. Indian Army in the 1920's

A military career as a British Officer in the Indian Army appealed to John, firstly because of the opportunities to see the world, to be part of the expanding British Empire in an exotic land of wild country abounding in game, but also to continue the life chosen by his brother which had begun with so much promise before it was cut short – the avoidance of stuffy British Army hierarchy and discipline also appealed!

John arrived in Bombay, India, on 17th March 1921 where he knew no-one. He celebrated his 21st birthday by having a dove of peace tattooed on his upper left arm – this he took pleasure in showing his grandchildren by squeezing his muscles to make the dove fly!



John as a young officer just before departing for India, Jersey 1920

He was initially attached to the 2nd Battalion Manchester's for a year from March 1921 and then transferred to the 46th Punjabi's for 6 month's service in India. He accompanied his battalion to Bushehr, Iran, on the Persian Gulf in November 1922 for five months. During 1922 the army was reorganised and in March 1923 John was posted to the 9th Bhopal Infantry, which was incorporated into the 16th Punjab Regiment in the 4th Battalion, and promoted to the rank of Lieutenant.

From 4 Aug 1923 to 8 Jan 1924, John became Aide-de-Camp (ADC) to His Excellency (HE) Sir Frank Sly, the Governor of the Central Province, and was based at Government House in Nagpur. The Governor was a very capable man, conducting extremely important secret talks about the future government of India during the day and relaxing after formal dinner parties by participating in a game of charades – even crawling on all fours imitating an ant on a sugar trail!

John was made responsible for all the arrangements for the wedding of Miss Joan Sly, the Governor's daughter, to Captain Geddes from the Regiment. The arrangements went very well but it required a huge amount of precision planning and was very nerve wracking - there were 5-600 guests at the "at home" and 300 for the evening dance. However, John did also get invitations to go on buck and snipe shoots with senior members of the Governor's staff.



Bushehr, Iran, 1922



NCO's Tea Fight at General HQ
Nagpur, India, 1924



HE and Miss Sly at her wedding
Nagpur, India, 1924

In March 1924, HE Sir Gerald R. Isaacs, the Viceroy and first Marquis of Reading, held a shooting party at Muki, in the Central Provinces, to which John was attached as one of four ADC's. John wrote to his sister that the Viceroy "*appears to be a very cheery old bird, most genial and thoroughly enjoys a joke*". There were 11 people in the official party, accommodated in a palatial tented camp under the trees that John had helped set up during the previous 10 days.

While these preparations were taking place, the Governor sent John 30 miles away into the jungle, stalking game with Forest Service Officers. They started on ponies and then on foot deep into the forest, where they saw a herd of bison and a small herd of cheetah, one of which John was able to shoot.

Back at camp the grand shoot took place on 30th March, the first beat in the morning netting a tiger, which the Viceroy wounded shooting from the safety of his *machan*, and requiring three other attempts and the Chief Secretary Mr Mathias, on an elephant, before it was finally killed. Later in the day five more tigers were shot, one of which almost got away and had to be chased up by John and Mathias the next morning nine miles further into the country, using cows from the local headman as bait and mounted on Champa the elephant.



Official Dinner (above) and Viceroy's Camp (below)
at Muki, near Nagpur, Mar 1924



On the shoot with Champa the elephant at Muki, near Nagpur, Mar 1924



Viceroy, Governor and shoot party (JAH 3rd from right) and trophies at Muki, near Nagpur, Mar 1924



The Enemy (left) and Afghan Border Notice (right), NW Frontier, India, 1925

From January 1924 to January 1925, John returned to his Regiment, the 4/16th Punjab, stationed in Jubbulpore near Nagpur. He was then posted as a company officer to Waziristan on the North-West Frontier until mid-November 1925. They were protecting the main route to Afghanistan, in mountainous often icebound countryside peopled by warring and hostile tribes who resented any Government interference.

From November 1925 to 1929, John returned to his Regiment centred in Ahmedabad, Gujarat, where he was appointed quartermaster. During this time, John managed to shoot a Panther and a Black Bear, both skins of which were cured and sent to his mother in Jersey. He also met the Maharajah of Bikaner, "*an old topper*", who gave a fancy-dress party and made his acquaintance over the bear incident. He subsequently dined with the Maharajah twice "*he is a great shikari himself and the incident interested him*".

John sat for promotion exams in November 1927 and he was promoted to Captain on 25 March 1929. In April of that year he took long service leave primarily to visit his bereaved mother – his father having died suddenly in 1926 when John was unable to get away leaving the burden of arrangements to his sister Marjorie, which he regretted very much.



Mule convoy (left) and John and C Company (right), NW Frontier, India, 1925

While travelling to England by ship, John met Magdalene (Mag) who was also returning home to Gerrards Cross, Buckinghamshire, to be with her father, her mother having recently died. This meeting was on the first night of the voyage and was a case of "love at first sight" but the couple agreed initially to go their separate ways, Mag leaving the ship at Naples where her father met her, and John going home to Jersey.

By July, however, they had both decided that the romance was not a passing phase and they became engaged to be married. He had to get the approval of his Commanding Officer as he was not yet 30, the officially accepted minimum age for officers to be married. They arranged for the wedding to be held on 15th November 1929, and spent the intervening time getting to know their respective families and enjoying holidays in Cornwall and Jersey.



John and Mag at fancy dress party on board ship, 1929



John and Mag after their Engagement in 1929

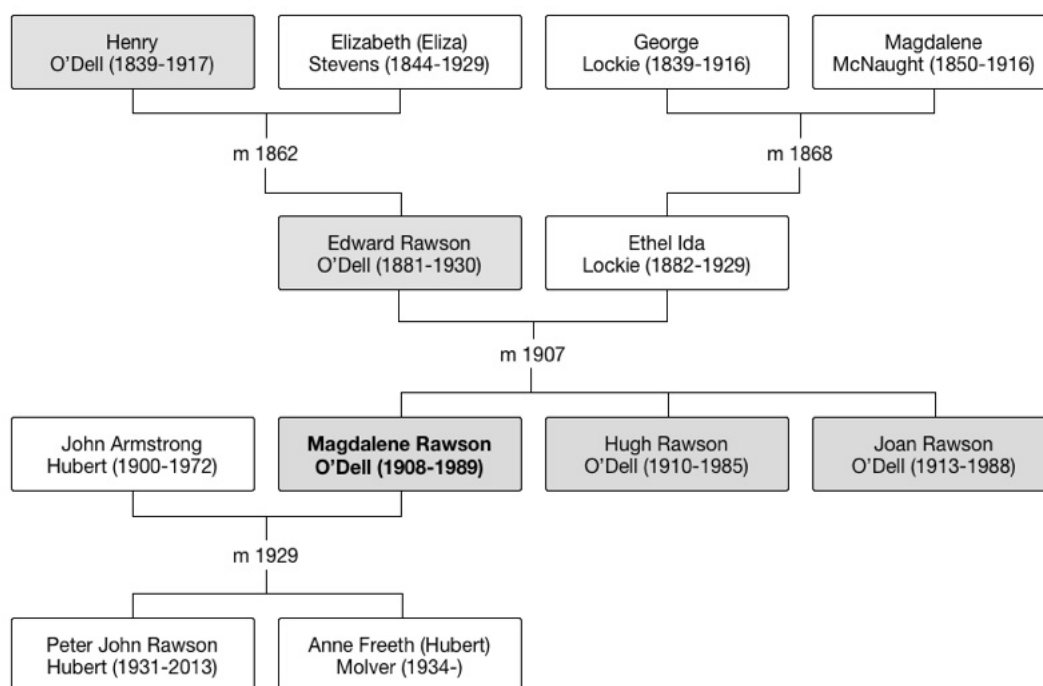


John and Mag swimming and fishing with family and friends after their Engagement in 1929

After the wedding (front cover picture), they had a two-week honeymoon – after which John had to return to India, leaving Mag on her own again for the first of many separations!

1.2 Magdalene (Mag) Rawson O'Dell (from birth to marriage)

1.2.1 Mag's Ancestry



Part of the O'Dell Family Tree

Magdalene (Mag) Rawson O'Dell's paternal grandparents, Henry O'Dell and Elizabeth Stevens, were married in 1862 and they had 17 children. His mother was Mary Rawson whose maiden-name was included in the names of his son as well as Mag and her siblings.



Henry and Elizabeth (Stevens) O'Dell, Mag's paternal grand-parents

Mag's father, Edward (Teddy) Rawson O'Dell, was the 11th child born in 1881. He was the youngest of three boys, the eldest remained in England while the second went to Canada. The rest of the siblings were all girls – two married a Chapman and two went to South Africa. Violette Bertha, the 12th girl, married a man who became a casualty of the first World War suffering from mustard gas blindness, which left him struggling to hold down any job and being accident prone.



George Lockie and his wife Magdalene (McNaught) Lockie,
Mag's maternal grand-parents, in Paris

Mag's maternal grandfather was George Lockie born in 1839 the eighth of ten children. George's father William came from Kelso in the lowlands of Scotland, and was a glass merchant in London until ill health caused the family to move in 1846 three years after his wife died, when George was only four. In the same

year father William bought a small farm near St Boswells, in the Scottish Borders, which was heavily mortgaged and failed. He died a year later intestate, and the farm was left to the eldest son but he gave it to his younger siblings who were reared by an aunt and the eldest girl Margaret. Three of William's children went to Australia.

George and the orphaned children moved back to Kelso in 1849 where George and his older brother John ran wild at school. He was apprenticed when he was 15 to a company of corn, manure and feeding-stuff traders. At twenty he went to London and obtained a position with Provision Merchants in the city, but in the next year he was offered a position with merchants in Akyab, western Burma, and India, obtained through friends (the Hays) in Edinburgh. He sailed to Calcutta and went by steamer to Akyab, to stay with his friend John Hay.

In 1860 George saw his future wife Magdalene McNaught – a little girl of 10 – who was travelling with her uncle from Bassein (about 70kms north of Bombay) to rejoin her mother in Calcutta. George travelled extensively for the company between Akyab, Calcutta, Rangoon and England and in 1865 sailed to Europe and finally back to Scotland to be married to Magdalene in 1868 when she was eighteen.



Edward (Teddy) Rawson O'Dell and his wife Ethel Ida (Lockie) O'Dell, Mag's parents, at their home in Gerrards Cross, Buckinghamshire (1927-8)

He left the Hays' firm and set up business in London and Liverpool, but later a severe famine in Bengal meant he made ruinous losses in the rice business and the company was liquidated in 1875. He went into business with a Mr Gray as a starch maker, the business failed and he had to take his partner to court. He then joined the company Sydney Harvey & Co as a Broker and became a partner in

1881. The company became Harvey, Lockie & Co in 1885. In 1890 he caught Russian influenza but was able to set up a new partnership, which included his two oldest sons William Stewart and George McNaught. William stayed in Akyab while George died in Santa Domingo (he was the father of Mag's cousin Mary Davis née Lockie who features often in Mag's life).

George and Magdalene McNaught had eleven children, the seventh being Ethel Ida Lockie, Mag's mother, who married Teddy O'Dell in 1907. They had 3 children, the eldest of which was Mag (born 1908), followed by son Hugh Rawson O'Dell (born 1910) and another daughter Joan Rawson O'Dell (called Jane) born in 1913.

1.2.2 Mag's Early Life

Magdalene (Mag) Rawson O'Dell was born on 2nd July 1908 in North Croydon, the eldest of three children.

Mag was educated at home and went to school locally, before being sent to Europe with cousin Mary to a "finishing school". This was probably for two years, during which time they led the Madama a dance, enjoying themselves as much as possible even when it required climbing through apartment windows in the evenings!

When they were young the family enjoyed simple holidays by the beach, including any number of young cousins in the party. In her early teens, they always spent their summer holidays in Mawgan Porth in Cornwall.

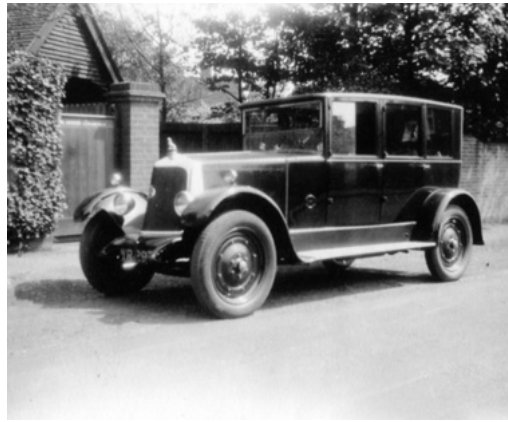


Mag with cousins Robert and Mary Lockie, at the beach in North Devon, 1910 (above left),
Mag's parents with other Lockie's, on the beach at Beatridge, North Devon, 1912 (below left),
Edward (Teddy) Rawson O'Dell with family at Morgan Porth, Cornwall (right)

Between 1925 and 1928 many of the Lockie's went to Switzerland and other European snowfields as winter sports were all the rage at that time. When she was eighteen Mag became her father's alternate chauffeur as he never wished to drive.



Mag skiing with cousin Mary, 1925



The family car, which Mag often drove, 1926

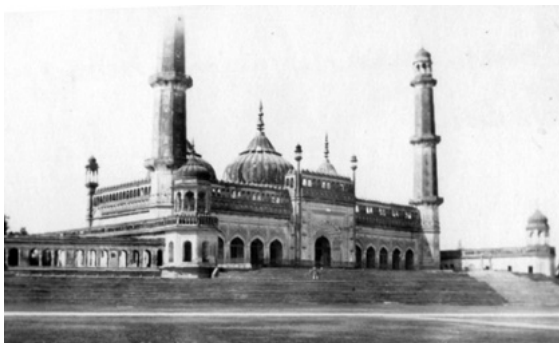


Mag on the roof of
Milan Cathedral, 1926

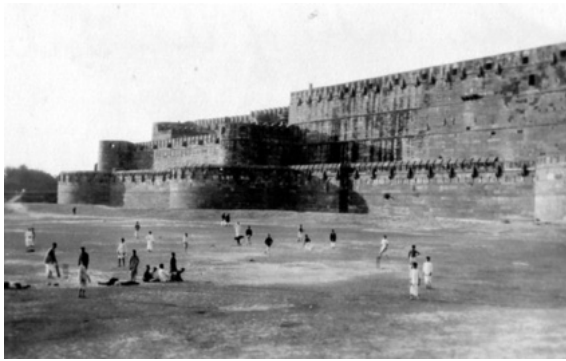


The family house,
at Gerrards Cross, Buckinghamshire, 1926

In 1928 Mag accompanied her aunt Olive (Doog) to Bombay by sea, to join Olive's husband, who was a manager in Tata's (a large Parsee company) and a part-time local magistrate. Almost immediately after she arrived there were race riots in the bazaar below their apartment and for three days he left them armed with a shotgun by the bed!



Imambara Imam Mosque (left) and The Residency, Lucknow, India, Jan 1929



Cricket match outside wall of Fort Agra (left) and an old bridge, Lucknow, India, Jan 1929

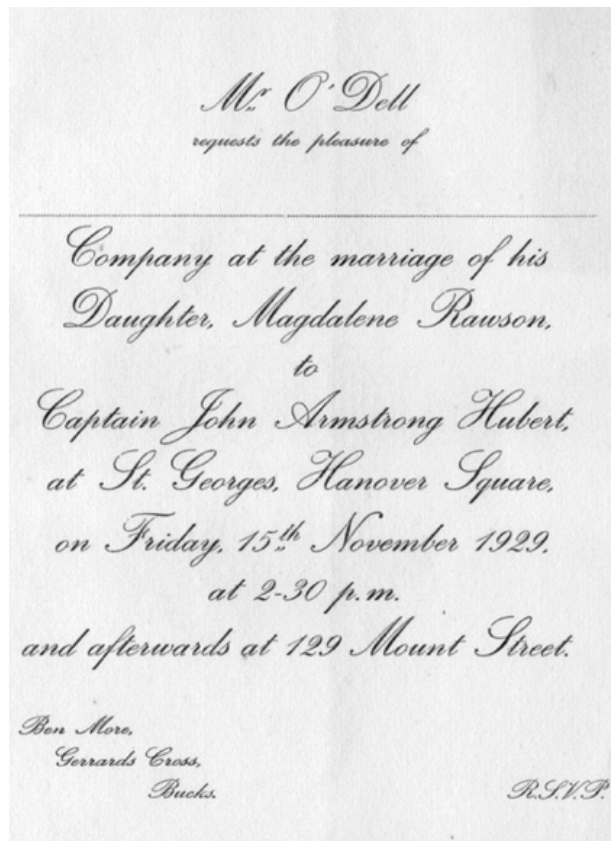
At Christmas, they toured the country, visiting Agra and the Taj Mahal, staying with the Commissioner in Lucknow, and having fun visiting the local markets and sightseeing. Back in Bombay they had a very social time entertaining both Europeans and influential Parsees.

In April 1929, Mag's mother Ethel died very suddenly and Mag had to return to England. It was at this time that she met John on the ship also travelling home for family reasons.



John and Mag at fancy dress party on board ship, 1929

After a couple of months "cooling off" they became engaged and then were married on 15th November at St Georges Hanover Square, London. Victor Northam from the regiment was best man.



Invitation to wedding of John and Mag, 1929 (above)
John and Mag at their wedding in London on 15 Nov 1929 (below)

They had a two-week honeymoon in Torquay with John trying to recover from the 'flu! John had to return to India immediately afterwards, leaving Mag to follow by ship in early January 1930.

1.3 John Armstrong Hubert (early married life in India)

Mag spent much of her early married life away from John and these events are covered in the next section.

1.3.1 Ahmedabad and Chitral (1929-1931)

After their wedding, John returned to India in December 1929 as a company officer to the regiment (4/16th Punjab Regiment) in Ahmedabad, and was appointed Adjutant in April 1930.

He met Mag – now his wife – in Bombay in January 1930 and they immediately took the overnight train up north to Ahmedabad. In Mag's words when she arrived *"The regiment was then stationed in Ahmedabad but was due for a move, and for us the unwelcome announcement came that in September they were going to a frontier station – Chitral – in the far north west for two years where no women were allowed!"*



Ahmedabad 1930 – Front of bungalow compound (top left), Mag and John with Moll's and Northam's at dinner (top right), Social after croquet (?) match (bottom left), and Mag seated on wall (bottom right)

Accommodation at Ahmedabad was a small rented bungalow in the cantonment with hired furniture. An outside cook-house with large biscuit tin as oven, and possibly one cold tap in the house completed the living quarters – bathing took place in a metal bath-tub. It was compulsory to hire servants for each and every household job and so the staff included a bearer, cook, washerman, sweeper, gardener and nightwatchman. It was also necessary to rigidly adhere to the caste system.

In April 1930, John and Mag took a short camping and shooting trip in the hills, where John shot his first panther. Later they enjoyed six weeks 'hot weather leave' in the hill station of Mount Abu where they relaxed, swimming in the lake. They also enjoyed a garden party held at the Residency.



Ahmedabad 1930 – Mag with bed, dog, nets and box (top left), Mag on Knight Bird (top right), Crossing a stream in Betty Malcolm-Smith's car (bottom left), and a horse (bottom right)

By September 1930, John and his battalion were sent to Chitral on the N.W. Frontier for two years. The battalion travelled by train to Dargai, then marched for 138 miles in less than 2 weeks to their destination in Drosh, Chitral State. Rations were dropped twice by air, and mule carts were used for transport as far as Dir when everything had to be carried by the men the remaining 35 miles to Drosh. The mule carts were a mixed blessing, often requiring assistance up the steep gradients with a push by some of the men.

The district was controlled by the Newab of Dir who was antagonistic to British control. He lined the hill-sides of the route with small piquets of his own men and coerced villagers to harass the battalion as it progressed.

Mag, in the meantime, packed up their little bungalow and sailed to England by ship, pregnant and sick. Son Peter was born in April 1931 and, in June of that

year, John was able to get six-weeks leave to see his son and attend a ten-day course with the Coldstream Guards.



Peter (and Mag) at Salcombe, Devon, UK, Aug-Oct 1931 (after John's return to India) – 4 months 10 days (left), and at 5 and a half months (right)



John and C Company, Chitral, N.W. Frontier, 1930-2



Drosh post office (left) and John on "dammed dangerous frozen road" (right), near Chitral Fort, N.W. Frontier, 1930-2

The battalion relieved the 4/6th Rajputana Rifles at Kila Drosh, finding one company on detachment at Chitral Fort. Chitral was a paradise for the mountaineer, 20,000 foot peaks were commonplace. The remoteness of the place did not lend itself to visitations from higher authority. However, General Coleridge, Commanding Peshawar District managed to inspect the unit on 23rd June, 1932. On

1st October, 1932, the battalion handed over to 1/1st Punjab and set off on the trek back to Dargai and civilisation. [from Solah Punjab, 1967, p133].

The following pictures are from the Chitral region of the N.W. Frontier, taken during the period 1930-2.



Kila Drosh



Piquet (forward post) for 8 men



On guard in the snow



The Doctor, Bolam and a local with hawk



Look what we found in the snow



One of the locals wearing traditional clothing



View of lake with mountains



Above the tree line on horseback



Rugged, wet, cold, and difficult terrain



Skiing at around 10,000 ft.



Padre Eliot setting off for Risalpur from Chitral

1.3.2 Jhelum (1932-1934)

The battalion arrived at the new regimental station in Jhelum, towards the end of 1932, for training in mountain warfare.



Jhelum, August 1932



Typical Kashmir scene, 1932

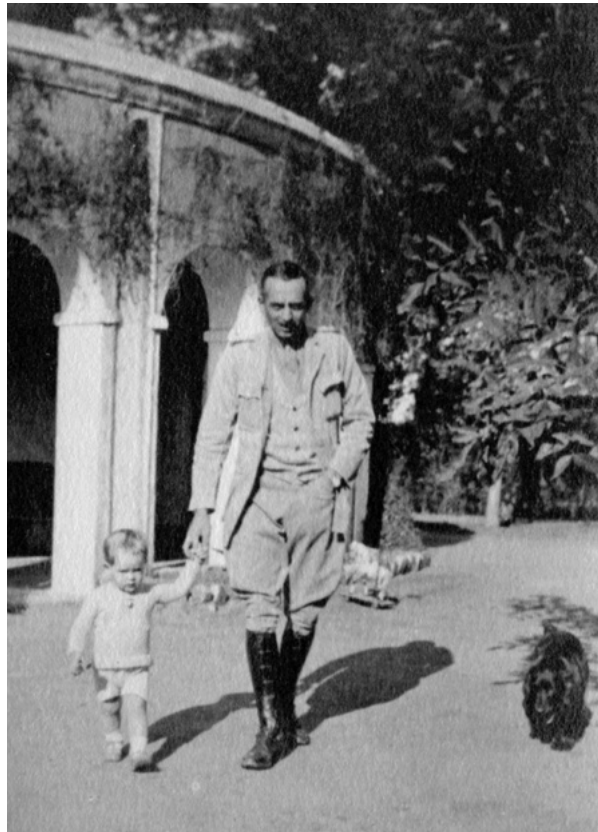
Mag, her son Peter and cousin Mary arrived by ship from Southampton in early March 1932 to find that John's return had been delayed, and so they travelled up to Kashmir in April by car. Mary left in July 1932 to join her future husband. John was given two month's leave to enjoy their company before returning to the regiment in Jhelum. He was later joined in Jhelum by Mag and Peter who travelled by car and train from Kashmir in September.



Srinagar, Kashmir, Sep 1932 - Peter aged 17 months playing with his ball (with Ayah and Bearer behind) at (top left), Mag attempting to paddle (bottom left),
Mag and John's houseboat (right)

In Jhelum, the battalion had a new Commanding Officer (CO) who was not liked, and John was happy to be sent away in 1933 for a staff course in Simla, where Mag and Peter were staying in rooms for the summer before returning to Jhelum. They had the brigadier's cousin stay with them for a while, for company, while John was studying for the Staff College exam. Study dragged on into September as the regiment was on 24-hour alert due to more trouble on the N.W. frontier, and the exam had to be delayed to March 1934.

Early in 1934, John was appointed as Military Adviser to Indian State forces in the three states forming the Desert Circle for four years. Meanwhile Mag became pregnant again. The bungalow was packed up and Anne was born in the military hospital in Rawalpindi in March. Mag, Peter and the baby stayed with the Molls in Jhelum until they were fit to travel to Mt Abu, later to join John again in Bikaner.



John with Peter aged 20 months walking, Jhelum 1933 (top),
John with Peter aged 20 months, Jhelum 1933 (bottom left), and Peter (who wouldn't keep
still), with Ayah holding Anne aged 7 weeks, Jhelum May 1934 (bottom right)

1.3.3 Bikaner and Desert Circle (1934-1938)

As Military Adviser to the Desert Circle forces, John was to report directly to the Brigadier (Military Adviser in Chief, Simla) and stay in Bikaner. He supervised about 2000 Bikaner and Bahawalpur State troops, and a small contingent in Loharu State (near Dehli) which required visiting once a year.

He left for Bikaner at the end of March 1934 for a four-year appointment. Mag stayed with the Molls until she could move to the hills at Mount Abu for the summer with the children, where John was able to visit them briefly. This was to be the pattern of their lives for the next four years – with an annual separation for about five months during the hottest months of each year.



Mag and John travelling to Kashmir (top left), John and his dog (bed in porch due to very hot weather), Bikaner (top right), and Gajner Lake scene, Bikaner (middle), and duck shooting hides on Gajner Lake, Bikaner (bottom) – 1934

In John's words *"Bikaner itself is quite an amusing place. There are about six white people and about 4 ladies. They give me a bungalow to live in and a few sticks of furniture. The cold weather is supposed to be marvellous – frost at night. But the hot weather is one of the grimmest going. I stayed there this year till the end of May and it was pretty grim, then I lived in one room with the front door leading on to the verandah bunged up with a grass door called a 'kas kas tati'. When a hot wind blows a servant outside pours water on the kas kas and the wind blows through cool and one can live quite comfortably" ... "I have a certain amount of touring to*

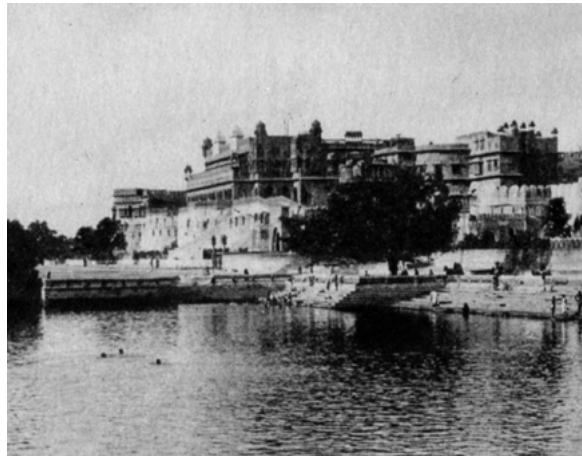
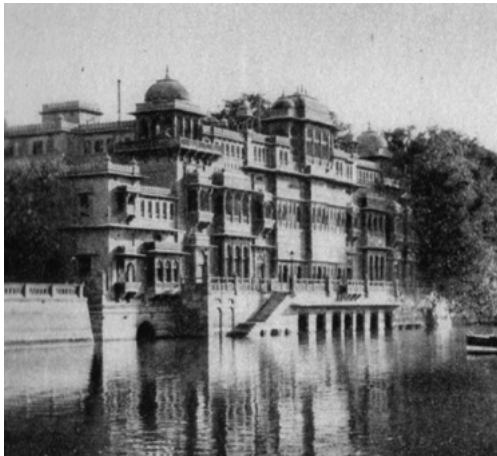
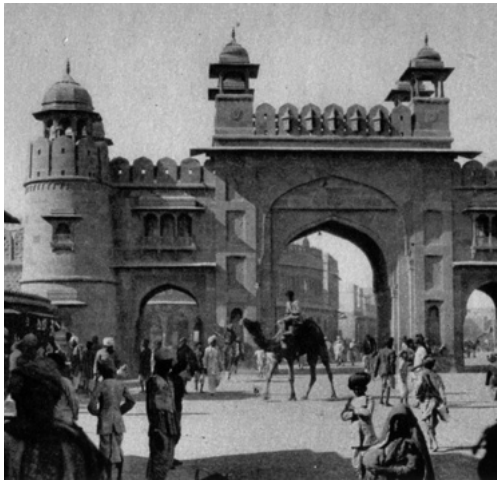
do. Bahawalpur has to be visited 6 times a year – Loharu once. Now they are sending me to a place called Rajkot in Kathiawar to hold a course for a fortnight. I shall have to give about two lectures daily and run Tactical Exercises etc. I then have to run similar courses in Bikaner and Bahawalpur. So, I shall be on the move until the end of September”.



Shoot at Bikaner, Mag (seated right) and John (behind HH to right), Dec 1934



Shooting party, Mag and John at centre, Bikaner, 1934



Bikaner 1934 –
 City Gate (top left),
 Lalgarh Palace (top right),
 Dungar Niwas Palace, Gajner Lake (mid left),
 The Fort (mid right),
 HH Maharajah of Bikaner, his son and other officers (John at rear) (bottom left),
 and Tea party in Lalgarh Palace gardens (bottom right)

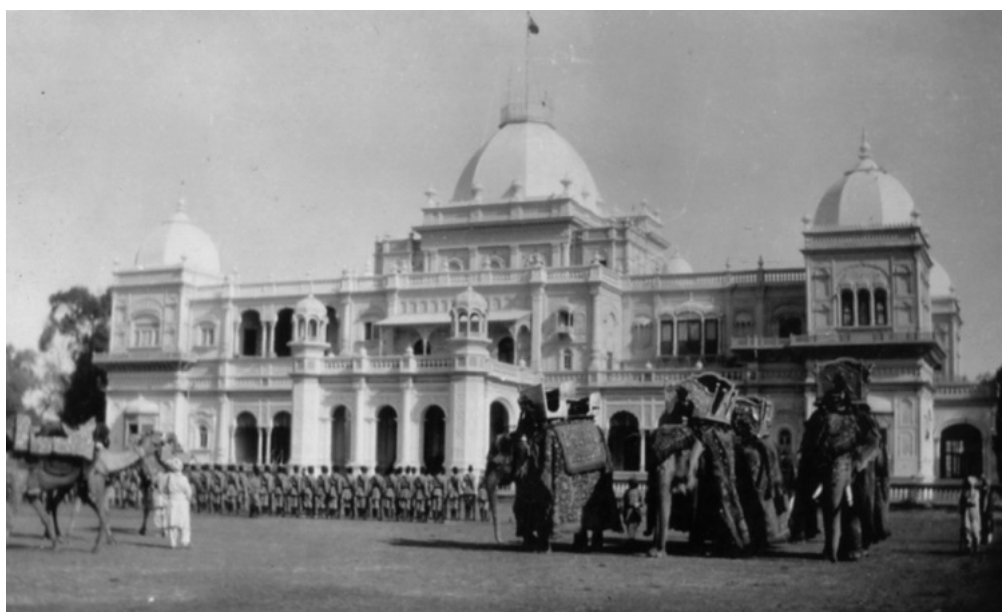
In January 1935, John and Mag were present for the Presentation and Trooping of the Colours of the 1st Bahawalpur Infantry (Sadiq Battalion) (this special event is expanded on in the box starting on the next page).

Bahawalpur and C-in-C visit (Jan 1935)

Field Marshall Sir Phillip E. Chetwede (Commander-in-Chief, India) visited Bahawalpur in January 1935, for the Presentation and Trooping of the Colours of the 1st Bahawalpur Infantry (Sadiq Battalion).



Presentation of Colours to Commander-in-Chief, Bahawalpur, Jan 1935



State Governor's Palace, Bahawalpur

The State was founded in 1802 and the ruling Nawab (Prince) was guaranteed independence by the British in 1833. The State covered 17.5 square miles and in 1935 the Nawab was Sir Sadiq Muhammad Khan V Abbasi who ruled until 1955 as Amir, acceding his State to the Dominion of Pakistan in 1947. He commanded troops in the Middle East during the Second World War. Bahawalpur had a large mainly agrarian population and was ruled in an autocratic manner, however the Nawabs were progressive rulers introducing many civic improvements including excellent irrigation systems for a variety of important crops.



Presentation of Nawabs' sons to Commander-in-Chief, Bahawalpur, Jan 1935
(Mag and John behind to right)

Bikaner was a Hindu State, and the other two Mohammedan, in different states of development and with different cultures. Mag was able to tour with John sometimes during the next three years, depending on the situation. There were times when the official safety position was volatile, primarily over the collection of rates and taxes.

From June to 1st August 1935, John ran his office from Kashmir to be with the family during the summer months, who returned to Bikaner a month or two later. Aunt Addie delivered her 'bombshell' in June which upset his leave – *she was no longer willing to contribute to Blanche's welfare, and considered John selfish and indulgent 'getting married and having children so far away'*. After much discussion, he recommended that the only solution was for Blanche (his mother) to live with Marjorie (his sister) and he would pay the extra costs, which meant that Blanche must move from Rosemount in Henfield, Sussex.

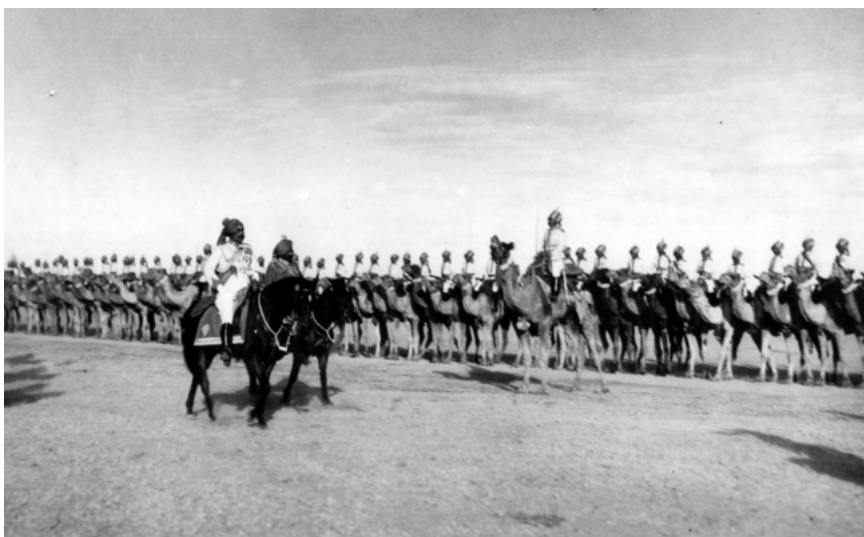
John wrote to Marjorie in August 1935 *"Mummy's affairs as a result of my absence – I really am terribly sorry about it all. The trouble at the moment as far as I am concerned is that I am the only British Officer in my circle and as Regulations are at the moment I cannot go home – even in Kashmir I had a camp office with me and could not leave the precincts of the Post or Telegraph Office. If on the other hand you should ever consider my presence a dire necessity, I could always put the whole thing up to my General and with any luck wangle 2-3 months' home leave."* Blanche finally accepted his idea of living with Marjorie after raising several objections, making life increasingly difficult for Marjorie who was still living in Hove. Later John wrote *"Mag and the brats will be back in England somewhere about the end of April 1936."*

In December 1935, John wrote *"I 'm at present on tour trying to teach 'chaps' how to become young generals! As I shall never be one myself, it is all very difficult!" ... "I am alone on this tour to Bahawalpur..."*

He was not looking forward to the family being away in England for the hot weather the following year, but felt it was necessary for reasons of their health, and asked Marjorie to have Mag checked during the visit in 1936. After a difficult time in England, Mag and the children returned to India with sister Jane in October for another enjoyable Christmas at Gajner.

During 1936 there was increased pressure on John in his job as Military Adviser, due to the planning associated with His Highness the Maharajah's decision to celebrate his Golden Jubilee in 1937. This was to include a visit by the Viceroy. Before the celebrations a contingent of Indian State forces attended the Coronation in May 1937 of George VI and Elizabeth, accompanied by John (see box below).

Mag and the children had retreated to Kashmir for the summer months of 1937, living on a houseboat with sister Jane to help. John was able to visit them briefly after his return from the Coronation, but was exceptionally busy planning some of the events for the Maharajah's Golden Jubilee which was due to start on 30th October 1937, superseded by religious and thanksgiving functions.



Camel Corps Inspection of Troops and Presentation of new colours,
His Highness and Maharajah Kumar, Bikaner, Nov 1937

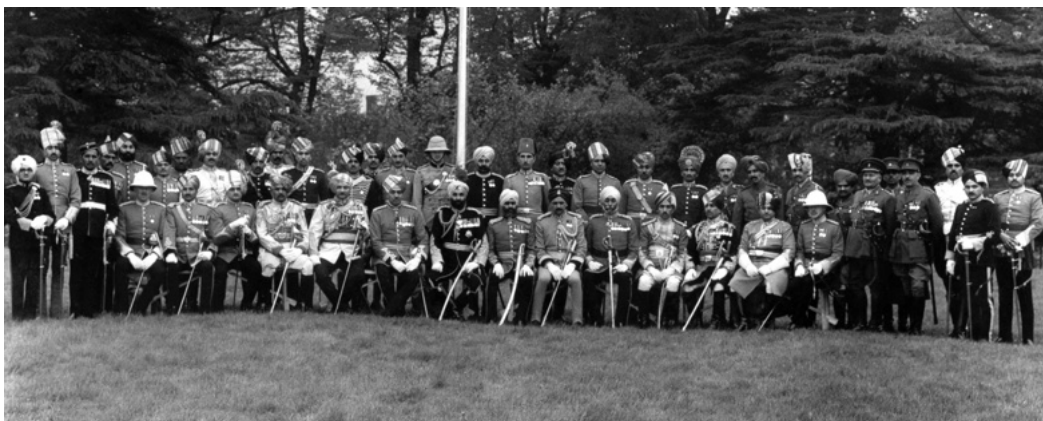
Coronation of George VI & Elizabeth (May 1937)

The Coronation ceremony of George VI & Elizabeth took place at Westminster Abbey in London on 12th May 1937. John marched in the procession with the Indian Coronation Contingent.



Their Majesties
KING GEORGE VI. AND QUEEN ELIZABETH
Crowned in Westminster Abbey
May 12th, 1937

From the Souvenir Book for the Empire Coronation Contingents



Officers of the Indian Coronation Contingent at Hampton Court

They arrived by ship in Southampton on 3rd May to travel by train to Hampton Court, and remained there until 25th when they returned to Southampton to embark on the 'Neuralia' and returning to India. Of approximately 630 men in the Contingent 255 officers were in the Procession, the balance being other ranks and followers. During the month's stay in England, outings had been arranged for each unit to attend a variety of dinners, receptions, visits to

Sandhurst, Woolwich, Aldershot Camp, Ford Motor Works, Ovaltine Dairies, a motor race, modern farms, film shows and boat trips on the Thames among other entertainments.



Visit of Field-Marshal Earl of Cavan to talk to the Indian Coronation Contingent at Hampton Court



Indian Coronation Contingent marching through Admiralty Arch



Marching into Buckingham Palace for the Presentation of Coronation Medals



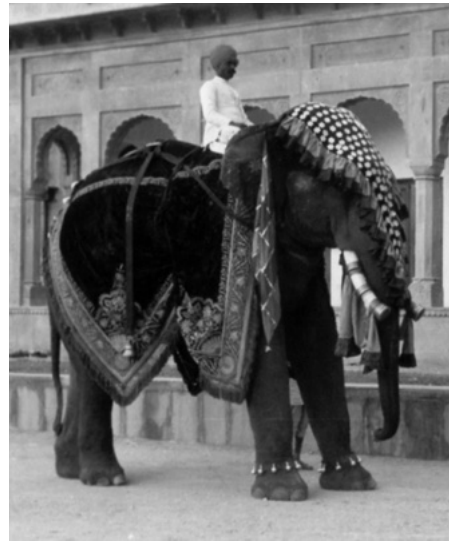
March Past at Buckingham Palace after each man had received his Coronation Medal

The Viceroy's entry into Bikaner took place on 3rd November, followed by the State Princes visit on 7th. Most of the important visitors stayed at Lalgarth Palace, with its beautiful gardens, having travelled by train through a drought stricken countryside where the villages were forced to collect water from tankers on the train-line.

The start of the secular celebrations of the Golden Jubilee commenced with a procession to the Palace by elephants and cars, followed by a military tournament and torchlight tattoo, a musical ride by the State Camel Corps, and a State Banquet.



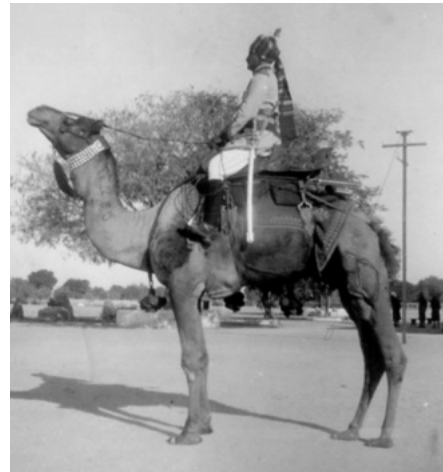
Elephants waiting for the Viceroy and Lady Linlithgow at Bikaner Railway Station, Nov 1937



A royal elephant, Bikaner, Nov 1937



Elephant race, Bikaner, Nov 1937



Officer Camel Corps, Bikaner

The next day the Grand Procession into the Fort and regal entry of The Viceroy (representative of King George VI) took place. The procession was over a mile in length, led by His Highness Ganga Singh and the Viceroy on the largest magnificently decorated royal elephant. On the second elephant came Lady Linlithgow with the Resident in Rajputana – Mr AC Lothian. They were followed by 10 elephants carrying the illustrious guests or state banners, then by 20 more elephants (some had been walked in from other States) with additional banners and Ancient State Relics. The leading elephants were surrounded by State Cavalry and a Camel Escort. The procession concluded with camels, cavalry, bullock chariots and bearers. The streets were lined by the people dressed in all their colourful finery, showing the esteem and affection they held for their much-revered Ruler.

The following days activities included a special day at the Fort viewing the coloured lights of the city, visits to Devi Kund to see the amazing marble and sandstone cenotaphs of former rulers, a shooting party to Gajner Lake, and a march past and presentation of new Colours to units of the Bikaner State army. It culminated with a State Banquet at Lalgah Palace where the Viceroy promoted HH to full General on the king's orders.



The Viceroy's Visit, Bikaner, Nov 1937 - His Excellency the Viceroy and His Highness of Bikaner leaving Bikaner Railway Station (top), Elephants ready to move off in the Grand Procession (middle), and The Grand Procession from above (bottom)

In John's words – *"The Viceroy's visit was a great success. His State entry was magnificent" ... "The Princes' visit has now started and H.H of Gwalior a lad of 22 was the first to arrive. I believe some 20 Princes will be arriving today and tomorrow including Jodhpur and Jaipur by plane. ... As soon as this Princes' visit here finishes i.e. 30 November I am off to Bahawalpur on tour – back here on the 15th and then really hard work till Xmas. General Mills arrives here on the 22nd December and I have to prepare 3 schemes for him".*

1.3.4 After Bikaner, for leave and then off to war

In March 1938 John was sent to Ramdurg, southeast of Poona, with a Sikh company, to collect taxes. Mag managed to join him for 10 days before the family left in April by sea for a combined long leave of eight months.

They moved into lodgings in Jersey and then Crookham, Hampshire, where aunt Clarie visited them. By the end of the summer they were in West Wittering, Sussex, having arranged for Peter's immediate welfare, when Hitler annexed Austria and was eying Czechoslovakia.



St Brelades Bay, Jersey, 1938 – John and Peter (top left), Anne and Peter (top right), and John and Mag with "fellow inmate of the Post Office" (bottom)

John was called back to India urgently for unknown service. He arrived back in India at the end of August 1938 and joined the Regiment in Poona. On the following Sunday, while he was out with the Poona Hunt, his Commanding Officer Robbie Robertson received instructions that John was to report to Ahmednagar, northeast of Poona, the next day to join the 11th brigade (Heron Force), 4th Indian Division of the 8th Army, as a Staff Captain destined for overseas duty. He was promoted to the rank of Major in 24 December 1938.



Officers of the 4/16th battalion at Poona, India, 1939 (John seated at far right)

Mag and John were able to meet from time to time while the family stayed in Poona. The last visit was by Mag to Ahmednagar, arriving by car, for a week before John finally left India in July 1939 – bound for Egypt and the declaration of war in September 1939.

1.4 Magdalene (Mag) Rawson Hubert (early married life in India)

1.4.1 Ahmedabad and England (1929-1931)

Mag's early married life was not a 'bed of roses'. She arrived in India in 1930 by ship to be met by John who introduced her to the battalion. *"My introduction to the battalion was somewhat traumatic..... my husband and I had to go out to a breakfast riding-picnic organised by one of the wives, where I was introduced to all the officers and wives."*

The couple enjoyed six month's together before John was sent to the N.W. Frontier station of Chitral for two years. When Mag became pregnant it was decided that she should return to England for family support. She was accompanied on the voyage by the Moll's governess, herself recovering from smallpox. The whole passage was spent in the ship's hospital as Mag was sick and almost suffered a miscarriage.

She arrived home in Gerrards Cross pregnant, to find that her father was remarried to an old family friend and very unhappy and alone in his grief. His

two younger children had been sent to Europe for their continuing education. Mag was so upset she moved out of the house to stay with an old school friend, and her father died within two months. Mag was then sent to Switzerland for a short period to be with her sister Jane.



Mag with Peter (a few weeks old), London, England, 1931



Peter (and Mag) at Salcombe, Devon, UK, Aug-Oct 1931 (after John's return to India) –
Peter at 4 months (left) and 4 months 10 days (centre and right)

Visits to various aunts helped pass the time during the pregnancy, and sister-in-law Marjorie took a keen interest in Mag's welfare, as she was a doctor at the New Sussex Hospital for women and children in Brighton. John and Mag's son Peter was born at the hospital in April 1931, a month overdue. It was a difficult birth which required the assistance of a mid-wife and Marjorie – who managed to get the baby to breathe just in time.

In June 1931 John was able to visit to see his son and attend a ten-day course with the Coldstream Guards. They stayed in lodgings in Chelsea which proved too difficult with a young baby, so accommodation was found elsewhere. When John returned to India, Mag moved to lodgings in Gerrards Cross and then stayed with her aunt 'Bobs' in Salcombe, Devon.

1.4.2 Jhelum (1932-1934)

By March 1932 she was on board ship with Peter returning to India from Southampton with cousin Mary to help her. They arrived in Bombay and travelled immediately by train to Rawalpindi where Mag thought John might arrive early before the regiment left the N.W. Frontier. He was delayed and so they hired a car and travelled on to Kashmir, up the Jhelum river valley and into the vale of Kashmir – *"The journey took two days and one spent the night in a dak bungalow – a primitive sort of coaching or post-house – where one could get a cooked meal of very tough chicken, which had been running around half an hour before"* – continuing the journey to Srinagar where the three of them rented a houseboat.



Peter aged 17 months and 20 months (right), Srinagar, Kashmir, late 1932

"The capital of Kashmir, Srinagar, on the river Jhelum is dirty and smelly – height about 5000 feet. We hired a furnished three-bedroom house-boat, complete with separate cook-boat in which the servants lived, and moved out to one of the large lakes and moored on the edge wherever one fancied. The mode of getting around was mainly by shikara – a small flat-bottomed paddleboat – and one soon became expert at handling the same. There was swimming in the centre of the lake where a bathing boat would be moored. There was excellent trout fishing in the many surrounding rivers, and beautifully laid out gardens with many fountains – Shalimar and Nagin Bagh – also shooting, riding and trekking etc. in the surrounding country and mountains. There was a Club in Srinagar if one wanted to

play tennis and all kinds of crafts – wood-work, papier-mâché, carpets, rugs, embroidery, silks, jewellery, and semi-precious stones were the main ones."

John arrived in Kashmir for two month's leave to join them. By this stage Peter was teething and having convulsions, and to ensure clean milk a cow was brought to the lake-side to be milked! Mary left in July 1932 after meeting her future husband at a club party.

The small family left for Jhelum in September by car and train, to be reunited for a year staying in an old mud-brick bungalow full of white-ants!

As Mag wrote – *"and our next station was Jhelum where we were for two years. Jhelum had a lovely climate in the winter – cold and crisp, freezing at night sometimes, but warm sun in the daytime. It was in the plains, with vast areas of crops of all kinds and distant views of snow-capped mountains – the Himalayas. Most of the bungalows were old buildings with wide verandahs and large rooms and they were beautifully cool"*. Peter had a donkey in the lines which kicked him leading to his distrust of four-legged animals.

In April 1933, Mag and Peter moved to Simla for the hot weather, where they were joined by John briefly to do a staff course before returning to the regiment.



Our bungalow (above left) and Mag with Peter aged 21 months (above right), Jhelum 1933
Mag with Anne aged 7 weeks (below left) and with Anne's dog Jock (below right), Jhelum 1934

Mag became pregnant for the second time, and daughter Anne was born in March 1934 at the military hospital in Rawalpindi, after a mad rush down the mountain road in a friend's car from Jhelum.

The bungalow in Jhelum was packed up as John had a new appointment in Bikaner, and Mag and Anne went to stay with the Molls from hospital with a Minto nurse, while Peter and his ayah stayed with other friends. In John's words *"The Moll's were exceeding good to us after Anne's arrival and when I was preparing to leave the Regiment. When Mag came back from hospital we stayed there till we both left Jhelum. I left on the 20th March and Mag on the 10th April"*.

This was not the only occasion that the family had to 'be rescued' by the Molls. Molly became one of Anne's godparents and gave her a young spaniel dog 'Jock' for a christening present!

1.4.3 Bikaner (1934-1938)

By April 1934 it was time to move to a hill station for the hot weather and Mag and the children plus ayah moved to hotel rooms in Mount Abu. John was able to visit in July from Bikaner, and the family had a ten day visit to their future home in August before moving in as residents for the cold weather.



Peter with Anne in pram (left), Mag with Anne and Peter (who was cross) (centre) and John with Anne (right), Mount Abu, 1934

John wrote in July – *"The family are in great form – Peter is growing up like anything and is a bag full of mischief – but very good with it all. He still has his poisonous paddies.... Anne is in great form – eats sleeps and smiles – most amusing infant. She is putting on weight a la doctor's orders ..."*

Mag is fit but easily gets tired and the weather does not help much at the moment. We have already had 8 inches of rain and the monsoon hasn't really started yet! She tried to bathe about three weeks ago but found that her legs didn't function properly. So, we had her overhauled by the local doctor who said she was absolutely OK but was to lie low as regards any form of exercise for three months. That is, I suppose, really normal. She is fit in herself and cheery but the two brats

keep her at it pretty hard and she seems always on the go. We are getting an Anglo-Indian nurse in October and sacking the ayah. I hope this will enable her to have more time off. The ayah cannot take responsibility for the brat, and also Peter is getting a bit beyond her!"

This led into family life in Bikaner which Mag describes as "We had a very interesting, happy and never to be forgotten 4 years. There being so few Europeans resident, only 18 including children if my memory serves me right. So, we were included in all events going on, from small private dinner parties at the Palace, to large official receptions and to the famous Imperial Sandgrouse and Duck shoots at the Maharajah's country Palace at Gajner every December. I was lucky to shoot at these also ... H.H was always very kind to us and we were very sorry to leave at the end of our time in Bikaner and all the very good friends we made." They were the only resident military personnel, the rest of the Europeans being State Railways employees and engineers.

Peter recalls that "I can remember the Maharajah clearly, chiefly because he gave me on occasion expensive clockwork toys which I treasured. I can still visualise him, very old to me with his white whiskers and foot-long white beard and immaculately clad in white robes."



Peter at a party with friends (left) and
aged 3 $\frac{1}{4}$ years with teddy and doll (right), Mount Abu, 1934

"We were living in a Hindu State – Rajput – in the middle of the Thar desert. The other two, Bahawalpur and Loharu were both Mohammedan. This was a wonderful experience ... My husband visited the other two States for about 10 days at approximately 6 week intervals. Our last year coincided with the Maharajah – His Highness Ganga Singh's – Golden Jubilee and there were all sorts of celebrations. The city and the Palaces were all built of red sandstone and very impressive. About 15 miles out in the desert there was a large lake and small palace, called Gajner, where H.H. held shooting parties for his guests and us residents. At Christmas time, all the families were invited out too for about a week and we stayed in family units. The shooting was mainly Imperial sandgrouse and duck, and before daylight

everyone would be driven out to selected hand-made butts and supplied with a loader. I used to shoot too – usually the only woman."



Peter (4 years) and Anne (15 months) with Hashmat the Bearer, Bikaner, 1935

Mag enjoyed a tour to Bahawalpur in December 1934 and was present with John for the C.I.C India's visit and 'Presentation and Trooping of the Colours' in early January. The children were cared for by the Anglo-Indian nurse.

It was essential that families and children move to cooler climes in the hot summer months. The 1935 summer was spent back in Kashmir from where John ran his office – *"The family are very fit – yesterday evening we spent the evening out at the Shalimar Gardens. Flowers were not too good but the grass steppes and Chinar Trees were marvellous. Doing a lot of bathing by way of exercise. Getting quite good!"* He returned to Bikaner on 1st August.

In December 1935, after a tour by himself, John wrote to Marjorie – *"Mag was busy making clothes, Xmas mail and a hundred and one things (she is a busy bee) and decided not to come. My course finishes on the 11th and I shall get back to Bikaner on the 14th December" ... "Mag & Co sail from Bombay on April 20th (City of Baroda). They will land at Plymouth. I haven't the foggiest idea where they will go to yet but I expect it will all come out in the wash. We are expecting answers to various enquiries now. Home leave next year will be a curse as far as I am concerned. I shall miss them all very much" "Peter is starting to grow rather rapidly and the little man hasn't enough flesh on his bones. Mag is anaemic."* He asked Marjorie to have her checked during the family visit to England in 1936.

Aunt Doog visited them in March before Mag and the two children returned to England again in May 1936 – a dreadful journey by British India to Plymouth and then she was met by sister Jane in London, to go into rooms in West Wittering. In July, she was back at the New Sussex Hospital for a month for an operation, while aunt Clarie and a young nursemaid looked after the children.



Anne aged 2 (left) and Peter aged 5 (right) at the beach, Surrey, 1936



Mag with Anne and Peter (left) and Anne and Peter (right) at Camberley, Surrey, 1936

In October 1936, the family returned to Bikaner accompanied by sister Jane to help. John was laid up with thrombosis in the leg from riding.

Things settled down and they had another wonderful Christmas at Gajner, their third with shooting parties picnics and dinners. They enjoyed another Kashmir summer break on a houseboat. John joined the family briefly and in Peter's words *"My parents hired horses and the three of us went riding. My pony was too big for me as were the stirrups, so that instead of my feet being in the proper place they were in the stirrup leathers. ... The predictable occurred and I fell off with one foot jammed in the leather."* leading to his permanent distrust of horses.



John, Mag, Anne and Jane (left) and Peter aged 5 (right), Bikaner, 1936

Mag and the children returned to Bikaner to join John for the celebrations for H.H. Ganga Singh's Golden Jubilee in November 1937. This event was the highlight of the year with all the pomp and ceremony – Mag wrote *"Among other things my husband organised a Torchlight Military Tattoo, similar to Edinburgh and Aldershot, including a Musical Ride by the State Camel Corps, who later went on service to the Middle East"*.

Peter wrote that *"I remember viewing from this (palace) balcony. ... A cloud of dust would herald the approach of the lancers on their superb horses as they put in a full cavalry charge careering at each other from opposite directions with lances lowered. That was my highlight and excitement when they all missed each other."* Peter was aged 6 at this time.



Shoot Party, Jane (left), Mag (mid right), John (back mid right), Bikaner, Xmas 1936



Anne aged 3³/₄ years and Peter aged 6³/₄ years (left) and Peter with party friends (right), Bikaner, Xmas 1937

John wrote in November 1937 – *“The weather now is beautifully cool with warm sunshine during the day. We are all very fit. The brats are growing very fast. Anne, I am glad to say is now not so much of an ‘inanimate blob’ as she was. In fact, as often as not leads the pair in their naughtiness! Peter is getting on well with his lessons. We have a girl looking after them, the daughter of a head clerk in the Army – rather a ‘refined’!! lady but not really too bad on the whole.”* *“Mag has had a lot of skin trouble for the last 2 months, and has been obliged to have about 15 inoculations. She seems to have thrown it over at last. It is due to an infection local to Bikaner, which thrives on dry skin caused by the dryness of the place. Darned hard luck.”*

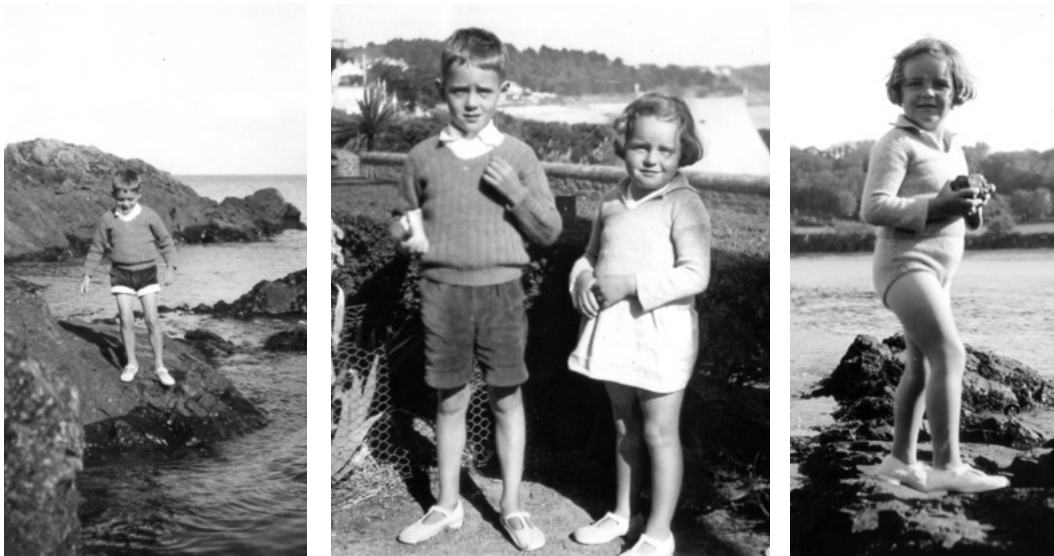
Mag’s sister Jane left them in Jan 1938 to stay with the Duffs in Bombay. By March, Anne had developed recurrent throat and fever problems, and the doctors decided that she must have her tonsils removed. The Maharajah and royal household were kind enough to allow her to have the operation in the Palace, sharing the surgeon with one of the royal children – something she did not appreciate until later. The Palace personnel were forced to send her home before recuperating as she would not remain peaceful – she still remembers waking up and howling to be told by her father to ‘shut up and go to sleep’ and being fed ice-cream!

Mag wrote – *“When we left early in 1938, H.H. presented my husband with the first issue of his own Golden Jubilee medal for his services, which was a great honour, and said he need only wear it in his presence!”*

1.4.4 After Bikaner in England, back in India and then war is declared

They all packed up in Bikaner and left together by ship for England in April for eight-months combined leave, and to settle Peter into a Prep School in September.

During the passage Peter became bored and developed a kleptomaniac streak, collecting spoons and jewellery from other cabins, for which the stewards were at first blamed, but after enquiry and searching they were found under Anne’s mattress on her bunk! The thefts were traced to Peter so Mag asked the ship’s captain to give him a fright, which he did successfully up on the bridge!



Peter (left), Peter and Anne (centre) and Anne (right), in Jersey, ?Apr 1938

The early part of the leave was spent in lodgings in Jersey, seeing Blanche, when the children both developed measles, Peter quite badly. The next move was to lodgings in Crookham, Hampshire, when aunt Clarie visited and taught Peter to count using painted cherry stones. He got a new bike while Anne was taught to ride on his cast-off.

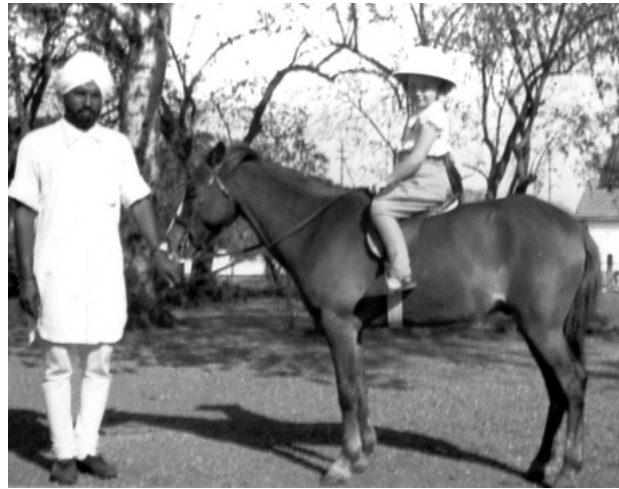


Peter in his Windlesham school uniform, Sep 1938

The final stay was at West Wittering. It was arranged for Peter to go to Windlesham Prep School, near Washington, West Sussex, in September, and to a 'holiday home' for children left by overseas parents which was near Marjorie, who was to be his guardian. The holiday home was run by two lovely young women who he still remembered at the end of his life with much fondness, and the fun they provided.

Mag spent some time searching for her brother Hugh who was discovered very sick, and had to be hospitalised in Brighton with family aid.

John had to leave England in August, due to the deteriorating international situation, while Mag and Anne returned to India and Poona by ship in December 1938. They found on arrival in January that John had set up home in a bungalow and acquired horses including Pooji for Anne.



Anne on Pooji with Orderly on Funny Face (left),
Anne with good military seat on Sikh with Orderly Ranjit Singh (right), Poona 1939



Anne on Sikh with John, Mag, ?Adie, and orderly, Poona 1939

However, he had been ordered to attend a course in Ahmednagar in preparation for joining the 4th Indian Division of the 8th Army as a Staff Captain. Robbie Robertson was also on the course. 'Heron Force' left India in July 1939.

At a brief meeting for a week before John left for Egypt it was decided that Mag and Anne should prepare to go to Cairo, and Mag once again packed up the bungalow to stay with the Molls, sold the horses and moved on after hearing the declaration of war on 3rd Sept 1939 in the Mess!

Part 2 of these Life Notes is in a separate document and covers the period from the beginning of World War 2, in September 1939, to the Partition of India, in August 1947.

Anne Molver (December 2016)

1.5 Appendix 1 – John and Mag’s timeline (1900-1939)

Note that the term “India” in this document refers to the whole of British India prior to August 1947 when it achieved Independence from Great Britain and therefore place names reflect pre-Partition political boundaries.

Year	Date	John	Mag
1900	13 Jul	Born St Helier, Jersey, Channel Islands, England	
1908	2 Jul		Born North Croydon, Surrey, England
1910	16 Oct		Brother Hugh born Norwood, Surrey, England
1910-1917		Victoria College, St Helier, Jersey, Channel Islands, England	
1913	24 Sep		Sister Joan born Norwood, Surrey, England
1917	14 Mar	Death of brother Donald, Al Basrah, Basra, Iraq	
1918-1920		Royal Military College, Sandhurst, Camberley, Berkshire, England	
1920	24 Dec	2 nd Lieutenant (unattached) in the Indian Army	
1921	17 Mar	Arrived in Bombay, India	
1922	Nov	Bushehr, Iran, Persian Gulf	
1923	24 Mar	Promoted to Lieutenant	
1923-1924	4 Aug-8 Jan	ADC to HE Sir Frank Sly, Governor of the Central Province, at Government House in Nagpur, Maharashtra, India	
1924-1925	Jan-Jan	Returned to regiment in Jubbulpore, north of Nagpur, Maharashtra, India	
1925	Jan-Nov	Posted to Waziristan on the North-West Frontier, India	
1925-1929	Nov-	Returned to regiment in Ahmedabad, Gujarat, India appointed as Quarter Master	
1926	5 Nov	Death of his father Horatio in St Helier, Jersey, Channel Islands, England	
1928			Accompanied Aunt Olive (Doog) to Bombay, India, by sea
1929	25 Mar	Promoted to Captain	
1929	20 April		Death of her mother Ethel Ida in Gerrards Cross, Buckinghamshire, England
1929	April	Long service leave to visit his bereaved mother in England	Returned to England to be with her bereaved father
1929	April	John and Mag meet on board ship while they were both returning to England to be with their respective families	
1929	June	John and Mag engaged to be married	
1929	15 Nov	John and Mag married at St George, Hannover Square, London, England	
1929	Dec	Returned to regiment in Ahmedabad, Gujarat, India and Appointed as Adjutant	
1930	Jan		Returned to India
1930	Jan	John met Mag off the ship and travelled by train to Ahmedabad, Gujarat, India	

Year	Date	John	Mag
1930	Apr	Camping and shooting trip in the hills, followed by 6 weeks of hot weather leave at Mt Abu hill station, Rajasthan, India	
1930	Sep	John and his battalion sent to Chitral, on the North-West Frontier, India	Packed up bungalow and sailed to England pregnant and sick
1930	21 Nov		Death of Mag's father Edward O'Dell at Gerrards Cross, Buckinghamshire, England
1931	28 Apr		Son Peter born in Steyning, Sussex, England
1931	June	6 weeks leave to see his son and attend a ten-day course with the Coldstream Guards	Stayed in lodgings and later in Salcombe, Devon, England
1932	Mar		Travelled by ship from Southampton with son Peter and cousin Mary and then by train to Rawalpindi, Punjab, India where Mag expected to meet up with John
1932	April	John given 2-months leave to join Mag, Peter and Mary in Kashmir, India	Travelled by car to Srinagar, Kashmir, India, with son Peter and cousin Mary
1932	Late	Arrived at regimental station in Jhelum, Punjab, India for training in mountain warfare	
1932	Sep		Mag and Peter travel by car and train from Kashmir, India, to Jhelum, Punjab, India
1933	Apr	John sent to Simla, Himachal Pradesh, India, for a staff course and exam	Mag and Peter moved to Simla, Himachal Pradesh, India for the summer
1934	4 Mar		Daughter Anne born in military hospital in Rawalpindi, Punjab, India and then all stayed with the Moll's in Jhelum, Punjab, India
1934	End Mar	John appointed as Military Adviser to Indian State forces in the three states forming the Desert Circle, in Bikaner, Rajasthan, India	
1934	Apr	After a brief visit to Mt Abu, embarked on a lecture tour of Desert Circle states	Mag and children in Mt Abu, Rajasthan, India
1934	Dec	Mag joins John on tour to Bahawalpur in the Punjab region of India	
1935	Jan	John and Mag were present for the Presentation and Trooping of the Colours of the 1 st Bahawalpur Infantry (Sadiq Battalion) by Field Marshall Sir Phillip E. Chetwede (Commander-in-Chief, India)	
1935	Jun-Jul	John runs his office from Kashmir, India	Mag and children in Kashmir, India, for the summer
1935	1 Aug	John returns to Bikaner, Rajasthan, India	
1935	Oct		Mag and children join John in Bikaner, Rajasthan, India
1936	20 Apr		Mag, Peter and Anne travel by ship on the City of Baroda to Plymouth, England
1936	Oct		Mag, Peter and Anne return to India with her sister Jane
1936	Dec	Christmas at Gajner, Rajasthan, India	
1937	12 May	John attends Coronation of George VI and Elizabeth in London with the Indian Coronation Contingent	Mag and children in Kashmir, India, with sister Jane
1937	1-30 Nov	John and Mag were at the Golden Jubilee of His Highness and Maharajah Ganga Singh, at Bikaner, Rajasthan, India with the Viceroy and Lady Linlithgow in attendance	

Year	Date	John	Mag
1938	Jan	Mag's sister Jane left to stay with the Duffs in Bombay	
1938	Mar		Anne had her tonsils removed by the Maharajah's surgeon in the Palace
1938	Mar	John was sent to collect taxes in Ramdurg, southeast of Poona, Maharashtra, India, with a Sikh company	Mag visited John for 10 days
1938	Apr	Family travelled on ship from Bombay, India, to London, England	
1938	May	Family on leave to Jersey, Channel Islands, England, seeing John's mother Blanche and both children getting measles (Peter quite badly)	
		Then later to Crookham, Hampshire, England, where aunt Clarie visited them	
1938	Aug	Family in West Wittering, Sussex, England, having arranged for Peter to attend Windlesham Prep School, near Washington, West Sussex, England, and his holiday accommodation near to John's sister Marjorie who was to be Peter's guardian	
1938	Aug	John called back to India urgently for unknown service joining his regiment in Poona, Maharashtra, India	
		John ordered to report to Ahmednagar, northeast of Poona, India, to join the 11 th brigade (Heron Force), as a Staff Captain destined for overseas duty	
1938	24 Dec	Promoted to Major	
1938	Dec		Mag and Anne return by ship to India and travelled to Poona, Maharashtra, India, where John had organised a home and Pooji the horse for Anne
1939	Jul	John leaves India bound for Egypt with Heron Force	
1939	3 Sep	Declaration of War – the start of WW2	
1939	Sep		Mag and Anne travel to Egypt
1939	3 Nov	Death of John's mother Blanche at Temple Gardens, Brighton, Sussex, England	