

The life of Olive Redmond

**by
Olive Redmond**

Cover photo: 126 Quebec Road, Ilford, Essex, England.
The house where my brothers and sister and I were born and grew up until we each married. My mother lived here all her married life and died there 22 February 1996.
It was not until recently we discovered on Google maps that the Central Line of the London Underground goes right underneath the house.

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My Childhood in England

Birth

I was born Olive Beatrice Deane at about six o'clock in the evening, on Friday 16 April 1943. I was born at home, in the dining room I think, which was turned into a maternity room for the occasion. The dining room table and chairs were put into the front room which was hardly ever used, except at Christmas and on Sundays during the summer. A bed was set up in the dining room for the birth. I don't know where David was born but think the same arrangement was made for John's birth in 1945. Hazel was born in the upstairs back bedroom which later became the bedroom for Hazel and me. My parents had lived at 126 Quebec Road, Ilford, Essex, which was about 15 miles from the main part of London, ever since their marriage about four years before. My father had been married before and had two little daughters, Margaret Elizabeth, born 23 September 1928 and Barbara Muriel, born 25 November 1929, but their mother died when they were only 23 months and 9 months old. Margaret went to live with my father's mother at Forest Gate, London, and Barbara went to live with her mother's mother in London, where she stayed until she was 5 and brought back to live at 126 Quebec Road, Ilford.

Now that I am a mother and grandmother myself, I realise how traumatic that whole time was for all the people concerned. It must have been heart-wrenching for my father, not only losing his wife, but also having to part with his baby, but there was no-one else who could care for her, and he had to go to work each day. He took Margaret with him to live with Gran and Grandfather, his parents, and only saw Barbara at the weekends. By the time Barbara was 5, my

father and Margaret had moved back to Ilford a year before, so Margaret could start school at Christchurch Road. Previous to that the house had been rented out for 3 years.

After a succession of housekeepers my father employed Freda Smith, the eldest daughter of a family who lived about 400 yards (metres) away, in the same road, near the park. She had not been well and was only to do light housekeeping for a while. It turned out to be a long-term occupation as, after a few years, they got married, 22 Apr 1939 and were married for almost 43 years before my father died on 21 November 1981. For several years my father took Margaret and Barbara back to their grandparents in Forest Gate every Sunday for dinner. It was about an hour's journey on 2 buses. This continued after he married my mother, but was much more difficult during the Second World War with the bombing. They lived nearer to London than we did so there was more bombing of their area than ours.

My parents' full names were William Harvey Deane (10 May 1894 to 21 November 1981) and Freda Beatrice Smith (15 July 1917 to 23 February 1996). My two older sisters each took up nursing when they reached about seventeen years of age, so I only knew Margaret until I was about three years old and do not remember her at all. There was a family disagreement and she left home when she went nursing, and much to my regret, I never saw her again, except once when I was ill in hospital when I was five. Barbara still came home on her days off so I was always able to have her as a much older sister, over thirteen years older than me, and we have always been good friends, which I am very glad about.

My father and mother had four children, two boys and two girls. My older brother, David William, was born on Sunday, 11 August 1940, I was born Friday, 16 April, 1943, my sister Hazel Ann on Saturday, 22 September 1945, and my younger brother, John Harvey, on Friday, 7 May 1948. There were two and a half years between each of us. This was a natural spacing as my mother said it took her nearly two years to get

over the birth of each baby, and it must be remembered that most of us were born during the food shortages of wartime England and its immediate aftermath. My mother had a lot of obstetrical difficulties. Her blood group was Rhesus negative and with David being her first baby she was all right, but at my birth she haemorrhaged very severely and almost died. In fact she was so ill they did not move her from her bed in case she died on the way to the hospital, and she was nursed by her midwife, Nurse Runcieman, who became a very good friend after this and remained so for the rest of her life. She has always been called simply Nurse by all of us, and then in turn by all of our own children, and was rather like a grandmother to us, and a very strict one at that.

It is an interesting piece of history that each of my mother, my sister Hazel, and I, haemorrhaged severely enough to endanger our lives and require extensive blood transfusions, each of us with the birth of our second child. It is a known fact too, that girl babies survive the birth more often than boys. My sister and I gave birth to boys and they both died, but my mother gave birth to a girl and I survived. Of my own children's generation, Moana had to have an emergency Caesar for the safe delivery of her twin boys Alma and Jacob, Cancy's first 2 babies were lost as miscarriages early in the pregnancies and Monique's first baby, Isaac, needed an emergency Caesarian birth and her second baby died about 3 or 4 months into the pregnancy, so not a good obstetric history there either.

At birth I weighed about 6 and 1/2 pounds, which was vastly different from Hazel, who weighed about 10 pounds, even though we have always been the same height and build since then. David weighed 8 pounds and John was 9. The difference was probably caused by war-time food rationing, and my mother just didn't get enough food to eat before I was born. Also, there was a tremendous amount of emotional stress to contend with, especially with the increasing air raids in the early years of the war. My mother said that when I was born I looked like a long, very skinny rabbit, and cried

a lot, and many times she would have liked to have put me out of her hearing, which I gather meant she felt like throwing me out the window. However, she said I grew into a nice looking little girl, even if I did have a mind of my own. Nurse said I needed to be strong-willed to survive, not only my birth, and childhood illnesses, but emigrating to New Zealand too.

I often felt isolated and lonely during my childhood, which is a feeling that was probably there even from the time I was a baby. I did not realise that until in my early 40's I consulted a psychologist who, at one consultation, asked me to close my eyes and remember my early adult life. That was all right, so he asked me to remember my childhood. That was all right, but then he asked me to remember how it was when I was a baby. I immediately wanted to cry and opened my eyes. I told him I could not go on thinking about it as it was too upsetting. He asked me to tell him about it and I said I could see in my mind a wooden shelf near a window and then 2 hands putting a baby wrapped in a shawl on the shelf and leaving it there. Then I realised that I was the baby and I was being left there because I cried. The word that was most often used by my parents to describe me as a child was that I was 'difficult'. I think that was due to the stress of the world I was born into, but I grew up thinking it was my fault and I should have been better. I used to think that if I could only be better my parents would like me, but I did not know how to do it. These memories made it easier for me to know what I wanted for my own children when that time came and I knew I had succeeded when Craig in his early twenties told me he had written to a friend, 'Our Mum always made us feel that we were special and we could achieve whatever we put our minds to in life.'

All my mother's babies were born at home, which was quite common in those days. The dining room furniture was moved out and a bed installed for the births of David, myself and John, but Hazel was born in the upstairs bedroom at the back of the house. This was the bedroom Hazel and I shared

until we each got married over twenty years later, and which my parents then moved into as it was such a lovely, sunny room. Nurse Runcieman was the midwife for the birth of myself and then Hazel, but Nurse Day was the midwife for the births of David and John. After Hazel's birth the doctor told our father that there should be no more babies born as his wife was not well enough. Then John was born and the doctor said he would not be responsible for delivering any more babies as it was not safe. So there were no more babies.

World War 2

I was born right in the middle of the most terrible, wide-spread war in the history of mankind. Because our house was only 20 kms from London we had enemy bombers flying over us to bomb London. We did not have as much bombing as further into London had it, but still enough to be terrifying. Consequently there was a lot of nervous tension around us and not very much to eat. I cried a lot as a newborn baby, which I am sure was because I was hungry. I am sure my mother would not have had much milk as she had been so ill at my birth, but she tried to breastfeed me for three months. She had fed David for six months, but later fed Hazel for about two months and John for about six weeks. As time went on I put on weight and did well.

Because I was only a baby and toddler in war time, my memories are few of the actual war, but shortages went on for several years after the war finished and I remember that well. Because many items came from overseas, brought in by ships that were in danger of being sunk by enemy aircraft or submarines, we could not have such things as oranges, bananas, any foods made with sugar, and anything manufactured overseas. People would queue for anything that came into shops, and often when they saw a few people queuing would ask what was available, and then join the queue. If they did not want the item themselves, they could

always give it to relatives or sell it. Meat was rationed in 1941 and occasionally there was horse meat for sale. Although most people would not usually eat that, it was queued for enthusiastically because there was nothing else. It was either eat that, or go hungry. There were special classes in local church halls for women to learn how to make meals with such short supplies of foods.

For the first few months of my life I was carried out to the air-raid shelter whenever there was an air-raid. This was a heavy metal structure, like a garden shed, sunk deep into the earth, at the bottom of the garden, with more earth piled on top of it, to deaden the impact of flying debris hitting it in an air-raid. Every household had a shelter and put mattresses in it to sleep on during the raids. It was dark, cold and damp in the shelters, but at least they protected people from being injured by the flying glass, bricks and wood from the explosions of houses in the air raids.

We had to glue strips of paper on all our windows to stop the glass flying out. At night we had to have black curtains drawn right across our windows so no light showed from the outside. Any light could show enemy aircraft that there was a house and maybe a town there. One night my brother and I were kneeling beside the window looking at the searchlights. I was 2 years old and thought they were fairies and found them fascinating. They were huge arcs of light that swept the skies searching for planes to see if they were enemy bombers so the air-raid warning could be sounded. My mother came into the room and hurriedly shut the blackout curtains across again.

After 2 years of disrupted sleep with so many air-raids my family were in a very nervy state and our doctor told my mother not to go to the shelter in the middle of the night, but to stay in our beds. By that time most of the windows had been blown out anyway so there was not so much fear of flying glass. We were then issued with a Morrison shelter which was put up in our dining room. It was like a metal

table with wire at the sides like a cage. The wire was to stop the flying glass cutting people. So I grew up sitting under the table with my older sisters Margaret and Barbara telling me stories, and because I knew nothing else, I thought this was normal!

Often when an air-raid warning sounded my mother would run to get me out of the pram, only to find three year old David already struggling to undo the pram straps to, "get Oddle out." One night my father was standing in the garden after the air-raid siren had sounded and everyone else was inside the shelter. He could not bear to go into the shelter as he suffered all his life with claustrophobia, so on this particular night he was standing at the shelter door, watching the sky. Soon he heard the sound of a flying bomb and knew that it was headed right for our house. There was nothing else he could do but stand and pray, and he did that and watched as suddenly the flying bomb veered upwards at a slightly different angle and missed our house. It hit a block of houses about 100 yards (metres) away and they were blown to bits. How thankful we were that we had been taken care of, but how sad my mother always was to see so many other homes blown up by the bombs in the streets around us. As we grew up the bombed houses were demolished and rebuilt, but as young school children we often played on the bomb sites on our way home from school, and picked the wild flowers growing there.

At the start of the War a lot of parks and grass verges were ploughed up to grow food instead of grass. Grass playing fields, tennis courts and lawns disappeared during the war as land was much too valuable to be wasted on play. Most of it was dug up to grow vegetables. Families went on a waiting list to be allotted a small section of park land about ten metres long and three or four metres wide which became known as an allotment. My father had an allotment and I remember going there with my family while my parents dug and weeded. If you didn't grow your own food you went hungry. During the War there was a great shortage of food so

people grew vegetables and kept chickens wherever they could. My parents kept about six ducks at the bottom of our garden, but when the time came to kill and eat them, they found they could not face doing this, so the postman came and took them away to do the job for my parents, and they had one or two of the ducks I think, and the postman kept the rest. Historians say the war ended in 1945 but the food and other shortages continued for several years after that. My father continued growing vegetables on his allotment until the late 1940's.

My father rode on his bike almost every day, before or after work, in the summer, often with my brother David on the back of the bike, to our allotment. This was in the Brisbane Road playing field of Valentine's Park, right at the other end of Quebec Road, about one kilometre away. There they would work on the vegetable garden, and became very friendly with Mr and Mrs Filmore who had a neighbouring allotment and lived right at the other end of Quebec Road from us, very near to the allotment. Mr Filmore's children were grown up and he became very fond of David and called him a Scallywag, which David tried to say too, but being only three years old he said something that sounded like "Scalyback" so this nickname stuck with him over the years as Mr Filmore's name for David.

Several years later when we were all school children, we still knew the Filmores very well even though we no longer had the allotment, and every Christmas we children were washed and smartened up to pay a special visit to them. The Filmores used to have more Christmas decorations around their living room than I have ever seen anywhere else, before or since. We used to put up some crepe paper streamers, paper chains, balloons, and some baubles on our tree, but it used to amaze us to see so many, glittering, shimmering decorations hanging from their tree, and from the streamers across the room, and from the chandelier light fitting in the centre of the ceiling. Mr and Mrs Filmore were rich but they seemed unhappy too and we never saw any of their grown up

children. At the end of our visit we were always given some money for Christmas, which we felt embarrassed about accepting. Even though there was often not much money to spare in our family and we had pocket money only on very rare occasions, we were strictly brought up not to look for money from other people. If we ran an errand for a neighbour we were to do it to help and not to accept any money for doing it. My parents' values about money also meant that they would not be involved in any way with gambling or betting, whether it was football pools, Bingo, horse racing or raffle tickets. They said we should work to earn money, not just win it. Whenever advertising papers came in the mail about the football pools they went straight on the fire, and my mother said she burned them because her Dad had done that and he was right. When I had my own family, I found I had the same values, and felt very suspicious of "get rich quick" schemes.

People had to think of all sorts of ways to deal with difficult times. In the summer when it got very hot, we did not have a fridge so the butter would melt and be runny. My mother put a bucket of cold water in the hallway and put the butter in that to keep it cold. We had to be careful we did not knock it over and spill the water everywhere. We had to go to the shop nearly every day to buy the food because it would not keep long in our house with no fridge. The shop was about as far away as the shops and library in Euxton. We had to walk to the shop every day to buy the bread. If my mother needed potatoes or cabbage for dinner we had to walk to the shops for it, especially in the school holidays when we were home all day.

Sometimes people had burst pipes in winter because the water in the pipes became frozen and that cracked the pipes. So the people had to get a plumber to come and put in new pipes which cost a lot of money. So my mother put a little oil-stove in the bathroom every day and night underneath the bathroom sink to stop the water pipes from getting too cold and freezing. The oil was paraffin which is sometimes

called kerosene.

Every Monday my mother would wash the clothes in a copper. The copper was made of grey metal and was about the size of a washing machine. She would push the copper out of the corner in the kitchen to stand next to the sink, and fill it with buckets of cold water and switch it on to heat up. Then she put soap flakes in the water and put the sheets off the beds in to it to get washed. She had to lift the wet sheets out of the hot soapy water in the copper with big wooden tongs and pull them through a mangle to squash all the water out of them. Then she put them in a sink of cold water to rinse them, and back through the mangle to squash all the water out again. Then the sheets were taken out to the garden to be pegged on the washing line so they would dry in the wind. One time I remember the clothes line broke and all the clean washing fell down on the muddy ground and had to be washed all over again. My mother was very upset and crying when that happened as it made a lot more work for her when she was already tired. After the sheets the rest of our clothes were put in the washing water and rinsed and mangled and pegged out to dry. We did not have many clothes and usually had to wear them all week, or perhaps change them once in the week, even our underwear, so people often smelled a bit. Sometimes children in school did not want to sit next to someone who smelled because he had wet his trousers and they had dried and had to be worn again the next day because he had no other clothes to wear. Often in the winter it would rain and the washing would not get dry so it was put over wooden rails called a clothes-horse and placed round the fire to dry. Sometimes in some houses the clothes fell into the fire and that caught the house on fire, so it was very dangerous and my mother was often worried about it, and watched carefully to make sure it did not happen.

All people were issued with ration books 8 January 1940. Food was allocated so that each person was able to buy the same amount as anyone else. It was 4 ounces of butter, ham

or bacon per person per week. That is 125 grams. Also, 12 ounces of sugar per person per week. To get that, you took your ration book to the shop and had coupons cut out of it to allocate your ration for the week. It was the same with other items apart from food. I remember standing in a shop while my mother counted out how many coupons she had, to see if she could buy me a winter coat. I could only just peep over the counter so must have been 3 or 4. I was 10 when sweet rationing finished in 1953 and remember watching a man cycling along the road, trying to stop his bike wobbling because he was loaded up with bags of sweets and chocolates, now that he was allowed to buy as much as he wanted to.

Tea came off rationing in 1952. It is said that the teapot kept the country together during the war. Certainly whenever there was bad news, as there so often was, the first thing people did was to put the kettle on to make a cup of tea. Tea, being grown overseas, became a valuable commodity, because it was so difficult to get ships through the blockades put up around England by enemy warships and submarines. For the same reason we did not have oranges or bananas until I was nearly 10 years old. People became very clever at using food in different ways. Spam was shipped in tins from America. Spam was an acronym for Specially Processed American Meats. It was sausage meat in fat, nearly half of it being fat so people used the fat to make pastry. It tasted very bland and most people did not like it, thinking it was all the rubbish bits of meat processed into sausage, but it was better than nothing. Today spam to do with computers indicates the same level of 'rubbish' that people don't want.

With very little sugar and sultanas, or anything else grown overseas, if people wanted to make a Christmas, birthday or wedding cake, it took a lot of saving of coupons in the family to gather enough ingredients together to make a cake. Mostly people just went without, but for a wedding cake there were blocks of wood that people could hire that were decorated with plaster of paris to look as if they were iced. So photos

would be taken of a couple cutting a wedding cake, then the imitation 'cake' would be taken out to another room and some other plain cake brought in, already cut up, for the guests.

I remember going to my Aunty Dorothy's wedding because we travelled to the church in a car. I was 7 years old and it was one of the first times I had ever been in a car. Like almost everything else, petrol was severely rationed during the war and for several years after it, so even if you had a car, you could not use it. Due to the petrol shortages, horses were used a lot more and I remember the milkman and the bread man delivered the milk and bread with a horse pulling their cart. Also the rag-and-bone man went round with a horse and cart calling out some unintelligible words that never sounded like "rag and bones". This was the signal for us to run to him with empty jam jars or bottles, or rags, and he would give us a few coins of money for them. Metal was needed to build aircraft and ships. Bones were boiled down to make glue, and paper was in short supply.

We always went everywhere by bus - or walked. We walked a lot. My mother made us come home for midday dinner because the dinner break was for 1 and a half hours, from 12.30 to 2 pm, and she thought that was too long for us to be left in the playground. Most people went home for dinner which is why such a long time was allocated to it. Most shops closed at this time too. As it was a mile to my school, walking to and from school was 4 miles a day from the age of 4. I went to school 3 months before I was 5 because my mother was expecting another baby. I suppose she took me for the first few days, but after that I walked with my brother who was 7. A few months later when I was 5 I caught Meningitis, which is still a terrible disease. I was in hospital for a month and off school for 6 months convalescing so was not at school all that time. My life was saved by injections day and night of penicillin which had been discovered only about 8 years before, and used to treat soldiers. How I dreaded the green screens being pulled around my bed because I knew I would

be held down while needles were put into me. No matter how much I cried it still went on day after day, night after night.

My mother took us on the bus every week to see our grandparents, my father's parents who lived in Forest Gate, near east London. I do not remember having to get off the bus for an air-raid warning, but they happened all the time and were more frightening than I could ever tell you. In fact, the overriding memory I have of the 2nd World War is absolute fear. Fear that you could feel all around you. For many years even after the war ended, if a plane flew over our house and we children were playing in the garden, my mother would automatically come to the kitchen door and count us, to make sure we were all safely there. When I lived in New Zealand there was a celebration marking 50 years from the end of the war. They found some old Spitfire planes and bombers from war time, which had been re-made for a fly-past. I did not know this and was in my kitchen when I heard the familiar noise of the dreaded planes flying overhead. Fraser, aged 15, heard them too and ran excitedly into the house to tell me. He took one look at my face and put his arms round me and held on to me. I was pushing him away and shouting at him to let me go because we had to run and hide. He had no idea what was the matter but it was instinctive in me to run and hide, even after 50 years. About half an hour later we were going out so I went to put on lipstick and found my face was still so white with shock that I could not see my mouth. The blood had completely left it.

In the year 2000 David and I went to London because Craig was working there and paid for our flights. He took us to a Wartime exhibition. I did not really want to go there but David and Craig were interested in it so we went. Halfway round the exhibition there was a replica of an Anderson shelter. I went in it but came out in tears and left the hall. Craig came to find me and tried to persuade me to go back in, but I couldn't because of the smell. Craig said he had not noticed any smell, but I recognised what it was. It was the smell of damp, and urine, and fear. Anderson shelters were

built in most people's back gardens right at the beginning of the war. Families had to dig about a metre into the ground then construct sheets of curved corrugated iron to form a hut in the hole, and cover it with a metre of earth. About 3 million of these Anderson shelters were distributed around Britain. They were 2 metres long and 1 and half metres wide, and nearly 2 metres high. Whole families had to go into the shelter whenever the air-raid warning sounded so it was extremely cramped, cold and damp in there.

My father was 45 at the start of the war so was past the age to be called up as a soldier as he had been in the 1st world war. He volunteered to be a fire watcher in London as he worked in an office there every day. This meant he had to go up to the top of buildings and watch for fires and report them to the authorities. My father never talked about his time in the army in the 1st world war but when I was about 10 years old I saw some medals on his bed and asked what they were. My father hurriedly put them away in a drawer and told me that nothing good ever comes of war.

At home, not only did my father build an Anderson shelter in our back garden, but he grew vegetables there as well as on his allotment, and he also kept ducks and hens. People were encouraged to do this because they could feed themselves, but they also had to give some of their produce, including eggs to the local food office for distribution to the general public. At the end of our street there was a communal food bin into which people took their scraps of left-over food or vegetable peelings. The bins were collected and taken to farms to feed pigs. I have often wondered if the pigs got much because there was not much food for people to waste. As children we had to eat every scrap of food on our plates whether we liked it or not. I well remember sitting at the table for half an hour at midday dinner time because I did not like the rice pudding my mother wanted me to eat. In the end I was only allowed to go because otherwise I would be late for school. That must have been about 1949 but food was

still in very short supply and we were not allowed to waste it.

My memories of the 2nd World War are different from those of someone living in a different part of Britain. My husband David who was 6 years older than myself was evacuated with his brother Terry, at the start of the war, to Norfolk to stay with their Uncle Tom and Aunt Florrie, who had no children and were delighted to have them. However, not all children were treated well, and in some cases they endured the whole war as servants on farms. Many of the evacuated children were brought home to their families after 6 months as the families missed each other and the expected bombing had not happened. When the bombing started some children were again evacuated but some stayed with their families arguing that they were better to be together even though it was so dangerous.

My Uncle John, my mother's younger brother, joined the RAF, the Royal Air Force, and was trained as a pilot but near the end of his training the authorities decided they had enough pilots but not enough bombers so he was re-trained as a bomb-aimer. He had to learn a lot about navigation to help the pilot navigate to the correct area for bombing. Just as he was due to go for his first bombing raid the war ended and he was always extremely relieved that he had never had to kill anybody.

My Grandpa's 4 cousins all held high positions in the armed services in the 2nd World War. They would have had very different opinions from my Grandpa who was a Conscientious Objector in the 1st World War and very badly thought of, sometimes being given the white feather as a sign that he was a coward. He was conscripted to serve in the boiler room of a hospital. Part of his duties included incinerating the amputated limbs, which would have been distressing for a gentle person like him who was intelligent and spoke 4 languages. Keith, the eldest of the cousins, was born the same year as my Grandpa in 1886. He was a judge and eventually became the Lord Mayor of Aberdeen,

Scotland. Colin was an Admiral in the Navy and became Aide-de-Camp to King George 6th in 1939 but served in the war as Commander of a submarine. Neil was in the Army and was one of the doctors for King George 6th around 1940 but then served overseas in the war as a Major General in North Africa and Italy. Kenneth served in the war in the Army, based in Britain, as Lieutenant-Colonel and later served in India as an engineer for railway lines constructions. All 4 brothers lived until they were over 80.

Men either volunteered to join the armed services at the start of the war or were conscripted for National Service. In the 2nd World War the Non-Combatant Corps was formed to use men who were either not fit for fighting duties or were conscientious objectors. As was pointed out by Winston Churchill those in the NCC were not all conscientious objectors but it was "entirely composed of men whose conscience permits them to serve as British soldiers, though it does not permit them to take human life." During the course of the war 6,766 men served in the NCC, of whom 465 volunteered to specialise in bomb disposal - nothing cowardly about that! During 1944-45 some volunteered for transfer to the Royal Army Medical Corps, while retaining their non-combatant status, in order to join Parachute Field Ambulance units dropped over France on and after D-Day. Others worked in army stores, in transport, agriculture, forestry, or on other projects 'not involving the handling of military material of an aggressive nature'. The NCC was part of the army, not a civilian unit. During the war some members of the NCC renounced their conscientious objector status in order to serve in combat roles when examples of German war crimes came to public attention. Also some men who had originally accepted call-up into the ordinary armed forces changed their minds, when more was known, and claimed conscientious objection.

With so many men away from home in the armed services, work done by men now had to be done by women. Many women who had previously never gone out to work, joined

the workforce to 'do their bit' as it was called. Many joined the armed forces as a WAAF which was Women's Auxiliary Air Force, or as ATS, Auxiliary Territorial Service, or WRNS Women's Royal Naval Service, pronounced Wrens. Women in the armed services were not allowed to fight but were in office and service positions. Many other women joined the Land Army working on farms around Britain helping to grow food for the nation. Other women worked in munitions factories which was extremely dangerous because of fire or explosions from the machinery, or from bombing. These factories were targeted and sometimes blown up, causing many deaths of the workers trapped in the building.

Large numbers of men in Australia and New Zealand volunteered to join the British armed forces because so many of their parents and grandparents had emigrated from Britain and it was still called 'home'. They were especially valued due to their pioneer 'can-do' outlook. Particularly the Maori Battalion were renowned for their bravery and fighting ability.

Many men who were conscripted or volunteered to join the armed services at the beginning of the war were away from their homes for the duration of the war, even if they survived, so many children had no idea of what it meant to have a father, and had no idea who the man was when he eventually returned home 6 years later. Some men had leave every few months or a year, but that was only for a few days and then they were gone again. If they were sent overseas, there was no leave.

My friend Susann did not know her father when he returned home at the end of the war. He never spoke of his experiences but she asked him about the dent in his leg and it transpired that he had been shot in the leg. He had been taken prisoner in Europe and his group were being marched from one camp to another. He was desperate to go to the toilet but when he tried to do this he was ordered to keep walking. When he stopped for a few moments he was shot in

the leg, and had to continue walking with blood pouring from the wound.

Another friend's husband Bert served in the Australian army and was taken prisoner to a Japanese prisoner-of-war camp. He also never spoke of what happened there but would often wake up in the night screaming in fear because of memories he could not get away from. My friend had to cope with the night-time screaming for many years. Marriage break-ups were often the price paid for war-time service. The men came home but they were changed men.

My father was correct when he said, Nothing good ever comes of war. However, there were some who gained financially from the war. The arms and ammunition makers, the black-marketeers who sold at higher cost items that were difficult to come by. People had to invent new ways of doing things, new machinery, new medicines, new communications systems. At first in the war it was just the British against the Germans, but later, as the Japanese joined the Germans and Italians, and the Japanese bombed Pearl Harbour in December 1941, the Americans joined the British and they became the Allies.

It was only around 2017 that I discovered one of the causes of the 2nd World War. Of course, there are many causes of anything, but after the 1st World War the German government and many of the people were incensed that they had not won and thought that if they had been allowed to continue fighting a little longer, they would have won. They bitterly opposed the restrictions put on them after that war. Throughout the years of the Depression at the latter end of the 1920's when jobs were scarce and food and clothes even more scarce, average Germans realised that the Jews in their neighbourhoods were living better than most of them. The Jews had always kept their businesses within the extended family and helped each other. This is the way they had lived for centuries but to the Germans it was excluding anyone who was not Jewish. Anger erupted in small ways at first, but

by the 1930's it only needed a spokesman to give the general population a voice. Then along came an Austrian painter and wallpaperer, named Adolf Hitler. The violence became a tidal wave in Austria and Germany of Jews having their businesses smashed and themselves removed to concentration camps.

In Chicago, USA, on 18 May 1937, Cardinal George Mundelein made these observations on the tragic transformation of German public opinion: 'Perhaps you will ask how it is that a nation of 60 million intelligent people will submit in fear and servitude to an alien, an Austrian paper hanger, and a poor one at that, and a few associates like Goebbels and Göring, who dictate every move of the people's lives?' The Cardinal went on to suggest that the brains of 60 million Germans had been removed without their even noticing it. So it was that the stage was set for the largest, most widespread conflict ever endured in human history.

Brothers and Sisters

As the War drew to a close, people became more relaxed, and began to believe that life really could become normal once again. Our family went on holiday to Ramsgate staying at a boarding house. We spent the daytimes on the beach with my parents sitting in deck chairs, and David and myself digging endless sandcastles and paddling in the sea. To me, David was always "my big brudder" and he always looked after me. He was never jealous of me, mainly because he was the first boy born in the family, and a favourite with everyone.

I well remember that Hazel was born in the upstairs bedroom, in fact it is the earliest memory I have as I remember sitting on the top stair crying loudly for my mother. I was two and a half years old and felt very lost to have had my mother disappear so suddenly. After I had been

crying and calling for my mother for some time, Nurse Runcieman appeared at the door and told me to go away as my mother could not come as she was busy. How right she was!

I was very jealous of Hazel after she was born. She seemed to have everyone running after her. Dad bored a little hole in the bedroom door so my parents could look through it to see if baby Hazel was awake in her cot, and if so would go in and pick her up, and take her into the living room. I always wished people would give me that same attention, but I was not a smiley baby like Hazel, and people said it was difficult to get a smile from me. In fact, they said I was just 'difficult'. So I grew up with that label. In later years I learned that people reacted better to me if I smiled, so I learned to smile. However, I often wished I could be accepted for how I was, not for how they wanted me to be.

Another early memory is after something happened to upset me when I was three and Hazel was about nine months old, and while she was lying on her rug on the floor, I cut the front of her hair off. I also remember cutting all the daffodil flowers off to give to my mother - no stalks on them, just the heads!

Maybe I was rather a "scissor-happy" child as another time I poked the scissors into my brand new dolls pram hood. It made a lovely sawing, rasping sound, so I stuck the scissors in again and again, loving the sound. My father was shaving at the time in front of the big mirror over the dining room fireplace, as he always did, with a big mug of hot water. Suddenly, he saw in the mirror his four year old daughter attacking the wonderful new doll's pram he had saved so hard to buy for Christmas, ripping it to shreds. I will never forget my father stopping in mid-shave, with the razor held halfway down the soapy lather on his face, looking at me in horror, and shouting to my mother, "Freda! Come and see what this girl is doing!" My mother was never able to understand why I should have done such a thing, but I know

it was because I loved the sound I was making. I was too young to appreciate how difficult it still was to get toys or other luxuries after the War had ended.

One day when Hazel was about a year old, my parents took us all to the allotment and Hazel was left sitting in the pram, while David and I played nearby while our parents worked. We got bored and I climbed into the pram with Hazel. We found that by jumping up and down in the pram as much as we could we could rock it around quite a bit. Unfortunately, we not only rocked it about - we rocked it right over! Hearing our screams, my mother came racing over to us, and found the pram upside down with Hazel and myself trapped underneath it. They say history repeats itself, and a full quarter of a century later our baby son Owen, aged about nine months, was strapped into his pram and left on the front porch to have an afternoon sleep. A little while later we heard a loud crash followed by muffled screams. We raced out to find Owen had rocked the pram right off the porch, and it had tipped down the steps, and landed upside down in the flower bed with Owen trapped underneath, screaming indignantly with a mouthful of earth!

I was Christened in the Anglican Church of Saint Clement's, as my father was a member of the Church of England, but it was a long way to walk to St. Lawrence's or St. Clement's which were our nearest Anglican churches, so, as my mother was a member of the Baptist Church and both my parents enjoyed the preaching of the new Baptist Minister, the Reverend Beasley-Murray, we went to church and Sunday School at the Baptist Church in Ashurst Drive when I was about three years old. This is why David and I were Christened and Hazel and John were Dedicated in the Baptist Church. I shall always be very glad we went there as I learned a great deal and was taught by many very fine people.

I started school at Christchurch Road School, Ilford, before I was five years old. The usual age to start school was five, but

my parents were told I could start before that if they thought I was ready for it. I think I started at the beginning of the Spring term in March, but it may have been earlier than that. I can still remember my first teacher. She was a plump lady and very kind, but unfortunately she retired a few weeks after I started school. I remember the farewell ceremony they held for her and presented her with an enormous grey suitcase. At least it seemed enormous to me, but probably that was only because I was so small. Maybe one of the reasons why my parents thought it would be a good idea for me to start school so early was because my mother was due to have her fourth baby a few weeks later. She had been told after Hazel was born that it was not advisable to have any more babies because of the very difficult times she had giving birth. However, after John was born in May 1948 my mother was told that she was not to have any more babies, and to emphasise the point our family doctor, Dr Payan, made a special visit to see my father. He told him the risk was too great and said, "It's your wife's life that's at stake," and that if he allowed his wife to become pregnant again they would have to find another doctor to deliver the baby as he would not take the responsibility.

Hospital

After John was born, when he was only three days old on the Sunday, I remember walking into the dining room which had once again been turned into a maternity delivery room, and telling my mother I had a headache and did not feel well. I must have looked ill as they put me to bed tucked up beside my mother next to the cradle where my baby brother lay asleep. I became more and more ill and remember people looking at me with very worried faces. Hazel and I were delivered by Nurse Runcieman, but David and John were delivered by Nurse Day, and I think she may have come in the afternoon to check on my mother, and called the doctor

to see me, or perhaps my parents phoned for the doctor using a neighbour's phone, as they never had one at home until long after we had all married and left home. The next thing I remember was being carried out of our front door in the arms of an ambulance driver and driving to the hospital. I think I was taken to the Isolation Hospital about ten kilometres away, and I remember wishing the ambulance windows were not made of smoked glass, so I could see out of them and see where we were going.

I was in hospital for about four weeks with spinal meningitis. Friends of my parents also had their daughter in hospital at the same time but she had tubercular meningitis, and she died soon afterwards, so it was an upsetting and very worrying time for my parents, especially as my mother was still recovering from John's birth and could not come to see me. Later, when she was able to visit, the hospital staff advised her, as they so often did in those days, not to come for fear of upsetting me and setting my progress back, so I did not see my mother for the whole of the four weeks. I think my father was only able to visit me on Saturdays and Sundays, and on one of those days he took Margaret and Barbara with him, and they stood outside on the grass and waved and smiled to me, not being allowed to come in to my room. I was kept in isolation, partly to keep germs away from me in my weakened state, but also because people were afraid of the spread of meningitis to others, and I later learned that our whole house had been fumigated by health workers as soon as I had gone into hospital. Often a lesser type of disinfection was carried out after a child had Measles, and clothes, toys and books, were washed or burned to stop the spread of the infection.

I remember the first few days in hospital, and especially the nights, as being a nightmare of green curtains on screens pulled round my bed, and the lights turned full on me as they held my naked little body down and stuck needle after needle in to me. There were no explanations, just the pain and fear, and fifty years later it is still a vivid memory. There were

lumbar punctures where I was held down, curled up, so a big needle could be inserted in my spine, and fluid drawn off and examined to check the progress of the meningitis, and then injection after injection of Penicillin. Although the doctors and nurses were very kind to me, and probably dreaded my screams too, how I hated all those needles being stuck in me.

How well I remember the day the nurse told me I was well enough to do without any more injections. I could hardly believe it and remember saying, "No more pricks?" over and over again. How thankful I am that Sir Alexander Flemming and many other scientists had been able to produce Penicillin. It had been used then for only about five years and without it I would almost certainly have died. Something else I feel grateful for is the faith of so many good people at Ashurst Drive Baptist Church who held a special Prayer Meeting a day or two after I went into hospital and spent all evening praying just for me. I feel that was a special blessing and a privilege.

I was kept in a glass walled cubicle on my own, as all the other children were as far as I could see. In the room next to me was a baby of about six months old. It must have been a lonely time for me as I had almost no visitors, and was kept in isolation, most of the time in bed, so was not allowed to play with other children. When I was at last allowed up to go to the toilet, a nurse carried me on her back "pick-a-back" style. One day when a nurse came into my glass room to bring in my lunch, on her way out past the glass wall of my room she looked back and noticed me saying "grace" out loud, before eating my food. She stopped and watched me with a nice smile on her face, but I did not see her there until I said "Amen" and opened my eyes, and was surprised to see her there. Looking back, my parents must have taught me well for me to have remembered to do this so unselfconsciously in hospital.

The day came at last when I was allowed to go home, and my father hired a car or taxi to take me home because, like most

families, we did not have a car. Most people travelled by bus, train or walked, and neither of my parents ever learned to drive. It had been my father's birthday the day I was rushed off to hospital so his birthday celebration had been delayed until I came home a month later, and they held a double celebration. I was allowed to hold my new baby brother, but felt quite annoyed that my mother held her hand under him too and did not seem quite to trust me to hold his weight all right! My mother had made a baked egg custard pie - in fact, two of them - as she knew how I loved them, and so did my father, as we were alike over a lot of things, and I have liked them even more ever since. I think I was probably given a lot of attention that evening to make up for all I had been through, but the feeling I have is of a sort of isolation or loneliness, that I could not fit into the family somehow. For quite some time I felt very aware of feeling on the edge of things looking in.

I was given the bed in the dining room where my mother had given birth to John so I would not have to walk up the stairs, as I was still quite weak. One morning soon after, my brother David came to see me before anyone else was up. He sat on my bed and I said, "Don't sit there. I've wet the bed." He got off very quickly! My mother had to put the mattress out in the sun to air, and soon after that I was transferred back to my bedroom upstairs which I shared with Hazel. I was allowed to sit outside in the sunshine in an armchair and warmly wrapped up in a blanket. I did jigsaw puzzles and played with a set of small bricks in different colours and shapes, made of a pottery-like substance. I played with my dolls but my mother said I was not very nice to them. Maybe I was having my revenge on them.

Family Life

I do not know how long I was convalescing, but it was probably several weeks. I came out of hospital mid June and

was very weak after having had meningitis, after all I had nearly died. When school started in September I was allowed to go to school but only in the mornings for several more weeks. We had to walk a mile each way to school - nearly two kilometres. So, as we came home to lunch, that was about seven kilometres we each walked every day from the time we were five years old. That's almost a marathon each week - a long way for little children - no wonder we were usually strong and healthy! We started our school days at 9.30 a.m. and finished at 4 p.m. walking home in semi-darkness in the middle of winter. We had an hour and a half for lunchtime from 12.30 p.m. to 2 p.m. as most people had a cooked dinner at mid-day and a lighter tea of baked beans on toast, cheese on toast, boiled egg, or mashed banana at about 5 p.m. or 6 p.m. So every day we walked home very quickly in the middle of the day, ate our cooked dinner, and then started the long walk back to school again. My mother did not like us to stay at school at lunchtime as it was a long time to sit or play in the playground, and she was sure we would have gotten bored and up to mischief. Also she liked us to have a cooked meal in the middle of the day, and not just sandwiches. How times change!

On Sundays we usually had a roast lamb or roast beef dinner, and on Mondays my mother did a big family wash which took up the whole morning, so lunch was always cold meat, potatoes and cabbage on that day. On the other days we often had cold meat or had it minced to make shepherd's pie or rissoles. We often had sausages or liver, but not often did we have fish. We usually only had fish, a small skinless fillet of it, steamed in a little milk between two plates over a saucepan of boiling water, when someone was ill and needed invalid cookery. It was very rare for us to have fish and chips as, not only was that too expensive for our family, but my mother considered that was not a "proper meal." Mostly the vegetables were potatoes and carrots and cabbage, with the cabbages often home grown, but in the summer we also had runner beans and marrow grown by my father, and

sometimes we would have freshly shelled peas. We liked to shell the peas, but I hated the ones that had a maggot in them, and would drop them quickly.

At dinnertime we almost always had a dessert, often stewed apple or rhubarb and custard. Sometimes the apple was made into an apple pie, or occasionally apple crumble. We had three apple trees in our garden, but the apples were full of maggots, so my mother used to use what she could of them, and then buy cooking apples. We also had a small pear tree and a large plum tree with big Victoria plums, so we had these fruits too in season. We also grew gooseberries which we picked in very early summer, and sometimes they arrived in the kitchen, but often they were used as ammunition in our "wars." Usually, David and John would rush upstairs with pocketfuls of pear buds, when they were just beginning to be shaped into pears, and aim their missiles down on to Hazel and myself all unsuspecting in the garden. Once "war" was declared Hazel and I would pick our own pear ammunition, or pick some up that had been thrown already, and hurl them at the boys who were grinning out of the upstairs windows, usually the bathroom and toilet. It amazes me that no-one ever actually fell down the toilet while they were balancing on it throwing things, or, even worse, fell out of the window. Sometimes Hazel and I would be able to sneak up to our bedroom first and throw the pears at the boys, and sometimes it would be Hazel and David against John and me. It would always go on until someone was crying, or our mother could not stand it any longer. It was no wonder we never had any ripe pears until we all grew up, they never stood a chance.

Whenever anyone in the family had a birthday we always had a birthday party because our mother had never had parties when she was a child, as they had very little money, so she was determined her children would have parties. We usually had strawberry jelly, pink blancmange in a jelly-mould shape, and a birthday cake with candles. Blancmange is very similar to cold, stiff custard, and my mother usually made it

pink and set it in a mould shaped like a rabbit. Then when she was serving it out at the table she would ask us, "Do you want some of the pink bunny's head or his tail?" Of course, all being animal lovers we could not bear to eat it after she had said that, and she was always left with a big plate of blancmange left over at the end of the party. I remember when I was four years old my Uncle Peter laughing at the way I was eating as I turned each spoonful of food over upside down inside my mouth before I took the spoon out. That was the way I always ate.

The first dog I can remember was called Jack. He did not mind joining in all our games in the garden, where we made a "tent" with a blanket draped over chairs and sticks, or in the dining room where we made "boats" or "trains" out of upturned dining chairs, or a "house" with a blanket draped over the dining table or the clothes-horse. The clothes-horse was a wooden frame to hang the clothes over after they were washed and ironed so they could be "aired". It was usually put in front of the fire to be near the warmth. My mother was always careful about putting anything near the fire in case it caught fire, but some people had their house burned down by the clothes on the clothes-horse catching fire.

The only fire we ever had lit in our house was in the dining room, except on Christmas Day and Boxing Day when we went into the front room and had the fire lit in there. We could not afford the coal to light two fires so the front room, which was a cold, north-facing room, was rarely ever used. When my sister Hazel was born in our upstairs bedroom I think the fire was lit there too, and I think when we had measles and once when my mother was ill, the fires in the bedrooms were lit, but that was rare.

Christmas

The food at Christmas Day tea was similar to our birthday

parties, but instead of a sponge cake, we had a fruit cake mixed and stirred and wished over by all of us, two weeks before, and then marzipanned, covered with white icing roughed up with a fork to look like snow, and decorated with little figures of snowmen, Christmas trees and a Father Christmas. Usually we did not eat much of the tea though as we had had such a big Christmas dinner, which was about one o'clock, after going to the hour-long church service about ten o'clock. My mother usually stayed home to cook the dinner. We always had a roast chicken, although once we had a turkey when I was a teenager. Then there were roast potatoes, baked parsnip, carrots, Brussels sprouts, and peas, with stuffing from the meat, and gravy. This was followed by Christmas pudding, also made by my mother a few weeks beforehand. We loved Christmas dinner, especially as we did not often have chicken, but it was a lot of work for my mother, even though my father always peeled the vegetables for her on that day, early in the morning.

In the days and weeks before Christmas we made cards, decorations and small gifts. In an English winter these activities helped to pass the time, and we didn't have much money to buy things. We all wrote letters to Santa Claus, or Father Christmas as we usually called him, even after we didn't believe in him any more! I remember when my brother David told me about Father Christmas. We were walking to school, through the park, past the small duck pond, and he told me. I didn't believe him at first, but later on began to realise it was true. I remember feeling such disappointment and that I had left part of my childhood behind. I was only 7 so this was a big realisation, but I wanted my younger sister and brother to go on believing, so we kept up the secret for them.

On Christmas morning we all woke up very early and felt in the mid-winter darkness for our pillowcase at the bottom of each bed, hoping it would be full of parcels. It always was. Looking back I do not know how our parents managed to get so much for us in such difficult times, especially just after the

War, but they always did. We all ran with our pillowcases into our parents' bedroom and undid the parcels amidst lots of noise and mountains of wrapping paper. I am sure we were teenagers before we stopped doing it this way and were old enough to wait until later in the morning and open our presents in the living room. I do not remember most of the presents we had for Christmas, except a wooden toy fort my father spent a lot of time making for David when he was about six, and a wooden cot he made for my dolls. I know I was also given dolls when I was little, and doll's clothes, and later on books.

Sisters

When Hazel started school I was seven and a half years old and a big girl in the Junior School. I searched and searched in the Infants playground at morning playtime at 11 a.m. and asked everyone there if they had seen a new little girl in a Fair-isle knitted hat, who had just started school that day. No-one had seen her and it was not until I got home for mid-day dinner that I found that no-one had thought to tell me that my sister was not going to Christchurch School, where David and I went, but to Newbury Park School. This was because the school boundaries had been changed and our house now came into the Newbury Park area. Hazel, and later on John, had their school a lot nearer than ours, but had to cross a major cross roads which, although it had four sets of traffic lights, was still nerve-wracking to cross even when we were older, and was a great worry to my mother when Hazel and John were very young.

When Hazel was about six and I was eight or nine, our mother made a dress for each of us of a shiny, silky material, on her old treadle Singer sewing machine, which she had converted to a hand-operated one a few years later for us to learn on. One dress was pink and the other was green. How I longed for that pink dress, and as my mother sewed those

dresses I imagined how I would look in the beautiful pink dress. But when the day came for us to try the dresses on, Hazel was given the pink dress and I was given the green one. I still remember feeling such utter disappointment. I did not like green clothes for many years after that and only started wearing them in my fifties. What a long time it takes to get over some disappointments in childhood. My mother told me "pink was not my colour" and it was not until I was an adult that I started cautiously to wear a peachy pink, only to find that I loved it and it is "my" colour.

I often thought Hazel got her own way a lot more than I did, right from the time she was a baby and Dad made a tiny hole in the bedroom door so they could see through it to the cot and see if Hazel was awake, and if she was she would be picked up. Much later I told my mother that she had always given Hazel a lot more attention, and she said it was because Hazel was always such a happy baby that everyone loved her, whereas I had been a difficult baby, often crying, did not want to go to Dad, so no-one wanted to pick me up. When I was nine or ten I heard my mother talking to a neighbour who we met in the street, while we were all with my mother out shopping. They were talking about their children when they were babies and my mother explained that when she was expecting me, although I was her second baby, they already had two girls. She said, "We really wanted another boy, but we had Olive." As an adult I can understand what she meant, but as a young child I heard the words and felt my value crumple into nothing.

However, there were times when I got what I wanted. One day Hazel, John and I dressed up as a bride and groom and bridesmaid with some old white net curtains and an old shawl. I was the bride, and at nine years old was about half a metre taller than my bridegroom, John, who was only four years old. Hazel was not too happy to be the bridesmaid as she wanted to be the bride, but I used seniority to get my own way. Our older sister Barbara took a photo of us in the

garden.

I can not remember if my sister Barbara had started nursing by then or was still working in an office. I think she was doing her Children's Nursing training though. After the three year training Barbara worked for several years at Queen Mary's Hospital for Sick Children at Carshalton in Surrey, and it was not until I was about twelve, in 1955 that she did her General Nursing training. She had to do only two years instead of three because of her previous training. After that she trained as a midwife, but went back to looking after sick children, as she preferred this. So she was able to give me a lot of encouragement in 1962 when I decided to start my own nursing training after working in an office for two years.

Valentine's Park

My mother was not sure if we had German Measles, but Hazel and I were kept away from school for a few days when I was ten because we had a mysterious pink rash. I do not think it could have been German Measles though as, when I had a special blood test about 25 years later, it indicated I probably had never had German Measles. However, Hazel and I had a nice holiday from school, with nothing wrong with us, and enjoyed pushing our dolls' prams to the park. We loved going to Valentine's Park. It was about a kilometre from our house, but we were not supposed to go there on our own as there was a lot of worry about "stranger danger" there. There had to be at least two of us together, and we were told never to talk to strangers, and never, never, to take lollies or sweets from them or go with them anywhere. We were taught to be on our guard constantly, which made me very distrusting and wary, but also kept me safe. However, we loved going to the park, which was about 30 acres of grass playing fields, tennis courts, a boating pond, two big lakes, three streams, and many beautifully laid out flower gardens. Long before the park had been the grounds of a big old

country house, which was still there. It was called The Mansion, and was now the offices for the local Health Department. It was there I was sent with my mother when I was six to be told I needed my tonsils out. However, our old family doctor, Dr. Payan, who had delivered most of my mother's babies, refused to let me have my tonsils out, and my mother had great faith in him, so I still have my tonsils.

I also had to go to The Mansion for my new glasses when I was about ten years old, after it was discovered I was short-sighted. My mother had taken us children to a film and I kept asking her what the words on the screen were when the Interval advertisements came on. She knew I could read perfectly well, and realised it was because I could not see them. When I got my new glasses I was amazed, walking back home through the park, to look at the trees and be able to see the leaves instead of just a green blur. I thought everyone saw things in a blur and had no idea I was different. I was so excited to be able to see clearly, and kept pointing things out to my mother, but my happiness was short-lived as the children at school unkindly called me "four eyes" as well as "rabbit's teeth" because of my big teeth. I was always self-conscious about smiling and showing my teeth, and this feeling lasted well into adulthood.

Near The Mansion House grew several mulberry trees and we picked the leaves for our silkworms when I was about ten. It was mainly my brother David who kept the silkworms. They were grey caterpillars that made real silk, rather like a spider makes a thread to spin its web. I thought they looked weird and did not like to look at them. I never liked any kind of insects near me. My mother thought it might date back to when I was about three and put my hand into some sort of spiders' nest in a tree, not knowing what it was, and the spiders came out in droves and ran all over me. I was screaming when my mother got to me and she said I went white with fear.

Brothers

When I was about fourteen my mother went to the shops about 200 metres away one afternoon. I was sitting at the dining table reading and my brother David started teasing me with a spider. He sent the spider across the table, walking towards me. I screamed so loudly my mother heard me as she was coming home down the road. She came rushing home as she thought I had had an accident. David got into trouble for teasing me. About the same time, one evening I went to bed at my usual time of about 8.45 or 9 p.m. but was horrified to find a spider on the bedroom floor. It ran behind my dressing table and I called my mother and asked her to take it out. She told me not to be silly, and to go to bed. I was so sure that spider would come creeping across me in bed in the middle of the night that I would not get into bed. No-one would come and take the spider away for me, and I was so upset I was nearly hysterical, and sat watching that spider in case it came creeping out. After an hour or more I was so tired I went to bed, but I decided I would never laugh at my own children or anyone else about their fears, and I never have. Later, as a nurse I found that most people have fears of one kind or another.

My brothers David and John often teased us about things they knew we did not like. When David was about fourteen he kept a grass snake, or a slow-worm, in a glass aquarium box. My mother hated having to go into David's and John's bedroom because the snake was in there. One afternoon when my mother was out shopping my sister Barbara was sitting quietly in the armchair reading. David and John came creeping stealthily towards her, and I was horrified to see David had the snake in his hands. As if hypnotised, I watched them as they crept quietly nearer and nearer towards Barbara. She went on reading completely unaware that they were near her. They held the snake just near her head and all

at once Barbara saw something out of the corner of her eye. She turned her head to see what it was and came face to face with the snake, with its forked tongue flicking in and out, just a few inches away from her face. She gave one blood curdling scream and leaped out of the armchair and ran out of the room screaming. David and John got into a lot of trouble over that. A few days later, when David and John were at school, my mother very bravely carried the box containing the snake to a field near our house, and let it go. She told them it must have got out somehow, and I do not think they ever knew she had let it go deliberately.

My mother told the story of her sister, Dorothy I think it was, and her brothers were chasing her with a worm. She screamed just as they threw it at her and it went right in her open mouth. It seems brothers like doing terrible things to their sisters!

Grandma and Grandpa

We only ever saw about half our relatives as my parents seemed to be having a disagreement with the other half a lot of the time. My mother's parents were totally against her marrying my father as he was twice her age and a widower with two children. They refused to go to the wedding and never spoke to my parents for about four years, in spite of living only 400 metres away in the same street, at 70 Quebec Road, and going through a terrible war too.

My mother's sister Maisie got married in the War to a sailor she had only recently met. He went away again to the War and she had a baby girl, Ingrid, and they both came to stay with us for a few months at my parents' home. Having three adults and six children crammed into a three bedroom house put a lot of strain on everyone, and eventually there was a big argument and Maisie and Ingrid moved out, and we lost contact with them. My cousin Ingrid now lives in Sydney,

Australia, with her own three children.

My mother's brother John visited us occasionally, and when I was four years old I remember on our swing in the garden while he tried to take a photo of me. He was determined not to take the photo until I smiled, and used all his charm to win me over, but I was just as determined not to smile. Understandably, he eventually became very irritable, and told me off, which did not make matters any better.

There was a family disagreement with John around this time so I do not remember him after this, which is a shame as it was 50 years before we were put in contact with each other again, by my Aunty Dorothy, and we became good friends, writing a lot of letters to each other. My older sister Margaret left home to go nursing when I was three and I never saw her at home again as there had been a family disagreement there. Again, it was over 40 years before I wrote to her, and later phoned, and found what a nice person she was, and greatly regretted the gaps in our family life.

Whenever we met my mother's parents in the street I always felt very self-conscious about talking to them as I was never sure if my parents were "on speaking terms" with them, and if I was allowed to speak to them. I deeply regret this as I never really knew my Grandma and Grandpa because of this. Occasionally I was allowed to go to their house with a message when I was ten or eleven. In the hall they had a picture called "The old rugged cross."

My Grandma was crippled with pain in her legs, from arthritis. She had had Rheumatic Fever in 1945 at the age of 57. Her son Peter had it at age 9. She could get around the house with a stick, very slowly, but when out in the street had to be pushed in a wheelchair by Grandpa. It seemed to me that Grandma often seemed to be telling Grandpa off, and would say, "Be quiet, Dad," or "Don't do that, Dad," which I thought strange as he was a quiet man, but also a very clever man. He spoke at least three languages and worked in the

office of a Bank in London before he retired. I later learned from my Uncle John that his father had been quite capable of ranting and raving at home at his family if they did not eat properly at the table or some other misdemeanor.

Both my mother's sisters Dorothy and Grace got married at the end of World War 2, and I remember going to Aunty Dorothy's wedding as we were taken there in a car which was a major event in itself. We hardly ever went in a car, occasionally on the bus, about once a year on a train, but mostly we walked everywhere. I went with my friend Ann Coxall in her dad's car to school, one day when I was nine. A year or two later when we went on holiday, after my mother had been ill for a few weeks, Mrs Filmore, who was like a mother to my mother, paid for a car to call and take us to the bus station about five miles away, to catch the special bus to our holiday destination. We were amazed to find the car was a Silver Cloud Rolls Royce. It was incredible riding in that car. It was so smooth we hardly knew we were moving. The chauffeur helped us in and out and took care of our luggage, and we felt like Royalty. Usually when we went on our annual holidays my father ordered a taxi to take us the 2 or 3 miles to and from the railway station.

My mother's sister Dorothy worked in the office of Dr. Barnardo's Children's Homes at Barkingside, about seven kilometres away from us. This was a village of homes for orphans, each cottage of about five children looked after by a House-mother. We got to know quite a few of them as they came to Sunday School at Ashurst Drive Baptist Church. My Uncle Peter was the gardener at Barnardo's and continued to work in gardening and horticulture until his retirement in the mid 1990's. He was the only one in her family that my mother always had contact with, after a disagreement with her other brother and sisters in the early 1960's.

Uncle Peter was my mother's youngest brother, and only twelve years older than me, so he loved to visit us and would often join in our games, like cowboys and Indians, cops and

robbers, digging a hole in the garden to get right through to Australia, or putting up a tent in the garden, made from draping a blanket over some chairs, and sitting under it telling jokes and eating our lunch. He was one of our favourite people. I also loved my mother's sisters, Dorothy and Grace. Aunty Dorothy had lovely brown eyes, and was always very kind to me, and we loved Aunty Grace's wonderful energy and imagination. I was told later that I had always been the favourite of my Aunty Dorothy and she made no secret of that fact. The rest of my mother's family we did not know much about due to family disagreements, so we did not see them even at times like Christmas. We grew up not knowing much at all about our cousins.

Gran and Grandfather and family

My father's parents were not happy about my father marrying my mother, as his mother did not want him to marry again. Maybe she feared she would lose contact with her two little granddaughters. However, that smoothed itself out a little as time went on, especially after my mother's first baby was a boy, and their first grandson. My father's sister Mabel never married, and his brother Harry never married until a few months after Aunty May died, and he was 74 years old. The lady he married was called Winifred and was blind, and he doted on her and was very happy. They were married for 6 years when Uncle Harry died and his wife died 18 months later.

My mother used to take us to see my father's parents every week, going by bus and walking quite a long way too. They lived at 45 Shrewsbury Road, Forest Gate in the eastern part of London. In Wartime we would have to go down into the air-raid shelters if the siren sounded a warning. This only added to the worry of the journey. My mother found it very difficult, especially when pregnant or with a new baby, but my grandparents had always expected to see Margaret and

Barbara each week so it continued on when the next children were born. We had to be quiet children and on our best behaviour. We spent most of the time each visit in the back parlour. This was a dark room at the back of the house where the family lived and had their meals. They had electric light in the house, but also used gas lighting in the back room, and we were always fascinated to see the gas light being lit, and would wait to hear the little "pop" it made. Grandfather smoked a pipe and would let us strike the matches to light it, particularly David, who was his special favourite as he was the first grandson. There would be great clouds of smoke before Grandfather got his pipe going, but we did not mind. It was even more exciting than looking through the cracks in the fence over the railway line in the shopping area of Ilford, and seeing a steam train rushing past, pouring out great clouds of smoke all over us. Grandfather loved strawberry jam, and liked nothing better than to sit beside the fire in his big armchair, eating jam by the spoonful out of the jar. When it was time to go we had to line up for the moment we all dreaded - Grandfather's kiss. He had a big, rough, white beard and liked to scrub our faces with it when we went to kiss him goodbye.

If we needed to go to the toilet while at Gran and Grandfather's this involved a major expedition upstairs. First of all Aunty May would go ahead of us upstairs to check no-one was in the toilet, then we would be taken into the toilet and have to climb up onto the high wooden seat. We did not have toilet rolls until a few years after the War had ended and had to use cut-up pieces of newspaper, or the tissue paper that was wrapped around the occasional apple or orange we might have if we were lucky. This continued till I was about eight or nine, and meant it took a long time in the toilet as we liked to read what was on the pieces of newspaper before we used them. We could not flush the toilet at our grandparents' as we needed to pull the chain to do this, and the chain was too high up and out of our reach. We would jump and jump, trying to reach it, and then Aunty

May would come and help us. There was a large bath set in the middle of the bathroom. I do not know if they used that or they had their baths in a tin bath that was brought in to the scullery and filled with water from the copper. We, like most other people, had a bath only once a week, usually on a Saturday night before church. The scullery was a little room next to the back parlour, and contained a sink for washing the dishes and a copper for boiling the water for baths or washing the clothes. Many houses also had a back-boiler built in to the back of the fire that would heat water which would then come out of the hot tap instead of having to carry buckets of boiling water from the copper, upstairs to the bathroom.

The meals may have been cooked in the scullery too but the kettle was always boiled on a metal hob on the open fire. I do not remember having a cooked meal at Gran's but we often had afternoon tea there. I used to love the Madeira cake, or sometimes Battenburg cake, Aunt May always bought for us, and once I remember having bread and butter and shrimps there. They also liked whelks and cockles which they bought already cooked and ate with salt and vinegar. Sometimes we toasted bread on long toasting forks in front of the fire. This made our hands hot and our faces red from the heat. My father liked hot, buttered toast with salt sprinkled on it, or bread and butter with sugar sprinkled on it. Butter was a luxury, as we had had hardly any during and just after the War. We hardly ever went to our grandparents with our father as he was usually at work when we went during the week. Occasionally Grandfather would roast chestnuts for us on the metal plate called a hob in front of the fire and we would show how brave we were peeling the shells off while they were still hot and eating them, because we were too impatient to wait for them to cool down.

Sometimes we were allowed to go in the next room where Gran had her rocking chair, and we took turns to rock in it. My father told us that when Gran was a little girl, she and her sister had to play very quietly while their mother had a sleep

in her rocking chair in the afternoon. They got bored at having to be quiet and started to giggle as their mother began to snore. They got a piece of soap and crept quietly up to their snoring mother and put the soap into her open mouth. She woke up with a start, choking and frothing and was very angry with the two little girls, and sent them to bed. Occasionally at Gran's we went out into the garden, but this was only about six metres square and had only a few roses in it. We never went into their front parlour except to have a look at it. That room was kept only for very special occasions such as Christmas, or for special visitors. It seems strange to me now that they had all those rooms and hardly ever used them, and were all cramped together in one dark little room, but that was the way most people lived then. It was also a status symbol to have a special "best" room.

I was thirteen when Grandfather died of cancer in 1956 and four years later Gran died of cancer too. We were told they had died but did not go to their funerals. Aunt May and Uncle Harry lived on in the big old house at 45 Shrewsbury Road, Forest Gate, London. Aunt May was always very nice to us and always generous to each of us on our birthdays when she would give us money, usually as a Postal Order, so we could buy what we really wanted for ourselves, as she knew we were never able to have pocket money. Aunt May was always very fat which was all the more noticeable as she was so short. I do not think she was even five feet tall. My father was about five feet two inches (155cm.) and Uncle Harry about the same. Gran was about the same height as them. Grandfather was a little taller, but not much. In her mid seventies Aunt May had to have a lot of treatment for cancer of the breast, but instead of dying of that she was killed on a pedestrian crossing one evening near their home, on her way home from singing in the church choir. So Uncle Harry lived on alone in the house for several months until he married a lady called Winifred Dunning. They both died within the next few years and the house was sold. The money from the sale of the house paid various solicitors' bills and

funeral expenses, and the rest, I was told, was left to my father and Margaret and Barbara, which did not please my mother as the children born to her were not included. However it did not worry us, and was probably the result of our grandparents making out a Will many years before and not updating it when we were born.

My father was always at work, or working on the work he brought home from work! I can hardly ever remember playing with him. Once I ran across the room to him when I was six or seven and my mother told me to be careful not to bump into Daddy. This was because he was then in his early fifties and my mother felt he had to be looked after. He often talked about the kind of funeral he wanted. He said he wanted us all to wear bright colours, not black, and sing happy hymns, and smile and have no crying. He said dying was not a sad thing. It was a happy time because of Jesus and the Resurrection. Ever since I was about ten I had it in the back of my mind that my father was probably going to die any time, which was ironic as he did not die for almost another thirty years.

Games

I hardly ever remember my mother playing with us and cannot remember any time when my father played with us. A few times she played games like Ludo and Halma, or Chinese Checkers with us. She said her father would never let them cry if they lost. He said you must be a good loser. He said anyone can be a happy winner, but it takes a good player to be a good loser. Once my mother played with us in the garden throwing the ball to each other. If we dropped the ball we had to put one hand behind our back for our next turn. If we dropped it again then we had to stand on one leg too. Sometimes we ended up sitting on the ground trying to catch the ball with our chin! Also we played "Piggy in the Middle" with two people throwing the ball to each other and the

person in the middle jumping up to try and catch it.

When it was time for my mother to go back into the kitchen we did not want her to go in and begged her to stay. She stayed a few more minutes, but despite our pleadings she soon went in to cook our father's evening meal for when he came home from work at about 6.30pm. We only wanted our mother to stay and play with us. We did not mind what she played, just so long as she played with us, but she was always busy and did not have time to play. One day I came home from school on a hot summer's day bursting to tell my mother something or other, but she was on her hands and knees polishing the floor and said I would have to wait until she had finished the floor. By the time she had finished I was no longer "bursting" to tell her and the moment had gone. I always remembered that experience and how it felt, so that I would know how my own children felt. She was a good mother, though, and did everything she could for us, and certainly worked hard. This encouraged in us as children that we should also work hard and be obedient.

We played a lot of games to amuse ourselves as there were very few plastic toys because plastic had only just been invented. We played marbles, skipping, five stones which is also called knucklebones, hopscotch, and catching and juggling games with tennis balls. One such game was "sevenses". We had to throw the ball against the wall seven times and catch it each time, then bounce the ball under our leg without dropping it. This was repeated as many times as we could before we dropped the ball and were "out" and someone else had a turn. In other ball games we would bounce the ball on the ground or up against a wall and recite rhymes, such as,

Nebuchadnezzar, King of the Jews
Bought his wife a pair of shoes;
When the shoes began to wear
Nebuchadnezzar began to swear
When the swearing had to stop

Nebuchadnezzar bought a shop
When the shop began to sell
Nebuchadnezzar bought a bell
When the bell began to ring
Nebuchadnezzar began to sing

If we had to choose someone to be the first for the game, we had several rhymes to chant to get people 'out' until only one of us was left to be 'it'. We would chant, Eeny, Meeny, Miny, Mo, Catch a Nigger by the toe, If he hollers, let him go, Eeny, Meeny, Miny, Mo. On that last word of Mo that person had to step backwards and be 'out' while the chant went on for the other people, until there was only one person left there to be chosen. The word Nigger was not thought of as a bad word, but in later years was changed to Tiger. We so rarely saw anyone from another country that we had no idea what Nigger meant. Another chant was when we each held out our hands in a fist, and someone went round the circle saying, One potato, two potatoes, three potatoes, four, five potatoes, six potatoes, seven potatoes, more. The child with the fist that had the word More, was out. Then the rhyme started all over again with the remaining children to find the last one in.

A skipping game was with a long, long rope, with a girl at each end turning the rope in a big, high circle. Girls would run into the swinging rope, one at a time, and we would all count out loud to see how far each one could get before stepping on the rope and being "out".

Sometimes, at home, in summer time in the garden we made a "tent" with a blanket draped over chairs and sticks. In winter in the dining room we made "boats" or "trains" out of upturned dining chairs, or a "house" with a blanket draped over the dining table.

We were taught to be obedient to our teachers, policemen, and people at church. However when I was seven my mother went against one of the teachers herself, on my behalf, so I knew it was serious. We were in Miss Croft's class at school.

She was a stout, white haired lady, soon to retire. She was strict on discipline, in fact girls from the rest of the school were sent to her to be smacked on the legs when they had misbehaved. We used to hate it when a girl was sent into our classroom, as then a chair was brought to the front of the room and the girl had to hold on to it while Miss Croft smacked her legs. Usually the girls were aged about ten, but looked quite old to us seven year olds, and were often crying loudly and trying to get away, with Miss Croft hanging on to them, shouting at them. We dreaded the whole upheaval. The boys who misbehaved were sent to the headmaster to be caned, but he was not allowed to touch the girls, so Miss Croft got the job - and looking back, I do not suppose she liked it either. At the age of seven we were thought to be old enough to cope with learning curved writing, instead of printing, and to start using real pen and ink. I tried to keep my hands clean and not get blots of ink on my writing book, but one day I got some blots of ink on the desk and Miss Croft was angry with me and hit me on the hand with her ruler. My hand came up in a big red lump and when I got home I showed my mother. She was furious that the teacher had done that, and marched straight back to the school with me to complain to the teacher and headmaster. She certainly took my side, and I was glad of that, but had to walk an extra two miles that day to the school for the complaint!

At home my father sometimes caned my brothers David and John after they had misbehaved. My sister Hazel and I were never caned but smacked on the legs by my mother. I used to dread David and John being taken upstairs to their bedroom by our father because we knew what was going to happen. They used to scream and cry and plead and promise not to do it again. It was not until 20 or 30 years later that my sister and I spoke about it and said how much we hated hearing them screaming and crying, but our brothers said they were not actually hit with the cane but that Dad brought it down until it was just near their skin and they thought they were going to be hit with it. I suppose that was one step less than a

beating but still a horrifying experience for all concerned.

In winter we would go straight home from school at 4pm as it would be getting dark by 4.30pm in mid-winter. We would play in the house or read, or if it was still daylight, and not too cold, we would play in the garden. We did not have television until I was ten when my father proudly bought a TV to watch the Queen's coronation. Even then they did not have programmes specially for children after school for several more years. Sometimes, now, I wonder what we did with our time, and what we played but we were always busy. I know Hazel and I played with our dolls a lot. David and John played games of cowboys and Indians, as most boys did. We dug in the ground a lot, making "mixtures" and mud pies, and just digging holes. Every summer holidays we dug a deep hole at the end of the garden, near our plum tree. Sometimes the hole was a metre square and nearly a metre deep, and we were sure we were near the equator, and that if we dug long enough we would dig right through to Australia. We knew there was a huge fire in the centre of the earth and as we dug we were sure we were getting nearer to it as it was getting hotter - but I think that was because we were the ones getting hotter with all our digging!

On very rare occasions we would go for a swim at the swimming pool in the Park. In fact, I hardly ever went in a swimming pool until I went to Woodford High School when I was ten and a half, and then swimming lessons were compulsory in the school pool and I learned to swim when I was twelve. My brothers and sister did not swim very much at all, and my mother never learned to swim all her life. She was greatly frightened as a child by being held under the water, and was always scared of the water after that. As children we had competitions with each other in the bath to see how long we could hold our breath under the water. When we were little my mother would put us all in the bath together, but as we got too big to all fit in together, we were bathed one after the other, usually with Hazel and John being left in last to play with the water. When I was nine or

ten we had competitions to hold our breath with our head under water in the wash-basin while the rest counted to see who lasted longest. Hazel and I did not like doing it but had to be as good as the rest. David and John promised "on their honour" they would not hold our head under but often they did it anyway, and we would struggle to get away from them and be choking to get our breath, so we were always scared, and I never liked to put my face in the water in the swimming pool, which is a fear that lasted long into adulthood.

Holidays

Even though our family had very little money my parents always saved hard so we could have a holiday by the sea every summer. We liked to splash around in the waves, and try and learn to swim. My father used to like to swim in the sea. In the First World War he was sent with the Army to various countries around Greece and went to the Dead Sea. He said it was very strange trying to swim in the water as it was so salty you just floated automatically.

At the end of the war we went to Ramsgate or Margate in Kent and stayed in a boarding house where an evening meal was provided. When I was 6 we went to Canvey Island, Essex, and stayed in a guest house. When I was 8 we went to Little Holland near Clacton, Essex, and stayed in a chalet. The chalet had beds and basic cooking equipment but no bathroom or toilet. There was a big storm while we were there and the sea flooded over the seawall. All around the chalet was knee-deep in water that we had to wade through for several days whenever we went to the toilet.

When I was 9 our neighbour Mr Mayers offered my parents his 2 caravans for us to hire very cheaply for our holiday. They were at Minster on the Isle of Sheppey and we spent 4 years of happy holidays there for 2 weeks every August. We

got to know the place well and had plenty of freedom to explore the countryside. The 2 caravans were parked next to each other and Dad stayed in one with the 2 boys and Mum was in the other with the 2 girls. We also took with us our dog, and John's tortoise which he carried in a plastic bag. I think one year we even took our 2 cats with us in cardboard boxes. Then we had to put butter and tuna fish on their paws so they were too busy licking them to run away. To get to the Isle of Sheppey we had to cross a short stretch of water on a boat for about 20 minutes. My mother always felt seasick and was glad to get back on dry land again. My brother John took his pet tortoise one year in a plastic bag and at one point in the journey held it over the side of the boat to worry my mother even further.

Going on holiday required immense organisation by my mother. She would be washing clothes for days, then packed them all in a large suitcase called a trunk which was sent by train to our holiday address several days ahead. This meant we had hardly anything to wear for a week. She also had to pack all the sheets and towels to take with us and as much food as possible. We could buy food when we got there but the shop was a long way away so we took tinned food with us. It was about 5 hours travel to get to the caravan site. First we piled our luggage and ourselves into a taxi to the train station. Then a train to the Isle of Sheppey and a bus to where we were to stay. For the next 2 weeks we ran free climbing the high cliffs down to the beach and playing with our friends there. We soon made friends with other children who were also on holiday at the caravan site. The cliffs were very high, about as high as 5 houses. We could not dig sandcastles as the beach was mostly all stones and hardly any sand. We wore shirts and shorts as we were running around and climbing a lot. Even if it rained we still went out to play on the cliffs and the beach. I could not swim but we all enjoyed splashing about in the sea but were only allowed to do that when our parents were with us. On Sundays we walked into the town about an hour's walk away, to go to

church. Sometimes we went to look inside a very old church called Minster Abbey which was over 1,000 years old.

When I was 12 my mother sent me to a church holiday home for a week which was run by Christian Endeavour in the Baptist church. I loved being there with Bible study and hymn singing every evening after a day of walking in the countryside. The friendly atmosphere made me feel very much at home and I was not homesick at all. When I was 15 we went to Cromer in Norfolk for 2 weeks for our family holiday. It was the furthest north I had ever been, probably the furthest from my home until I travelled to New Zealand.

Primary School

Sometimes after school on a very hot summer day, or in the school holidays, we would go to the stream in Valentine's Park and fish with our little fishing nets on sticks, for little grey fish called sticklebacks. They were about three centimetres long, and we often caught five or six of them and took them home in a jam jar. We tried to keep them alive, but they usually died within a few days, so later we used to catch them and put them in the jar until we were ready to go home, and after everyone had admired our catch, we would put them back in the stream.

Occasionally, after we had finished fishing in the stream, we would have our tea there. My mother would take sandwiches with cheese, tomato and lettuce in them, with a bottle of milk. Also jam sandwiches, and sometimes some cake. We had to get home before 6.30 pm as my mother had to cook dinner for my father for when he came home from working at the office in London. It used to take him over 45 minutes on the train each day with a half hour walk to Ilford Station through Valentine's Park, and the same coming home, except in the winter when the park was closed at dusk, he would walk home along the streets, which was similar to the route

David and I took walking to school. My father used to tell the story of when I was two years old and he took me for a walk in the park with David and we met Grandpa. They decided they wanted to go to the toilet and expected me to wait outside. I cried and cried at being left on my own, and wanted to go in the men's toilet with them. They thought that was hilarious, and often told people what a huge joke it was, but to me it seems terrible to leave a little two year old on her own outside, and shows the way attitudes to such things have become better over the years.

When I first started at Christchurch Road school, just before I was five, it all seemed very strange. We learned to read simple words after we had learned our ".A.B.C." The words were like this, "The cat sat on the mat." We had books about John and his sister Jane and their dog Rover, like this, "I can see Rover. Can you see Rover? Can Rover see John? Rover can see Jane." We seemed to spend a lot of time at a huge sink of water, pouring water into different sized glass jars. There was no plastic in those days. It had not been invented. It was a very peaceful time pouring water backwards and forwards from one jar to the other, but we had to learn to be careful not to break the glass jars. They were empty fish paste jars and made from thick glass. This was just after World War 2 and everything was in very short supply. We used to walk past houses that had been bombed and half the front of the house was missing and you could see into all the rooms, even where the bath was or the toilet. As children we thought the worst thing about being bombed was not losing your home, we were too young to be able to grasp that, but to have been bombed while you were in the toilet, or even in the bath, and having to run out with no clothes on.

Although I started school in 1948 before I was five, I then had meningitis a month after my fifth birthday, and was away from school convalescing for nearly a year, so I must have been nearly six before I went back to school full time. For the first few years I went to and from school with my brother David who was over two years older than me, and

stopped that when I was about nine and he went on to the next school. Soon after I had started back to school after my illness, I was running along Christchurch Road near the school with David and two other friends, when a dog ran out of a house and growled at us all and bit me on the leg. I was terrified and crying with blood streaming down my leg. My brother helped me to school and my right leg was cleaned up and bandaged. We did not have Band-aids, or sticking plasters in those days. I do not know how I was taken home as my family never had a car, but I remember a policeman calling at our house the next day, or a few days later, to see me and to ask my mother how I was getting on. The worst part about it all was that to counteract the possibility of tetanus from the dog bite, I was given an anti-tetanus serum injection. This was the real stuff, made from horse serum, not the tetanus toxoid that is used today. Not only did I have to have an injection, but then they found I was allergic to the serum, and swelled up with a big rash and ended up having to have treatment for that too! My parents were very angry about the dog biting me and wanted the police to get rid of the dog, but it was not until it later bit another child that it was eventually destroyed. I must admit I felt a bit sorry for the dog as it was probably teased by children as they walked past its house to school.

We were given a school report to take home to our parents at the end of the school year. This was usually near the end of July, and we relished the thought of 5 weeks holiday with no school until the first few days of September. My very first report stated, Olive has made a good start in spite of her long absence through illness. A very good girl but a little self-conscious. My teacher was Mrs M.P. Stoneman, who left at the end of that year, and I remember her being given a suitcase for a leaving present. It seemed enormous to me, but then, I was only a little girl! She had a jar of Smarties and if we answered right to a difficult question, or did something good, we were given a Smartie. In days of sweet rationing, that would go on for another 7 long years, after the War, a

Smartie was a real treat.

I loved reading and could read easily by the time I was seven years old, despite having almost a year away from school when I had meningitis. I read all the Enid Blyton books I could get my hands on when I was nine, especially her "Famous Five" books, which had only just been written. When I was about twelve I loved "Anne of Green Gables" "Little Women" "What Katy Did" and many other similar classics. In my teenage years I went to the Gantshill Library every Saturday and loved to browse around amongst the books. I think I must have been quite clever at school, in my early years, as I was usually amongst the top of the class for my year. In my later schooling I had a lot of problems at home and did not do nearly so well at school. I have often wondered since then if then if the two factors were linked, or whether the other girls, being the top of the class from several primary schools were simply cleverer than I was. Certainly, I did not think I was capable of very much until my early forties, which is a waste of a lot of years.

I always had an enquiring mind which often got me into trouble. One day I woke early one Saturday morning when I was eight or nine and wanted to get out of bed but knew it was too early to get up yet. I was bored and stuck a safety pin into my hot water bottle. (No, I do not know how I came to have a safety pin in my hands early in the morning, nor why I stuck it in my hot water bottle!) Out shot a stream of water. I thought that was great, so I stuck the safety pin in again and got another stream of water. I kept stabbing the safety pin into the hot water bottle again and again, and soon it was like Trafalgar Square with streams of water shooting out all over my bed. My mother came into the bedroom and found me sitting there fascinated, oblivious to the fact that the bedclothes were soaking wet and the hot water bottle was ruined. She was furious, and just could not understand what had made me do such a thing. That too, gave me greater insight later on into how my children thought and acted.

I did not have a lot of close friends at my primary school, because we lived such a distance away from it, but I usually had one special friend. For most of the years that was a girl called Anne Bruton. She was from a family of six children, mostly girls, and her mother had a refrigerator. This was a great asset as we did not know many people with a fridge. We did not have one in our family until I was twelve. In the summer, on the long, hot walk home from school Anne, who lived only half the distance from school that I did, would get me an ice cube from the fridge and I would suck it on the rest of the way to my house, seeing how long I could make it last. We had to have all sorts of ideas to make the long walk seem not so long, and sometimes would read or count car registration plates, or look for certain trees or flowers. If we saw an ambulance drive past we had to hold on to our collar until we saw a cat, preferably a black cat. Sometimes we would walk along the walls of the houses trying to get right along the block, about 100 metres long, without having to step down on to the ground. This meant having to struggle along the fences when there was no wall, and there were several houses where old ladies sat at their windows to catch us and rap on the window at us with their walking sticks. We thought they were witches, and were quite scared of them, and were terrified in case they came out after us and chased after us, and turned us into something else, but in actual fact they probably could hardly walk, and were sick of us ruining their walls, poor souls.

I must have been 7 or 8 when I had Miss Croft for my teacher at school. She was a short, stout, white-haired lady, just about to retire. She was very strict about discipline, and we obeyed her instantly. We used to sit at wooden desks with a wooden seat attached. Sometimes in summer, if it was a very hot day, we were allowed to put our heads down on our arms on the desk and shut our eyes for a rest for 20 minutes or so. Sometimes the teacher read us a story at the same time. Life moved more slowly in those days.

We sat at desks in pairs. So we always tried to sit with a

friend as the desk places usually lasted for the whole year. In the desk was an inkwell, and as our writing got better we were allowed to graduate to writing with a pen and ink instead of pencil. The ink was very messy as we had to keep dipping the pen in the ink, and then there was too much ink on it and it fell in blobs all over the page. We also got ink all over our hands, and often on our clothes too. One afternoon, Miss Croft thought I had been too messy with the ink, or maybe she told me not to touch the ink and I did, I don't remember, but she hit me on the hand with her ruler. It came up in a big red mark, and when I went home I showed my mother. She was furious that the teacher had done this to me and marched me straight back to the school to complain. I think she spoke to the headmaster about it and he was apologetic. The main thing I remember about it though, is that I had already walked 2 miles to school and back that day, then 2 more coming home for mid-day dinner, and then I had to walk the whole distance all over again, making it 6 miles that day! No wonder we were fit!

If children did not behave right at school they were sent out of the classroom, or made to stand in the corner of the room with their back to the class. If they were really badly behaved they were sent to the headmaster. In that case the boys often got the cane, and were hit on the hand with the cane, which was a thin stick. The girls were sent to Miss Croft to be smacked. She was the official person in the school to do this. When it happened our lessons were interrupted and we had to watch while a chair was brought forward and the girl was told to hold on to it and stand still while Miss Croft bent down and smacked her legs. Of course, a lot of the girls were crying and didn't stand still at all. Miss Croft, being a bit stout, got out of breath bending down to the girl's legs, and having to follow her round the chair all the time. Miss Croft would be shouting at the girl to stand still and be smacked, and the girl would be crying, and we would be looking on in terror, hoping it would never happen to us. No wonder we grew up so obedient!

We were not really superstitious but just had rhymes and sayings that had been around for a long time, probably from our parents' and grandparents' times. If we trod on a crack in the footpath (pavement) we would chant, "Step on a crack, break your back" and then have to cross our fingers while we counted backwards from ten. If we said something we were not sure about, but hoped would happen, like a good mark in a test at school, we would either cross our fingers or touch wood, any piece of wood, a door, tree, pencil - even, if nothing else was around, our head! Sometimes we would make ourselves go cross-eyed and make everyone laugh, but someone would always say that if the wind changed while we were going cross-eyed we would stay like that. It was usually our mothers saying that to stop us doing it! When I was about ten, my friend Anne Bruton and I read in a book that if you made a cut on your finger, each of you, and then rubbed your fingers together the blood would intermingle and you would then be "blood brothers" or in our case, sisters. So we tried to make a cut in our fingers with a twig off a tree, but could only get a tiny little drop of blood from each of us, so had to give up. That was, of course, in the days long before the threat of AIDS or Hepatitis B, so we did not know any better.

The long walk to and from school was a good time to make up stories in your head, and use your imagination. A mile was a long way for a young child to walk, and used to take nearly half an hour each way. Sometimes we walked through the park, Valentine's Park, especially in the summer when the grass was dry and we could walk across the football pitches and make the journey shorter. Usually, though we went along the roads, which were mostly named after famous cities, so we went along Quebec Road into Perth Road, along to the fire station, and down Thorald Road, to our school in Christchurch Road, passing Brisbane, Melbourne, and Toronto Roads on the way. Nearly 50 years later, in Te Awamutu, we went to a local Justice of the Peace to get some forms signed for David to attend university, and when he saw

on our marriage certificate that we were married in Ilford, he told us that he had been born in Thorald Road and came to New Zealand with his parents on a sailing ship when he was three, eighty years before.

We used to walk home with several of the children who lived at the fire station whose fathers were firemen. Occasionally someone had some pocket money and would buy us all an aniseed ball or a gob-stopper to suck on the way home. Gob-stoppers were huge, nearly as big as your mouth, and you could not talk unless you took it out first, and made your fingers all sticky, which was not a good idea in winter when it was so cold you wanted to keep your gloves on. Aniseed balls were smaller and made up of several layers, each one a different colour, so you had to take that out of your mouth at regular intervals along the way home to compare it with everyone else's and see what colour you had all got to.

I was a bit lonely after I left the other children at the fire station and had to walk on, on my own. Occasionally I walked with a boy called Keith, who lived a bit nearer my house. He went to Cubs and showed me different knots he had learned. I really was not all that interested in learning about pieces of rope, but it made the time pass, so I pretended I was interested. You learned social graces in all sorts of ways. There was another boy who lived nearer me but I think was a year older than me, so, of course, was right out of my social group, and I hardly knew him. One day I heard that he had been walking home and had decided to pass the time by walking backwards and counting in his head till he got to the next power pole. The minutes went by and he felt sure he must be nearly there, so he turned around to see and smashed his face bang up against the power pole and broke his nose. It really was not at all funny, but even now it makes me smile to think about it! Apparently, he was a very clever boy at school and soon won a scholarship to Christ's College, one of the most prestigious schools in the country, but I sometimes thought he could not have been all that

clever if he couldn't even walk along the road straight!

There was a boy called Alan Landers who I sometimes walked with, but he lived quite near the school so was not company for very long. He was a very quiet boy and all the other boys picked on him, so I tried to be kind to him. When we were ten, our teacher told us we had to take a worm to school and cut it up as an experiment. I think this was supposed to be some sort of early biology class, and was called Nature Study. I was paired off with Alan and we found that neither of us could cut up the worm, so we took it outside and let it go, much to our teacher's disgust, who told us we were both cowards. I was a bit sorry about that as I liked the teacher, Mr. Malyon, and wanted him to think well of me. I felt afterwards that that was a bit of a slur on my character, but also felt I had done the right thing in not cutting up the worm just because everyone else was. During another class, Mr. Malyon asked everyone to put up their hands according to which group they thought they were in, whether they were boys who would rather be girls, or boys who were glad they were boys. Most of the boys were glad they were boys. Then he asked the girls if they would rather be boys, and most of the girls indicated they would rather be boys, tomboys. Then he asked if there were any girls who would rather be girls and I put up my hand thinking most of the other girls would too, and looked around the class and to my; surprise found I was the only one. I felt a bit unusual then, which is a strange thing to think you are unusual because you are normal! However, I had brothers and walked home from school with boys most of the time, and could do all the things they did, and could not see how being a boy could make it any better. For the rest of my life I have always been glad to be a girl, and never found there was anything I really wanted to do that I was held back from doing.

One day, when I was about nine, I went to school wearing a white dress with embroidery across the top of the front. Now I am a mother myself, I can hardly believe that my mother

sent me to school in a white dress, but she did. It was a very hot day, before we "broke up" from school for the summer holidays, and the tar on the road surface was melting slightly, forming bubbles. My friend Anne Bruton and I loved sitting on the road popping the tar bubbles. She lived in Coventry Road and they had a good stretch of tar near her house. We got out of the way if a car came along, but there were not many cars in those days, and it was a long road so we could see the cars from a long way off. We were quite engrossed in popping the tar bubbles and never noticed how much tar I was wiping on to my white dress. My mother was very angry with me when I got home. It was more difficult to get stains out of clothes in those days as there were no biological soaking powders for washing.

Mostly when my mother was angry with us she would smack us hard on our legs or bottom. My father never, ever hit Hazel or me, but he used to take David and John upstairs to their bedroom to cane them. I used to dread listening to their screams. I used to put my hands over my ears, but the screams still went right through me. Years later David told me that Dad did not really cane them hard, but that they were so scared they screamed anyway. Even so, I still used to hate it. As I got older I was "lectured" about my wrong doing, which went on for about an hour, and I preferred the quick hit from my mother. She was tall, about five feet nine inches, and strong, so a smack was quite hard. As we grew older, into our teens, she would call us down from our bedrooms when she found something we had done wrong, and hit us as we came down the last few steps, often on our head, so we learned to jump the last few steps, and run for it! We did not have a "violent" childhood, but obedience was definitely one of the first things to learn in our family. One time when I was about nine and playing with my friends from the fire station, I caught the hem of my winter coat in the wheel of their go-cart. It got mangled up and made a hole in it. My mother did not find out about it for quite some time, but when she did, she was quite sorrowful and asked me why I had not

been able to tell her. I knew I would have been told off, and probably hit, but I could not tell her that as that would have only made it worse, so I kept quiet. She must have realised what I was thinking and that made her even more sad.

Margaret Rea lived at 96 Quebec Road, about 200 metres away from me, but she was not in my class at school, so we did not really get to know each other until we were about nine years old and walked to school together. That was soon after David went to Dane Secondary School, which was right next to Christchurch School. David was 11 and didn't want to have his little sister tagging along. One day on our way back to school after lunchtime, Margaret and I saw a cat chasing a baby blackbird. We chased the cat away, but not before it had injured the little blackbird. We rescued the little bird, but did not know what to do with it as we had to get on to school and could not leave it where it was for the cat to get at again. So Margaret and I wrapped the little bird in our handkerchiefs and carried it to school. By this time we were very late for school and the teacher, Mr Malyon, wanted to know why. Margaret started crying as she thought she would be told off. Mr Malyon asked me why I was not crying too. I could not see there was any reason for me to cry as I had been rescuing the little bird, which I felt was the right thing to do. I never found out what happened to the bird in the end, but I suppose it died after all.

Mr Malyon was a good teacher, strict but fair. One day as we were lining up at his desk to have our homework checked, he asked us if we knew what we wanted to be when we grew up. I suddenly knew what I wanted to be, and told him I wanted to be a teacher. His face lit up with pleasure and he smiled as if I had given him a wonderful gift. Many years later, after a lot of discouragement at High School, I did not think I was clever enough to go to Teachers Training College, like some of my friends, even though I would love to have gone, and instead drifted into secretarial training, became a secretary for two years, and left that for nursing. I have always been glad I was a nurse, and loved my work, but it was not until I

became a mother that I found at last I could be a teacher.

When I was about ten I had mumps, which I never forgot, as it made my throat and ears so sore. I also remember having measles when I was three or four because my eyes hurt and I had to have the bedroom curtains closed to make it a bit darker and less painful. When I had the mumps, I was sitting by the fire one afternoon, in an armchair, with a blanket wrapped round me, when my mother came into the dining room followed by our school headmaster who had come to visit me, on his way home from work as I was not well. My mother thought it was very kind of Mr Pethybridge to come to visit me, but I was very embarrassed as I was in my pyjamas and dressing gown, and had my face so swollen I could not speak properly. I used to stammer and "gabble" - talk very fast - because I was nervous, and people could never understand what I was saying, and I always had to repeat everything. Once when I was sent by my school teacher with a message for Mr Pethybridge, he could not make out what on earth I was talking about, so he sat down in front of me, made me take a deep breath and say it slowly, and the third time he understood what the message was. I always spoke like this because of nervousness and it continued right into adulthood, when I eventually was able to feel a bit better about myself, and taught myself to speak properly by constantly saying to myself, "speak lower and slower." This continued right up until I had children myself and read them stories, and this helped me to slow my speech down. Then I found I enjoyed reading aloud to children, and could even put on different voices for different characters, especially in the book, "Uncle Remus' Stories". One of the greatest compliments I have ever received was when I was chosen as a reader at Playcentre over all the other mothers, because I read so well to the children. People then thought of me as a clear speaker, but they never realised that twenty or so years before no-one could understand a word I said.

We used to have two pet rabbits kept in cages, one cage on top of the other. One rabbit was black and the other white. In

the holidays we used to cut up very intricate meals of chopped carrots and cabbage stalks for the rabbits. We also made tents in the garden, draping blankets over upturned chairs, and when I was about twelve or thirteen, we had a real tent that David used for camping in. About then, Hazel was given a guinea pig for her birthday, and after that John was given a golden hamster. Mum liked the guinea pig as it squeaked, and "talked" to her, so she bought a couple for herself when we left home, but she never liked the golden hamster as it looked more like a mouse without a tail.

Birthdays and Games

Our birthdays were special days to us. We would count the weeks and days to our birthdays, wondering what presents we would be given. My birthday, being in April, was in the English Spring and I remember lovely sunlit mornings before breakfast. On my birthday I never had to be reminded to get out of bed early. I do not know if I ate as much breakfast as usual on my birthday, as we usually had a boiled egg and bread and butter, or fried egg on toast, but we always opened our presents from the family before we went to school. After school we could have two or three special friends to come and play games, and then have birthday tea. If we did it the other way round, and had the tea and then the games, there was often one child who would be sick, and then there was a mess to clear up. Much better to have the games, and then the tea, and let them be sick at their own house! We usually had jelly and blancmange and sandwiches for birthday teas, followed by the birthday cake with candles on it. Everyone sang "Happy Birthday" and then we would blow out our candles and make a wish. Grandma was not able to give her children birthday parties as she said there were too many of them to do it for them all, so my mother said she would always give her own children parties.

Even later on in our teens we always had parties. When I was

thirteen my friend Jill Asbridge asked me how it felt now that I was a teenager and I was surprised to admit it did not feel any different from before, even though I had thought it would as I had been looking forward to it for so long.

One of the things people usually did at birthdays, which has always seemed strange to me, but was quite accepted years ago, was to give the birthday person Bumps. The child was grabbed by the arms and legs and thrown up into the air and landed down on the ground again on their back, just lightly touching the ground. This happened once for every year of their age, with everyone shouting out the numbers, 1,2,3,4,etc. I always hoped there would be an adult there when it happened to me so they wouldn't drop me. Looking back, I wonder how many back injuries can be traced to this activity!

Some of the things we did now seem painful, but we did not think of it at the time. For instance, on the first day of the month, we would say to someone else in our family, "Pinch, punch, first day of the month, and no returns." We would pinch and punch them as we said it, usually on their arm, and as long as we said, "and no returns," they couldn't do it back to us. But they had their answer in, "A pinch and a kick for being so quick, and no returns," also accompanied by the pinch and kick. I haven't heard of this in New Zealand, and don't know if children in England still say it.

The games at parties at home depended on our age and whether it was an indoor party or the weather was good enough for games in the garden. Outdoor games were mostly ball games, throwing a ball to each other and having to do forfeits if we dropped it. A forfeit was something like standing on one leg and saying a nursery rhyme, or turning round in a circle with your eyes shut. Or we might play hide-and-seek, or grandmother's steps, where one child stood facing a wall and turned round quickly every so often trying to catch the movement of the rest of the children who were trying to creep up and touch grandmother on the

shoulder. The child who succeeded then became the grandmother.

We played more games indoors. These included Hunt the thimble, Pass the parcel, Blind man's buff, Squeak-piggy-squeak, and Pin the tail on the donkey.

For **Hunt the thimble**, all the children went out of the room while one person hid a small object, like a thimble. A thimble is a little metal finger-cap to protect someone's finger while hand-sewing. Then the children came in and tried to find it. Usually, though we played it the other way round, so a child went out of the room while the rest agreed where the object was to be hidden. Then the child came in and started to look for it, with the rest saying, "You're getting warmer," when near the object, or "You're getting colder," when moving away from it.

Pass the parcel involved a bit of preparation beforehand. A small prize was wrapped up, then wrapped in a piece of newspaper. Then a lollie-sweet was attached to this little parcel and wrapped in another layer of newspaper. The layers continued with a lollie in each wrapping. Sometimes a forfeit was included with the lollie. The parcel was passed round the circle of children to music, and when the music stopped suddenly the child holding the parcel unwrapped it and found the lollie and did the forfeit, before passing it on again to the music. An adult watched to see that all the children got a lollie by holding up their hand to stop the music at a strategic point.

In **Blind man's buff**, one child was blindfolded and stood with arms outstretched trying to catch the other children as they ran past in the room. Whoever was caught wore the blindfold next.

For **Squeak-piggy-squeak**, everyone sat in a circle on chairs. A child was blindfolded and given a cushion to put on the lap of someone sitting down and would then say, "Squeak piggy, squeak." The person would make a noise and the child

had to guess who it was. If successful, that person was then blindfolded. Once blindfolded people were then turned round 3 times, so they had no idea who was sitting where, but they were often so giddy by then that they fell over. This was another reason not to play games after tea and make children sick!

For **pin the tail on the donkey**, a big donkey was drawn on paper, and a tail made from paper or knitting wool, with a drawing-pin in it. Then each child was blindfolded in turn and had to pin the tail on where they thought the tail-end of the donkey was. This caused laughter from the other children who could see the funny places where the tail was pinned.

As we got older the games required more planning. I remember Memory, Objects under a sheet, Nelson's Body, and Mirror Actions.

Memory was played by looking at 10 objects on a tray for 3 minutes and after the tray was taken away writing them down on paper. The objects were things like a spoon, pen, comb, key, alarm clock, apple, rubberband, knife, hairclip, book.

For **Objects under a sheet**, several different objects had to be prepared beforehand. They were then passed round, under a sheet, and felt by each person, but not seen, then written down. These could be such things as a matchbox, piece of cotton wool, paperclip, stick of firewood, orange, etc.

Nelson's Body was a variation on the objects game. Several objects were prepared well beforehand to represent different parts of Nelson's Body. The lights were turned out in the room, with only the hall light or a torch shining in the room, which made it a bit scary to start with. Everyone sat round in a circle with a big sheet spread over their knees, and objects were then passed round from one to another. First would come Nelson's coat. That was all right. Then his medals, which were metal buttons or brooches. Then Nelson's shoe. Then the mud he stepped in on the way! This was a lump of

flour and water dough. People started to squirm at this stage, and the giggling started. Then Nelson's hat, then his comb, and people were asked to feel for any hairs from his head, which were pieces of cotton thread glued on the comb, and any fleas, which were seeds glued on! Then people were reminded that Nelson had lost an arm in battle, and round was passed a bone, much to the shrieks and horror of everyone. The bone was either a piece of wood, or stalk of celery, or if really well prepared, a bone from the butcher's which was then boiled or baked. Then people were told that Nelson lost an eye in battle and the "eye" was passed around, being a peeled grape or piece of orange. By this time several people were feeling quite sick, which was another game to avoid after tea!

Mirror actions involved only 2 people, with everyone else watching. The 2 people sat opposite each other, with one the leader and the other having to copy exactly what the leader did without taking their eyes off the other's face. If they looked away they would be Out and not get their little prize. Each was given a small plate, while still staring at the other's face. Then the leader would gently rub the underneath of the plate, and then touch his face, and repeat this action several times, with the other person copying it all carefully. What the copier did not know was that there was soot on his plate, and every time he touched it and then his face, he got black marks on his face. The soot was produced by holding the plate over a candle till it was black. Soon everyone was rolling around laughing, especially when a mirror was brought for the copier to see his sooty face, which he had no idea was happening. It was usually boys who were chosen for this game, not girls with make-up on. There was usually a prize of a small bar of chocolate for the copier, and others who were either the winner of a game, or who had been what was called "a good sport".

Every year, at Christmas, we would have a party at Ashurst Drive Baptist Church, for the Sunday School children. I remember those parties from the viewpoint of a child, and

later of being a young adult helping with the parties. The weather was cold, as Christmas was in the winter, but everyone soon got warmed up with games, so the tea was able to be cold. There were sandwiches, and cakes and biscuits. Also there were little waxed-cardboard dishes of tinned fruit, jelly and blancmange. As young children, we did not often have such food, so it was always a special treat, and we looked forward to the Christmas party for a long time.

Some of the games I remember were Aeroplane rides, Step on eggs, Coin on the flour pudding, Musical chairs, Islands, Bigamy, and Cut the chocolate.

Aeroplane rides needed a father to hold each end of a short plank of wood. A blindfolded child sat on the wood to be taken up in the air for a plane ride. The wood wobbled around so the child had to hold on tight, then a book was lightly touched on top of the child's head to pretend they had touched the ceiling. Then the men shouted out that there was engine failure, and "get your parachute on". Then the child was told to jump out of the plane. The wood was only a few centimetres off the floor but most children thought they were right up by the ceiling and took a big jump. They were very surprised to be so near the floor and everyone laughed. Usually the younger children went first, and were allowed to stay in the room to watch the others being fooled.

Step on eggs was another game to be fooled by. Everyone in the room would watch while eggs were put on the floor in various places. They were told to remember where the eggs were as they had to walk across the floor blindfolded. Usually about 6 hard-boiled eggs were used. Then all the children were sent out of the room and only brought back in blindfolded, one at a time for their turn. They did not know that in the meantime all the eggs had been picked up off the floor, and they were very wary about which way they walked, placing their feet very cautiously. A guide walked alongside, telling them to be careful, which made them even more nervous! When they reached the other side, the blindfold was

removed, and they could see the bare floor, causing surprised laughter, which increased as they watched the others brought in for their turn.

Coin on the flour required a pudding-basin of flour, packed down firmly, and inverted over a large plate. This was carried into the roomful of people on a tray, or with newspaper under it, to catch the flour. It was set down on the floor, and a coin placed on top of the pudding, with a knife alongside the plate. People were invited to cut a slice of pudding without letting the coin fall down. If it did, then that person had to pick out the coin with their teeth, hands behind their back, often with someone standing behind them to push their face into the flour! Usually they didn't mind too much, as long as they could keep the coin.

Musical Chairs needed music and chairs! Everyone sat on a chair, then walked round the chairs while the piano was played and one chair was taken away. When the music stopped everyone rushed to sit on a chair, and the one without a seat was out. This went on until there was only one chair left, and the two children had to walk round an adult at each end of the room, and run to the chair when the music stopped. The winner got a small prize.

Islands was similar to musical chairs but children stepped on a sheet of newspaper when the music stopped, and these were gradually taken away till there was only one person left. If there were a lot of children, we went round in pairs.

Bigamy was also a variation of musical chairs. Children sat on chairs in groups of three. However one group had only 2 people in it, and no chairs to sit on. When the music started everyone walked around the room individually, but had to sit on the chairs as soon as the music stopped. This meant 2 people had nowhere to sit, and were out. Chairs were taken away a group at a time, and a three without chairs were out. So it went on with more rushing to sit down in a threesome before the music stopped.

Cut the Chocolate required a dice, large packet of chocolate, knife, fork and plate, and several items of clothing, such as a coat, apron and pair of gloves. A dice was thrown by each child in turn, and when they got a 6 they rushed to the pile of clothing, put it on, and started to cut up the large bar of chocolate on a plate on the floor, using a knife and fork - and wearing gloves! They had to cut it into the small squares marked on it, and could then eat it, as long as another child hadn't thrown a 6 in the meantime, and come to drag the clothes off them to get at the chocolate!

Before starting the games, we had "get-to-know-you" activities. In one of them each person was given half a picture-postcard or Christmas card and had to find out who had the other half. Another idea was scrambled words written on pieces of paper on a table that we all had to sort out, eg. drieneer is reindeer - dingdup is pudding. Another time we each had a sticky label put on our forehead, where we couldn't see it, but everyone else could. On it was a word that we had to guess, like an animal or occupation, but we could only ask questions to be answered yes or no. For instance, "is my word useful, is it a job, is it alive, do you find it in a house?" All these ideas got us talking to other people in the room, and "broke the ice" so we did not feel 'cold' to other people, so were called "ice-breakers".

In England Christmas was, of course, in the winter, and there would always be pantomimes on at the theatres. Every year we were taken to see a pantomime or a ballet, by Miss Parrack. She was a school headmistress and my mother did her housework twice a week, and she gave my mother an extra thank-you every year by taking her and her children to the theatre. Miss Parrack also took several of her nieces and nephews as well, so it was quite a large group. After she retired she suddenly got married, to a man she had known for years, Mr Berry, whose wife had recently died.

My mother did housework for about 4 people, mostly in the mornings, so she was always home when we came home

from school. She was always a hard worker, and people never wanted her to leave them. A school teacher told her she was amused when she overheard my brother John, aged 5, tell another child that his mother was better than the other boy's because, "My mother works for Ladies!"

Church

My father always remained a member of the Anglican Church, but went to Ashurst Drive Baptist Church from the time I was 3 until I was about 10. There was a Reverend George Beasley-Murray there at that time who was a very intelligent man and gave interesting sermons, so my father, who was a clever man too, liked to listen to him. When Mr Beasley-Murray left to work in Switzerland in the early 1950's and later to become the Principal of Spurgeon's Baptist Ministers' College my father went to St Andrew's Church. This was about a 45 minute walk away, but he continued to make this journey, and the 45 minute walk home again, until he was nearly 80. After that people usually gave him a ride. As a young man in his twenties my father would have loved to have followed his friends to college to be an Anglican curate then progressed to a vicar, but his father was out of work and he had to give up his dream and help support the family. It was a lifelong disappointment to my father.

When I was 17 I was baptised by immersion at Ashurst Drive Baptist church by our minister Leslie J. Moon who later officiated at my wedding. The baptism came after I had several religious lessons with Mr Moon to understand the solemnity of my decision. The baptismal font was under the platform on which usually stood the table used for the bread and drink for Communion, and the men would take up the floorboards during the late afternoon and fill the font ready for evening service at 6.30pm. I wore a white dress and when I came up out of the water the church secretary was standing

by to envelope me in a big white towel so I was modestly covered while wet. Then the congregation sang the verse always sung at baptisms, Be thou faithful unto death and I will give you a crown of life.

Soon after my baptism I was asked to be a Sunday School teacher, and taught the 7 year olds. So I became one of the people organising the games instead of playing in them. I remember the other teachers and I, about 5 of us, put on a pantomime-play, for the children, based on Cinderella. I think I wanted to be one of the Ugly Sisters, because I could have more fun with that. I think my friend Margaret Rea was Cinderella because she liked Ian Handscombe who was another of the teachers, and was the only male there, so he had to be Prince Charming. Margaret and Ian would always walk home from church together, and really liked each other, so we were all completely dumbfounded when Ian told us he was gay. We couldn't understand it, and he didn't seem all that sure about it himself, so that didn't help us much either. It wasn't talked about in those days, so we grew up not knowing much about it. Ten years later Ian became a Baptist minister, and when I met him again nearly 30 years later he was still the same calm, kind person, and had never married but had a partner.

Every year there would be a Christmas party at Ashurst Baptist church. We always had the same things and we enjoyed the predictability of that. We had lots of games like Musical chairs, Blind man's buff, and Bigamy which involved a boy with 2 girls running round the chairs, and when the music stopped any boy with only 1 girl had to grab another girl and sit down quickly or be out. After the games we had jelly and trifle in little paper dishes which were a novelty, then biscuits and little cakes. Sometimes Father Christmas made his appearance and our parents took us home, but after the War when there was so little money for presents Father Christmas disappeared for a while, or rather, did not appear at so many events.

I think the people at church worked together well to organise quite a few activities during the year. Mothering Sunday was in March and the mothers were all given a buttonhole of flowers. We children used to save up any money we could, and put it together to buy a bunch of daffodils from all 4 of us children. The flowers were bought on the Saturday and hidden in our wardrobe till after breakfast the next day. Then we would all present them to our mother who always looked surprised to see them, as if she would never have guessed, and was very pleased.

Everyone looked forward to the Sunday School Anniversary which was held in May, particularly as it was the start of the warmer weather. We practised songs to sing at it, and on the Saturday afternoon everyone who had any flowers in their garden took them to church to decorate the building. The men put up a large trellis on the platform at the front of the church, in front of the pulpit. Then vases of flowers were tied to the trellis and it really did look spectacular when it was finished. My sister Hazel and I were allowed to start wearing our summer dresses on this Sunday, and often had a new dress to wear because we had grown out of the old one. We only had one each. Then on Sunday morning there was a special service, often with a guest speaker instead of only the minister. After Mr Beasley-Murray left we had Mr Brown for about 10 years, then Mr Moon. Several people had a part in either singing or reading and there was a feeling of sunshine and the beginning of summer, after the long winter.

On Easter Sunday we were given an Easter Egg each before church, when they were available after the Second World War. As we got older, they became more readily available, and we had several each. I was 12 before Sweet Rationing was stopped after the War. During that time we had to collect a certain amount of coupons before we were allowed to buy sweets. Sweets were the last thing to be rationed. Before that, just about everything was rationed, and I remember being about 4 and standing on tiptoe to look over the shop counter while my mother counted up the coupons in the ration books

to see if there were enough to buy a winter coat for me.

Harvest Festival was another time we always looked forward to. On the Saturday afternoon everyone took their contributions of fruits, vegetables and flowers to the church to be displayed on the platform. It was always full every year, and there was a sheaf of corn or wheat on each side of it, and also two large loaves of bread made in the shape of a sheaf of corn. I always wondered how they got it in the oven but suppose it must have been commercially baked. The church smelled wonderful and the colours were beautiful, and we sang all the traditional hymns about gathering in the harvest. Our favourite was We plough the fields and scatter the good seed on the land, but it is fed and watered by God's almighty hand. I suppose because we had come through the War years of not much food, and because winters were cold and the growing season not very long, harvest time was much appreciated. After the evening service all the food and flowers were taken to members of the church who were elderly, or ill, or to the local hospital and rest homes.

We didn't go to church just once on a Sunday, but two or three times. It was about a kilometre away and took about 15 minutes to walk there. On Sunday mornings we went to church at 11am for 15 minutes then the children went out of the church to rooms at the back for 45 minutes of singing, lessons, Bible stories and quizzes. In the afternoon we were back at church at 2.30 for Sunday School, which was similar to the morning. Then at 6.30pm there was the evening service which was mostly attended by adults. My family was heavily involved with church on Sundays. I remember when it was time for me to go up to junior church when I turned 7 from the nursery class which was called the Cradle Roll class. I did not want to go up on my own and asked to wait another 3 months until Rosemary Webb turned 7 and we could go together. We have been friends ever since, and who would have known then that 15 years later she would marry my brother David.

We often had a Bible quiz in junior Sunday School and I found I knew a lot of the answers as the years went by and the other children wanted me on their team. This was a new experience for me as I was no good at ball games at school and was always the last to be picked for any teams there. I always felt very humiliated to be left till the last, and had to pretend I didn't mind, but really it hurt. I was just no good at catching a ball, and couldn't see much point in it anyway, so wasn't interested in trying.

Every summer in the school holidays we sat the Sunday School exam in Bible knowledge. I think it was about an hour or two long and my mother strictly supervised it at our house. There were 2 or 3 pages of questions to answer, which were then sent off for marking. I enjoyed seeing how much I knew about the Bible stories and we each got a nice book for a prize afterwards. If we had had 100% Sunday School attendance or almost, which we always had as my mother made sure of that, then we got another book for this too. Our family always did well there, and every summer at the Sunday School Prizegiving we would each go up to the front and be presented with our books. They were nice stories, and we enjoyed them. The only thing we didn't like was that we were also expected to 'do an item' at the prizegiving. This meant Hazel and I had to play the piano, or even worse do a duet together. So that involved a lot of practice beforehand with quarreling about who was doing it right, and who wasn't, and then being very nervous having to perform in public.

Sunday School was at 2.30 pm so we walked back to church without our parents. Usually we were school age before we could do that. There was a very busy main road to cross, called Eastern Avenue, and our parents often saw us over that. It was often one massive traffic jam, bumper to bumper, in the middle of summer, as it was the route to Southend, our nearest beach, about 25 miles away. It took cars hours to get there, though, as they all seemed to wait till about 9 or 10 am. before deciding to go, then had to sit in a traffic jam for

ages. We couldn't understand how they could be so stupid, but it was the same week after week, for years. We felt very self-righteous going to church instead of the beach!

We enjoyed going to C.E. or Christian Endeavour at Ashurst Baptist church. It was held from 6.30 to 7.30pm every Tuesday evening for 7 to 14 year olds and we learned about the Bible and particularly enjoyed the quizzes. Sometimes we had to take an object from a Bible verse such as Ye are the salt of the earth, and we took a salt cellar. Another time I took a Bible and a torch with the verse from Psalms, Thy word is a light unto my path. For several years it was run by Miss Norah Bloxidge who lived about 1km further along Quebec Road from us. It used to take us about 15 minutes to walk to church, and must have taken her at least 25 minutes to get there. Not many people had cars after the War. My family never had a car, did not get a fridge until I was 12, nor hot water on tap until I was 14, and did not have a phone until I was 25. I think Miss Bloxidge went out to work in the daytime, and had an elderly mother to look after at home as well. In 1955 when I was 12 my mother was ill and I had to help cook the meals so Miss Bloxidge gave me The Good Housekeeping book of Basic Cookery in Pictures which I still have, and occasionally use, to this day.

Another person I remember well was Mr Holt who used to play the church organ. He played Solemn Melody by Walford Davies one evening when I was in my early twenties and I loved it and asked him to play it at my wedding. When I was about 12 I was riding home on my bike near our church, when a man in a small truck stopped me and asked if I would like to go to the forest with him. I look back on that time as one of the most dangerous times of my life as there was nobody around to call out to for help. However, I also remember with amazement how politely I spoke to him, because our parents instilled good manners in us, and said, No thank you. He then said that I would come to no harm because he had his little boy with him, who looked about 6 years old. Again I politely said, No thank you. Then suddenly

Mr Holt rode past on his bike and said to me, Are you alright Olive? Again I politely answered, Yes thank you, and he rode on but kept looking back at us. I think the man in the truck decided it was no good waiting around and he drove off. Now that I am older, I look back on that time with horror about what could have happened if the man had grabbed me and forced me into his truck and I may never have been found if I had been murdered. I think we all have spiritual beings who look after us and they may not be so much guardian angels as our own ancestors who have died and gone on, but who still keep watch over us when needed.

Occasionally my mother took me to church with her in the evening when I was a little girl. She said that when I was 4 she took me with her, and when the Communion tray of little glass cups of liquid were brought round for the congregation, she took hers and drank it, then heard me ask, "Nice juice, Mummy?" Much to everyone's amusement. They used blackcurrant juice instead of wine as most Baptists don't drink alcohol. People who wanted to join the Baptist church were baptised by immersion and there was a baptismal font under the platform at the front of the church. As children we always got excited when we saw the men take up the floorboards of the platform, after Sunday School to fill the font ready for the evening for a baptism. As I got older my mother took me sometimes to see a baptism. Probably my brothers and sister went too, I can't remember. I don't remember David and John being baptised, and Hazel wasn't, but I will always remember my baptism there when I was 17. It was a very important event in my life.

We all looked forward to the Annual Sunday School Outing. Two buses were chartered to take everyone to Clacton Beach for the day. We met outside the church at about 6.30 am. with all the children very excited. Clacton was about 30 miles away and the journey took nearly 3 hours. I don't know why it took so long, but it did, and seemed even longer to Hazel and me as we were always travel sick. We would sing lots of songs on the bus to pass the time away. We seemed to sing

light songs on the way there, and hymns on the way home in the evening. We arrived at the beach mid morning, and could play all day. We paddled, and swam, and dug sandcastles, and absolutely loved it. At lunchtime we had a large piece of pie my mother had made the day before. It had meat and potatoes, carrots, onions and peas in it, and we really enjoyed it. She made it every year, and when I got married I carried on this traditional recipe, and called it Clacton Pie.

At 5 pm we had to gather up our belongings and put on our clothes and socks and sandals again ready to go to the tea that was provided. My mother said I always hated having sand on my feet when she was trying to get me to put my socks on, and I would complain all the time about it. Now, as a mother, I wouldn't even bother making my children put on sandals, let alone socks as well, but in those days children always wore socks. We were all disappointed at having to leave the beach but looked forward to the special tea. It was always the same, every year. We would all go into the restaurant and waitresses would ask each person if they wanted egg and chips or sausage and chips. We weren't used to being given a choice and it was always hard to make up our minds. I always had egg and chips.

Then we all piled back on to the buses for the long drive home again, with most of the children falling asleep on the way, and having to be woken up when we got back to the church around 10pm so we could walk home from there. Sometimes someone would give us a ride, but hardly anyone had a car. We didn't really need cars as there was a good bus service, with buses to most places every 10 to 15 minutes. I went in a car to my aunts wedding when I was about 4, then a friend gave me a ride in her father's car when he took her to school one day, when I was 9 or 10. Other than that we never went in a car except to and from the railway station for our annual holiday at the seaside. It wasn't called the beach but the seaside.

My Mother's Ill Health

My mother had an ulcer on her leg near her ankle and every summer the skin broke down and she had to lie in bed for a week or two for it to heal. Also at one time she had an emotional breakdown so was unwell for even longer. She worked hard and there was very little money to bring up all of us so she had a very worrying time, and that was why she was unwell. It meant we had to learn at a young age to cook and do the washing.

When I was 12 I made a stew and was just lifting the large dish out of the oven when it slipped and a lot spilled on the floor. I did not know what to do so was just scooping it up with a spoon and putting it back in the casserole dish when Hazel came into the kitchen. So I made her promise not to tell anyone what had happened, reboiled the stew and we ate it and were none the worse for it. David did the washing with Dad and we all had to help with vacuum cleaning and keeping the house tidy. We always had to make our beds each day and from a young age my job on a Saturday was to dust the dining room which had a lot of vases and cut glass biscuit barrels on the sideboard and mantelpiece, which I was always scared I would drop and break, so was glad when I had finished.

When I was 12 or 13 my mother went into the London Hospital to have all her toes broken and reset. This was because she had hammer toes from wearing badly fitting shoes as a child. She was in hospital for about a week then convalesced at home for 6 weeks on crutches.

When I was 14 my mother scalded the whole of her left arm as she slipped and fell with her arm in boiling water in the bath. We had no hot water in the bathroom, so for 15 years my mother had to carry boiling water from the copper in the kitchen, up the stairs in a bucket and tip it into the bath.

Then she had to repeat this until there was enough water in the bath. At the same time she had to watch that none of us children went into the bathroom as she was scared we would get scalded. I had just done a first aid course at school so covered her arm in clean tea towels and walked with her to the hospital. Looking back at that event now I am amazed how my mother was able to walk all the way to the hospital 1 km away, and then walk home again, when she was in such a shocked condition, but the only other way was to get a taxi and we did not have a phone to call for one. Also my parents only ever got a taxi once a year to take us to and from the railway station for our holiday at the sea, so taxi travel was a rare event as it was an extra expense. The doctor asked Mum if her daughter was a nurse because I had done all the right things. She had no scar except around her wedding ring which had to be cut off as her finger was so swollen. After this terrible event my father had gas heating installed to heat the bath water.

Friends of our Family

An important person to my mother was Nurse Runcieman who was the midwife who delivered Hazel and me. After that my mother thought of her as a second mother, always called her Nurse, and continued to visit her until she died in the late 1970's.

A neighbour, Mr Rayner lived about 200 metres away at 680 Eastern Avenue and he was an old family friend from my age of about 8 onwards. Every afternoon he would go for a walk along our road, Quebec Road, to the nearby Valentine's Park. I am not sure how he got to know our family but it was probably from having seen him so often on our road. Maybe my mother and he got talking one day. In many ways he was like a father figure to our mother while we children were growing up, just as Nurse Runcieman was a mother figure to her. I don't think Mr and Mrs Rayner had ever had any

children of their own. He sent us a family Christmas present each year and in January we four children were brushed and polished and sent to his house to say thank you and talk for an hour or so. He was always delighted to see us and made a special occasion of it, and gave us biscuits and fizzy drink, which we didn't often have. He had held a high position in the army and walked with great precision, like a colonel. He always carried an umbrella, either tucked under his arm, or swung in step with his walk. Mrs Rayner was well educated and very intelligent, but dressed in rags, literally, and walked along the road talking to herself. Mr Rayner thought she was sane most of the time, and behaved like this to spite him, but she probably was by then mentally unbalanced. Mr Rayner told Mum that he often used to buy his wife new clothes but she would tear them up or burn them, and refused to wear them. I think she died in the mid 1960's and Mr Rayner admitted it was a relief that he did not have the constant worry any more that she would harm herself or burn the house down, or something. Mr Rayner died aged about 80 or older, and was cremated 17 Jan 1975.

Mr and Mrs Gibbs lived almost opposite where my mother grew up. It must have been a sad situation that my mother would call in to see them but not be able to go across the road and visit her family. They helped her during the war years. Mr Gibbs had a good sense of humour and liked to tell jokes or make witty comments. Mrs Gibbs was a great knitter and my mother paid her to knit my school cardigans. After I started work I paid her to knit jerseys for me.

Woodford County High School

In 1954 when I was 11 and a half, I started at Woodford County High school and had 3 main friends for all the 5 years I was there. I met Jill Asbridge at the bus stop at Gantshill on the first morning and her mother and mine got talking and Jill and I stayed friends ever after that. Also Janet Clements

who was in my class, and Janet Hill who was in Jill's class. We always went around as a foursome in lunch breaks and I loved being at that school. It was an old Edwardian house set in about 10 acres of playing fields, gardens and woodland.

When I was 10 years old I had piano lessons each week for 5 years with Miss Cook who lived at Gantshill, about 2 km from our house. I progressed through several grades but was always very nervous doing the exams. The more years I spent playing the piano, the more exams there were, and the more I disliked it, so I made the excuse that I had too much homework to continue, and stopped piano lessons when I was about 15. I have always been glad though that I learned to play the piano. As with so many other things in my life, I did not do as well as perhaps I could have done, because there never seemed to be anyone to tell me I was doing well. My sister Hazel had lessons too, and we each had to play a short item at church for the Sunday School anniversary every year. We would be very nervous about playing in front of 100 or so people but they were always very complimentary to us, so we were glad that we had done it ... afterwards.

After my weekly piano lesson I cycled round to Jill Asbridge's house and had some tea with them. I usually arrived just as The Archers was starting on the radio. That was a 15 minute programme about a farming family. It was very popular and is still running after 65 years which is incredible. As soon as I arrived at the Asbridges they would all say, "Shh! The Archers is on." Then we would sit in silence eating cheese, tomatoes, lettuce and brown bread which Mr Asbridge would slice for each person. We usually had only a light meal in the evenings as we all had a cooked dinner at midday at school.

At Woodford we had dinner in 2 sittings. We had cooked vegetables and something like stew. Then a pudding and custard. The main one I remember we called stodge. It was a steamed pudding, but quite heavy, probably it was boiled instead of being steamed. It was certainly stodgier than the puddings my mother made. It was covered in either jam or

golden syrup. However, we were growing girls and always hungry so would usually persuade the dinner ladies to give us second helpings.

Janet Clements lived in Woodford but I saw more of Janet Hill and Jill as they lived at Gantshill and I could ride there easily on my bike. I went to the library at Gantshill as I loved to read, then would go and see my friends. I often went to church with them at the Congregational church they attended. I often had tea with the Hill family before evening service and loved their family tradition of making cream from milk, using a special machine to hand pump it. Then we had bread and butter with jam and cream which I loved. In the 1960's when we all got married Janet Hill moved to America and we lost touch for 40 years, but her sister Katie traced me through a Woman's Weekly magazine in 2006 and it was a pleasure to hear about her family again. She had moved to Perth, Australia, but visited England every few years to her parents who were in their 90's before they died.

I had to get 139 or 66 bus or walk 1 mile to Gantshill, then 145 bus to Woodford. On the way home, there was more time, so I often walked the first mile from school to save some of the bus fare. I usually walked to and from Gantshill to save the fare. The money saved was my pocket money as my parents could not afford to give us any. I saved it to buy birthday and Christmas presents and often thought about what I would buy each person, while walking the long cold walk from Gantshill each day, about 5pm. As we wore knee-length gymslips and socks all through winter the top part of my legs got very cold, and sore, and even some of the skin would be bleeding, so I had to have something nice to think of to take my mind off it. Also I saved the fare to pay for material to make clothes. When I was 12 my mother said she did not have the time or energy to make clothes for me, and I was old enough to do it myself, so I had to learn to use her sewing machine. I had not had many clothes made for me, mostly they were passed on from another family. We

rarely had clothes bought from a shop.

I felt devastated that I passed only 3 of the 5 subjects I took for GCE which was the General Certificate of Education before leaving Woodford County High school in mid 1959.

However, as is often the case, it turned out well in the end because I went into a pre-secretarial course for 3 months at Walthamstow Technical college, and found that very interesting. I did well in the course and it restored my confidence in my ability to do well. I had lost that during my time at Woodford, not just because subjects like Latin, French and Maths were difficult for me, but because of how I was spoken to at home with almost constant criticism, that dragged me down.

I rarely ever speak of it because it was such a terrible time of my life. It occurred from the age of 13 to 16. Maybe I was a difficult teenager but I think it was more that my parents expected me to do what I was told without any question, and I must have questioned that and brought trouble on my head.

I was made to stand in front of my parents 3 or 4 times a week while they told me I was no good, I was lazy and not working hard enough at school. I was told I had a face like the back of a bus and nobody would ever want to marry me.

Mostly it was my father speaking, but my mother sat beside him knitting and adding comments that I would never get anywhere in life because I had no method. This meant organisation, which is surprising since I grew up to be a very organised person. She said she pitied any children I might have because I would be no good as a mother. This would go on for about an hour until I was crying and was then told to go to bed. Usually I still had homework to finish but by this time I could not concentrate on it and did not know how to do the work. My mother and I had to go for an interview with the headmistress and it was decided to keep me on at the

school but I had to work harder.

I loved the whole area of the school because it had about 11 acres of land around it and I loved the trees and openness of the playing fields. It had several tennis courts and its own swimming pool. I had hardly ever been swimming up till that time and that is where I learned to swim. I had good friends at school and did not want to leave. I am glad I was able to stay there and was happy at school but could not understand maths and was no good at Latin or French, but enjoyed English, geography, science and history. I passed English literature, English language and Biology which were the subjects I needed 4 years later to enter nursing training.

My father's illness with TB spine

When I was 16 my father contracted TB of the spine and was in hospital many miles away at Black Notley for 6 months. Much of that time he was in a plaster cast from chest to hips which must have been very upsetting to him. Also he had been brought up in an era where TB was feared as it was a disease caught by poor people and most of them died from it. While my father was in hospital my mother visited at least one day a week and probably more often than that. The journey by bus took over an hour there and again coming home, as well as the time at the hospital, so my mother was away for several hours. My brother David learned to use the washing machine and did the washing. I learned to cook dinners and my sister Hazel and I did the housework. By the time my father came home from hospital I had gained more confidence and was never lectured in the same critical way again.

Baptist church holiday homes

In my late teens I was able to go away once a year for a church weekend with our youth group from Ashurst Drive Baptist church. I think they subsidised the cost too. The Baptist group of churches owned a house in the country and we stayed there for the weekend. We went out for long walks and one evening on the way back to the house I was walking with a group of friends from church when Peter Brazier suddenly popped out from behind the bike sheds, grabbed me and kissed me. I was really annoyed with him because I knew he did not do it because he liked me but because he had kissed all the other girls at church and I was just one more to add to his list of conquests. Every evening we all met in the large living room for a devotional service with lots of hymn singing. I think my brother David went once or twice, and I think Rosemary did too, but I don't remember Hazel or John going. Margaret Rea was there 2 or 3 times when I went. When I was at work Margaret and I went on our own to a week holiday at a Christian house on the Isle of Wight. There we met 2 German boys who spoke excellent English and went around with them most of the time. It is interesting that nothing was ever expected of a romantic situation of us in those days, even though we were in our late teens. We must have been very innocent because it did not really occur to us.

Secretarial course at Walthamstow

Technical College

As the time came for me to leave Woodford County High school I did not know what kind of work I wanted to do. My friends Janet Hill and Jill Asbridge were going to teacher training college. I remembered when I was 10 years old my teacher asked us all what we wanted to be when we grew up and I knew then that I wanted to be a school teacher. When I told him that, his face lit up with a big smile. So that was something in me that was always there, but as the time came

to leave school I knew I was not clever enough and had not passed enough exams for it.

Another friend Janet Clements wanted to be a secretary and was going to Walthamstow Technical college for the training course. She suggested I go there as well. My exam results were not good enough to go straight to the course Janet would be in, so first I had to take a pre-secretarial course of 3 months to see if I could manage it. The course was very interesting. Actually much more interesting than the secretarial course which was mainly learning shorthand and typing.

We had an introduction to English law and to business law and visited the law courts in London to view a case in action. We had elocution lessons and learned to say, How Now Brown Cow! We learned basic typing skills and had an introduction to Economics. In fact it was all very interesting. When we progressed on to the secretarial course it was much harder work and I struggled to remember what all the little squiggles meant in shorthand. I am glad I learned to type without looking at the keyboard because it has been so useful since using a computer.

One day we had a college visit to the birthplace of William Shakespeare in Stratford-upon-Avon for the day. We had to be at the college earlier than usual to catch the bus so my brother David took me on his motorbike. I had never been on it before and found it very scary not knowing how to balance. I had to keep thumping him on the back to slow down because the wind was rushing in my face so hard I could not breathe. When we got to the college I could see all the other girls waiting on the steps so I asked David to pretend he was my boyfriend and give me a kiss goodbye. He complied with a peck on the cheek and then roared off on his motorbike.

The girls were all eager to know who my boyfriend was and it was really funny answering their questions and trying not to laugh. It was good to visit an area of such famous history but

the only thing I can remember about it now is that we went to a place for lunch and they had set out bowls of lettuce on the tables. While we were waiting for the rest of the food to be brought we saw a worm climb out of the bowl of lettuce and crawl across the table. Needless to say we did not want salad that day!

Holiday jobs

My first experience of working in the adult world was while I was still at high school, when I spent a week at a day nursery. My friend from Ashurst Drive Baptist church, Marjorie Utting was a year older than I was and she had started her training to be a nursery nurse. I asked if I could go there to see if it was what I wanted to do when I left school and they let me do that. As the newest person there I had to do all the menial tasks. I quickly learned from having to wash very dirty nappies in a bucket of water, with no plastic gloves on, it was not the way I wanted to spend my life. However, it did prepare me for later years as a nurse having to wash the same kind of dirty trousers from tramps in London. I also learned to change a baby's nappy with the baby on my lap and not on a changing table or the floor. It was a case of balancing the baby and talking to him while doing it.

During the college holidays I tried various jobs for about a week each. I worked as a postman at Christmas delivering parcels and it was sad to see the old people who never saw anybody all day, or all week, who were so glad to see someone that they would stand at their door and chat even though it was freezing cold and snowing. I worked in a laundry for a week which was a hot steamy place. My job was to pick up shirts by the neck, fold the sleeves around and place them in a bin ready to go to the next person to iron them. So that's all I did all day long - pick up a shirt, fold the sleeves round and put it down in the bin. I estimated I folded about 12,000 shirts in that week. It was so boring I used to

go home and cry because it was depressing.

A lot of the women who worked in the laundry did not like working there as it was so boring. I often talked to them about them trying for a different job but they did not have any qualifications to do anything else. It really showed me that qualifications are essential. I think the woman manager knew I was trying to get the other women to leave and at the end of the week she was pleased to tell me she would not be needing me anymore. I was also pleased to tell her that I had found another job in an office and would not be needing her anymore either. She was very deflated. It was mean of me that I was not more humble about telling her, but she really had not been very nice to me all week. The next job I had was in the office of a psychiatric hospital. Although the people were nice it did not feel very secure working there. Another job I had was in the office of a furniture factory. To get to the office I had to walk past hundreds of wardrobes, desks and tables all being assembled, glued or painted. The smell was overpowering. From these holiday jobs I learned that there were disadvantages to many occupations but people were glad to have work and an income.

First job at Nestle's

The day after my 18th birthday I started work at Nestle's as secretary to Loraine Goodwin. I got the job through a secretarial agency called Brook Street Bureau. How strange that over 50 years later they were still going strong and my grandson Alma had an interview for his first job through Brook Street Bureau too. Miss Goodwin was always called Miss Goodwin never Loraine. She was in her mid 30's and was the personnel department interviewer for female staff for the offices in London and Vevey, Switzerland. She was very nice to work for. I had to take the applicants in the lift from reception on the ground floor up to her office on the 4th floor and chat to them on the way to help them relax. The

hours were 9 am to 5.30 pm with an hour off for lunch. There was a tea lady called Gladys who brought a cup of tea to each of us at our desks. She was often upset about her feet hurting, or something similar and the men in my office would always cheer her up so she went out again smiling. I worked in a large room with 2 or 3 other secretaries and 2 men who interviewed the male employees. I was paid 8 pounds a week and was given luncheon vouchers which entitled me to a lunch each day of something like mince and pasta or egg on toast at any of the cafes in that part of London which was very near St Paul's cathedral. I became friends with a girl 2 years older than me who worked in the next department. She was Rosemarie Hardy and I was her bridesmaid when she married Robin O'Connor about 2 years later. She shared a flat in London but her parents lived in a very rural part of Essex and I loved to go and stay with her at their home. Her father was a retired major in the army and nice but strict. Rosemarie and I were lifelong friends until she died from brain cancer around 2002.

Cranbrook Hall Dance

A month after my 18th birthday, on 20 May I went to a dance at the Cranbrook Hall in Ilford with friends I had known on the secretarial course. That proved to be a historic occasion in my life because it was that evening that I first met David. We enjoyed dancing together but then he disappeared. I found out several years later that he was going on holiday a week later and did not want to ask me out and then go away for 2 or 3 weeks. I came home with my friends and a young man gave us all a lift home. When they had all been dropped off I was alone with him and became nervous. He took me to my house but then I saw my mother taking the dog for a walk. She never took the dog for a walk at 11 pm and I knew she was out looking for me and would see me with the young man and be angry because I was in a car with someone I did

not know, which could lead to danger. I shot out of that car so fast he must have thought I was demented. I got indoors and my mother was understandably angry and shouted at me. Then my father got out of bed and shouted at me. Then my brother David got out of bed and shouted at me. I was really upset. They all decided that I was never to go to a dance again. In the meantime, David went on holiday, came home, went to the Cranbrook Hall and several other dance places but could never find me again. He went on searching for 2 years until I went back there with my friend Heather Dunkley who had finished her first year of training as a nurse at Charing Cross hospital. I was just about to start my nursing training and we decided we would go to the dance. As soon as David saw me he came over to dance and his face lit up when I remembered his name. I took him back to Heather and we stood chatting until someone asked her to dance. She brought him back to introduce him to us as Jim Hilton and we made up a foursome for the rest of the evening. Not just that evening either. Heather married Jim 3 years later and I married David 4 years later and we have been friends ever since. It was not until nearly 50 years later that Jim told me that he had meant to go to a different dance hall but got on the wrong bus and ended up at the Cranbrook Hall, and met Heather! The rest, as they say, is history!

Nursing experiences

I had never intended to be a nurse. At the age of 10 my school teacher Mr Malyon at Christchurch school asked our class what we wanted to be when we grew up. I told him I wanted to be a teacher and his face lit up in a smile. At high school I did not think I was clever enough so when I left Woodford County High school and my friend Janet Clements was going to Walthamstow Technical college I went too and did a secretarial course before working as a secretary at Nestle's in London. However, after nearly 2 years I really disliked shorthand and typing and my friend Heather suggested I try nursing.

I applied to Charing Cross hospital in London, where Heather had worked for over a year, and I was accepted. Heather had explained that there was a 3 month preliminary training course and I could always leave if I did not like it, but right from the beginning I really loved being with the patients and knew that nursing was what I wanted to do. Our pay was about a third of what I had earned as a secretary and my parents were not at all happy about that especially since they had kept me financially until I was 18 before starting work, and now I was living away from home and did not contribute to the housekeeping. My father was in his early 60's when I started work as a secretary at the Nestle company in London and I remember he was paid very little more than I was which must have been difficult for my parents to accept - and then when I gave it all up they thought I was being irresponsible.

It was extremely hard work because the sisters in charge of the wards had come through the depressed 1930's and the dangers of World War 2 and were very strict with all the nurses. There were other hospitals attached to the Charing Cross group, and I spent many months at the country hospital of Mount Vernon. It was still a Charing Cross ward I was working on but the discipline was just a little easier. I

found night duty the most difficult because I could never sleep much in the day time. Right from the beginning I made friends with Pauline Potter, Carolyn Blissett and Barbara Elkington and we all kept in touch even to this day, except for Barbara who we lost touch with after we all left the hospital.

While working in Charing Cross hospital in London we were able to pick up free tickets from the nurses' home to go to a show and David and I went to a few, but I was so tired after nursing all day that I did not go to many shows and regret that now. We often had to work split shifts where we worked during the busy mornings of dressings and baths, then had the afternoon off when visitors were there, and back on duty for the busy evenings of patient care and settling them down for sleep. We had one day off each week with a half day off before that. Usually we were off for the morning after our day off so it made it 48 hours and I was able to go home to my parents' home in Ilford. That was usually when I would see David, but he also came to London as well sometimes. We did not go out for long in the evenings because the strict rules at the nurses' home insisted that we had to be in by 10 pm unless we had a late pass in which case it was 11 pm. There was a hall porter to check that we did that.

Nurse training was very different from today where nurses learn in a college and hardly ever look after patients in a hospital, and even then have a tutor alongside them. We were the low-paid nurses who did menial work on the wards for our first year, but it meant we got to know the patients well and learned how to talk to people. Even in our 3 month Prelim course at Highwood House in Mill Hill, we went to the hospital one day a week, wearing purple dresses so everyone could recognise us as knowing nothing, and were mostly only allowed to do cleaning. The wards were old and large with about 30 beds in each, and no small rooms. We had to take a bowl of soapy water from patient to patient and clean their lockers. It does not sound very important, and it wasn't, but was one step better than cleaning bedpans, but in

this way we got to know each patient, their illness and worries. We were expected to know the name, diagnosis and treatment of each of those 30 patients. Every 3 months we had what we called Study Block. This meant we had between 3 and 6 weeks in the school room. We looked forward to these times because we met up again with our original set of nurses.

Other than these Block times, we had to do all our studying in our own time which was not easy after working long hours. I don't think you could do what we did unless you really loved nursing. We made lots of mistakes but looked after each other so those mistakes were not too traumatic. Also, because the wards were large and the patients often stayed in hospital several days and often weeks, much longer than now, they got to know the routine and told us about any mistakes we were making, or other patients who needed attention.

I did not enjoy my time at Fulham Hospital because I was assigned to do geriatric nursing for 3 months. What that really meant was that we changed wet beds, bathed patients, sat them in chairs, spoon-fed them, then got them back into bed a few hours later. The new Charing Cross hospital was being built at this time in the grounds of Fulham hospital, so money was put into that and not much allocated for the geriatric ward, which included clean laundry. We just had to make do with the most basic amount of laundry so when patients wet the bed we could only move the wet part of the sheet out to the side of the bed to allow it to dry, while pulling a dry part under the patient. One day a patient fell out of bed while I was with someone else. She kept crying and calling to me to get her back into bed. I was the only nurse there so I lifted her all by myself back on to the bed. I really don't know how I managed it as she weighed twice as much as I did. The next day I could not stand up straight and was sent to the nurses' clinic. The doctor simply told me to bend over forwards, backwards and sideways and when it was seen that I could do all that, he sent me back on duty. I

have had chronic back pain in the 55 years ever since.

While working at Charing Cross hospital we lived in the nurses' home near Hampstead and travelled about 10 minutes by tube train to the hospital. We usually travelled together not only because we had the same hours, but also for safety. When we went on night duty we had to walk from the tube station through the 'red light' area of London's Leicester Square. People called out to us such things as "Have a good night" and it was all very friendly because they knew we were the nurses who would look after them when they were injured or ill. We learned to look after all types of people and not question their way of earning money.

Towards the end of my 3rd year I thought I would like to do midwifery training but David wanted to get married. In reality he had been ready to get married soon after he met me as he had already served 2 years compulsory 'call-up' in the British Army, but I was enjoying the freedom of living at the nurses' home with other girls my own age where there was always somebody to go somewhere with. I did not want to get married so David said if I could not make up my mind then he would travel. I thought he meant he would go on holiday to Spain or somewhere - not New Zealand! David worked as a photocopy machine engineer in offices around London. He happened to be working in New Zealand house one day and asked how to emigrate to New Zealand. He was told to go down the road to the New Zealand shipping line office and ask if they had any berths available on a ship. He was told they had a cancellation and he had 48 hours to decide and pay for it. He decided to go and it was a huge shock to me and even bigger shock to his parents and mine. David left about a month later in early October 1965.

Immediately I missed him and wished he had not gone. His friends were all kind to me and invited me to go out in a group with them. They were more like brothers to me but one, who was David's best friend John Kiss, took me out for the day occasionally on my own and I thought he was

wonderful. If he had asked me to marry him I would have had no hesitation but he never did. In those days there was a strict code of ethics that meant John would not take advantage of David being away, so I never knew if he had romantic feelings for me like I did for him.

By this time David had already decided to come back to England late 1966 and we were to get married and return immediately to New Zealand where he had bought a tiny one-bedroom house at 19 Whau Street, Brooklyn, Wellington. He had quickly realised that there was no sense paying money for rent when that money could go into buying a house. He got the house cheaper than usual because it was built into a steep hillside and the previous owner had painted it strange colours. He painted the ceilings dark blue, the floors dark green, and the walls in different shades of yellow, pale blue and red. The bathroom was dark green and it was like going into a tunnel. When we lived there for 3 years I hated it the whole time although it was not so bad once we painted it all light colours.

While David was in New Zealand I took my nursing finals. We had to sit hospital finals first and I failed that on my first attempt. Then came State finals and I passed that. I think I had gained confidence by then and passed hospital finals on my next attempt. I was working on Casualty which is now called the Emergency Department. The other nurses and doctors were very happy I passed and very encouraging. I think I lacked confidence a lot from my upbringing of never having been told I had done well at something, and when other people I worked with told me I had done well I blossomed.

In my last year while David was in New Zealand, and while we planned our wedding by airmail, I lived at David's parents' home at 57 Prugel Street, Plaistow, London.

Every evening when I came off duty David's father met me at Plaistow station and taught me how to drive the car back to

their house. It was only about a 5 minute drive but doing it every day gave me the practice I needed and I learned quickly. I passed my driving test first time and David's parents were really pleased, especially as we were all keeping it a secret from David who was amazed when he returned to England and found me able to drive around London.

On my day off I still went back to my parents' home. My sister Hazel had got married the year before to Bob Smith and my brother David married my friend Rosemary Webb the year before that so the house was a bit empty and my parents and my brother John were glad to see me when I went home. Also there was all the excitement of planning another wedding. I was excited but also nervous about moving to the other side of the world. I knew almost nothing about New Zealand, and wondered what sort of houses they lived in, or if they still wore grass skirts!

I had almost finished my final year as a staff nurse at Charing Cross hospital and was proud to wear the distinctive hospital badge. This was a bronze medal in the shape of a cross attached to a short navy and red ribbon and was pinned to our dress at the neck. We also wore a navy belt which signified we had passed our exams and were a State Registered Nurse. Apparently, Queen Victoria had given permission for an army cannon to be melted down to make the medals because Charing Cross hospital had looked after one of her army officers who may have been a colonel. I am sure metal from the original cannon had long since run out by the time they got to my medal and I wonder who the favourite officer was but it is nice to know these traditions.

Wedding

Our wedding plans were made by airletters to get married on 26 November 1966. As I write this it is 26 November 2019 and 53 years since our wedding day. David returned to

England only 2 weeks before the wedding which did not give us much time to get to know each other again before getting married. I look back on that as one of the most stupid mistakes we made. I felt like I was just a parcel or some groceries David had come back to collect and then he would be off again. Now I understand that after David had lived in New Zealand for a year he knew there was no other place he wanted to live but I had no idea what I was going to. Also I knew that David had changed while being away. He had made decisions about finding a job, buying a house in Wellington, furnishing it from second-hand auctions and a lot more experiences that a couple would normally make together.

When David arrived back in England to get married he just wanted to get that over and done with and get back to New Zealand. I felt overwhelmed by the thought of it all and remember saying so to my friend Carolyn who was horrified and advised me not to get married if that was how I felt, but how could I call off the wedding? It was only a few days away and then I had to go across the world and not see my family and friends again, maybe never again.

A month or so before our wedding I had gone to the local hospital a mile from my parents' home for advice about contraception. After the nurses had poked and prodded me I was so sore I could hardly stand up. I asked them if that was what it was going to be like when I got married and saw the look of shame on their faces when they realised I had no idea about it and they should have been a lot more gentle with me. I could hardly walk home and was dreading getting married for that reason.

Another fear I had to live with was having been trapped in an underground tube train on my own late at night with a man who I thought was going to attack me. As nurses we usually travelled together but I had to go back on the train to the nurses' home on my own that night because I was the senior nurse and had to stay behind to work with the night nurses

before I could go off duty. The man had black glittering eyes and he looked at me with hate as if he wanted to kill me. He already had his trousers undone ready for me. I was so scared I did not know what to do and kept very still so as not to antagonise him. As soon the train got to my station I bolted from the train and ran all the way to the nurses' home crying with fright. For the next 20 years or so I often woke up in the middle of the night trying to get away from that nightmare.

By late 1966 I had sewn my wedding dress myself, my going-away dress and coat, and my mother's dress and matching coat. My bridesmaids Margaret Rea and Heather Humphrey had their red velvet dresses sewn by Heather's mother. My mother had planned the food for the wedding and David's parents were organising drinks for the wedding because they wanted alcohol which we, in the Baptist church, did not drink. David's father decided to give us his van as a wedding present and ship it to New Zealand. We just needed the bridegroom to return to England.

There was a great worry because David had been working on the wharves in Wellington to save the money for his fare and mine. There was no way I could save that amount on the very low nurses' pay. He was helping unload huge concrete slabs from the hold of a ship when one started to sway. Not being experienced in that work he put out his hand to steady the concrete slab and it dragged him backwards and slammed his arm against the side of the ship, breaking his wrist. Having no work meant no money coming in but fortunately David had booked and paid for our fares by ship before the accident.

Eventually the day arrived when David returned to England. I travelled by train to Southampton docks to meet him. I was so excited but when David arrived his first words were nothing romantic, no big hug or kiss, only, See that porter over there, watch him for me because he's got all my luggage! Having travelled a lot myself now, I realise there is a lot to

think of when arriving, but if only there had been a sign of David being glad to see me, it would have made all the difference. I felt like I was just another part of the luggage to be picked up from England and taken back to New Zealand.

Suddenly, I knew what I had tried not to think about all the time David was away, that we did not really know each other as well as we thought - but in reality who does know the person they marry? Before the wedding it is all romance and after the wedding it is all tough challenges to cope with. I was in love with the idea of a wedding, not in love with David. I have often thought about it since but don't know what else we could have done except to get married.

The wedding was all arranged and even more than that, David had saved up huge amounts of money to come back to England and then pay for himself and me to go back to New Zealand. It was all arranged - not just the wedding but the fares as well. David's parents had got to know my parents during that year, and got on well together.

One day I made a comment about maybe I would not get married after all, and David's mother told me in no uncertain terms that she did not want her son to be hurt. I had agreed a year beforehand to get married and there was nothing else I could think of doing but to get married. We had 2 weeks to get to know each other again after a year apart, before the wedding day arrived. That was at the end of November so it was a cold damp day but did not rain while the photos were taken outside the church.

Our wedding at 11 am at Ashurst Drive Baptist church which I had grown up in, was a happy occasion with many people wanting to make it a lovely day for us, and it was. As my father escorted me into the church Mr Holt who I had known since I was a little girl played my favourite Solemn Melody by Walford Davies on the organ. My mother went to enormous effort to make all the tables look spectacular with salads and bread rolls, fruit salad and trifle and she made a 3 tier

wedding cake as well.

I think there were about 120 guests so my mother and her helpers worked hard to make it a successful occasion. David's parents supplied the drinks because as a family we did not drink alcohol. David's parents also bought a van for us to have shipped to New Zealand so we would have our own transport.

David and I left the reception at about 7 pm to drive to Oxford for 3 days and were followed for many miles by my brothers David and John and David's wife Rosemary who had put a fish under the bonnet of the car and expected the smell to waft back into where we were sitting. It didn't so they stopped, explained, and drove home, leaving us to drive on to the boarding house we were to stay in.

We did not arrive until after 10 pm very tired after a long day. The woman who ran the boarding house was not very welcoming and explained that we would not be able to have much hot water for baths, and would have to put money in the meter to have a heater in our bedroom. Breakfast was for an hour in the morning and we would have to go out for the rest of the day.

We then discovered that Rosemary had put confetti in our suitcases but afterwards had locked the suitcases that had not been locked and we did not have a key to them. So the nice clothes I had looked forward to wearing were locked up until the Monday when we were able to go to a locksmith's shop in Oxford and get him to open the suitcases, which he did suspiciously, obviously wondering if they were stolen. We also had to go and buy another wedding ring because my finger was swollen from the tight ring, so we went to a store to buy a larger cheap ring and again were met with suspicion as to why we wanted a ring. Eventually we returned to the jeweller and bought a larger ring which was the 3rd one I had in about 2 weeks.

Being in Oxford in the middle of England in late November

the weather was cold. The boarding house was cold because we had very little money for the heater. David had returned to England with almost no money after paying for our shipping fares, and I had no money on low nurse's pay after paying what I could towards the wedding.

When we had breakfast we ate as much as we could of the egg and toast on our own table, then waited until the other guests had left the room and took toast from their tables to last us through the day. I had already paid for the bed and breakfast when I booked it, but we had to go hungry through the day until we could get a cheap meal in the evening. Romantic it was not!

None of our time there was romantic which is sad to look back on. At night I was petrified of pain, David promised he would not hurt me but we were both so inexperienced it was a disaster. I wish we had both known more but at the same time I am glad we had both not been with anybody else before we got married. Over 50 years later this must all sound strange to a generation who have so much knowledge and experience, but many young people of my generation did not have that. Even worse was that a few weeks later, when we were on the ship, as the weather got warmer near the equator, they took the doors off the cabins and just had a curtain, so there was no privacy at all.

I have never spoken about all this to my family, certainly not written about it, but now I am near the end part of my life it might explain some things to my sons. I don't want them to think that David and I were always unhappy. We were happy a lot of the time, but had what I think was a disastrous start to our marriage and I cried myself to sleep most nights for the first 2 years. Not good for me and not good for David. The first year of our marriage was overshadowed by great lack of money, in fact, apart from the time after the first 2 years and for the next 8 years while David worked at Xerox, all our marriage was overshadowed by great lack of money.

First years in New Zealand

David had injured his wrist before returning to England to get married so was not able to work as an engineer when we arrived in New Zealand. He had been working on the shipping wharves to save money for our fares. When assisting with unloading huge concrete beams he got dragged backwards by the crane and his arm was smashed against the side of the ship's hold. David got a job selling shares to people who wanted to buy a house but he was not good at it and a year later we had to pay back all the money he had been paid.

It took several weeks to get my British nursing registration approved in New Zealand by airmail, completely different from how long it would take today with the internet. So I could not work in a hospital for over 2 months.

We lived on low-cost food including a lot of vegetables and bread. I used to go to the butcher in Newtown, Wellington and ask for sausagemeat which was the cheapest thing to buy. Then I would also ask for bones for the dog. We did not have a dog. We were the dog. I boiled the bones for a long time and scraped the meat off. This was our meals for several days along with potatoes, carrots and cabbage. I hear people nowadays speak about the difficulties of managing on a low income, and I think, You have no idea!

In April 1967 I got a job as staff-nurse in Wellington hospital Outpatients. As I had been a staff nurse for over a year I was called staff-sister or simply Sister Redmond, so when much later I joined the church I was quite used to being called Sister Redmond. I made friends with the other staff nurses and enjoyed working there but about 2 months later I discovered a lump in my breast. I talked to the other nurses about it and they insisted I go to a surgeon.

After x-rays and extensive examinations I was told it was not breast cancer but I probably would not be able to have babies because I had something wrong with my ovaries. I did not like to ask the surgeon to explain in detail and never knew the extent of the condition but it was probably polycystic ovaries. In those days you did not ask questions like we have got used to doing today.

My family doctor advised me to adopt a baby but I kept hoping a baby would happen naturally. A month later in August, David was sent to Auckland with Rank Xerox which was a photocopy company he had joined recently. The course was for 3 months so we rented a flat in Remuera, Auckland and I got a job in a children's wear shop. Again I made friends with the people I worked with but did not dare tell them I was there for only 3 months so could not feel very relaxed about the situation.

Back in Wellington in early December I did not feel well, very tired, with large red blotchy rashes on my legs. I assumed I was allergic to some insect bites. In January 1968 I was diagnosed with Erythema Nodosum (the red lumps) caused by Sarcoidosis which affected my lungs. There was no cure and my doctor said, You are a nurse, you know all about bed rest, go home and do bed rest. That was all the advice I got. I was often scared I could not breathe and would lean out of the window to get more air. As this was the upstairs window it was more likely I would die from falling out than not being able to breathe.

Around this time, mid 1968, David was paid compensation money for the injury to his wrist which happened when he had worked on the wharves in 1966. He invested the money in the down-payment for a house and for a flat in Wellington. He let them to tenants so they would pay the mortgage. In theory it should have been a good investment but did not work out that way in practice.

David had to go to Auckland for another training course for 3

weeks with his Xerox photocopier job. As I had been ill and we now had a golden labrador dog named Honey I stayed at home while David went away.

I was really nervous about being on my own and driving the van so we went for a practice run near Wellington airport as there was a road there that was hardly ever used. I was so worried I was in tears and could not see the road clearly and took the bend too fast and tipped the whole van right over. I thought David would be furious but he just wanted to make sure I was not injured. It was actually our dog who looked at me as if to ask, What on earth do you think you are doing? Three men ran to help us and they got the car upright again and to our amazement we were able to drive it to a garage for repairs.

After David had left for Auckland I had to deal with all the insurance claims but then something worse happened. The students renting the house had not paid their rent so a neighbour of ours went with me to see what was happening. He would not let me go on my own which I was glad of because we discovered them in bed in the late afternoon after what looked like the aftermath of a lot of parties. The house was wrecked and filthy. My neighbour evicted them there and then and they packed and left immediately.

I spent the whole week each day going there to clean it. I had to get a plumber to put in a new toilet because the existing one had been broken in half. I felt so ashamed asking the plumber to deal with it because the broken toilet was covered in diarrhoea and vomit. With no toilet the tenants had used milk bottles and these were all lined up on the front lawn. I had to take up all the carpets and drag them outside to be taken away by a rubbish remover. After cleaning the whole house right through I had to get new carpets and then find more tenants. Needless to say, I lost a lot of weight during this time because it was not long after my illness with Sarcoidosis. It's a wonder I was not ill again.

I was away from nursing for a year and when I returned I discovered there had been 6 cases of it admitted to Wellington hospital and one person had died. I am glad I did not know then how serious it was but it has flared up many times over the years causing great tiredness and the only treatment I knew was bed rest.

After returning from Auckland I got a job in a dress fabric shop called Fyffes in the main city of Wellington. I enjoyed working there but had to leave after a few weeks when I was ill with Sarcoidosis. When I was well enough though about 6 months later I returned to the shop part-time to cover the busy lunch hours.

I missed nursing so left the shop and worked in a Catholic Mercy hospital geriatric unit and then in a rest home. I returned to nursing in Mercy hospital before we moved to Feilding 16 March 1970 after which I worked as a nurse for a local GP Doctor Winton Barnes for a year.

David had asked Xerox for a transfer out of Wellington because we wanted to live in a smaller town than Wellington. He drove around the Manawatu area going to offices to repair their Xerox photocopier machines and thoroughly enjoyed his work.

Working in the local doctor's surgery I got to know many people in Feilding but a year later while at work I had a phone call that changed my life. It was from the Social Welfare department saying our baby boy had been born in Wellington hospital and we could go there the next day to see him. Previously they had said it would probably be a year before we were able to adopt a baby, but it had only been a week since we had received our letter of acceptance on to the waiting list.

To say we were in a spin is to put it mildly. I left work immediately, that day, to get our home ready for our new baby. People were very kind and excited that our baby had arrived. I had no baby clothes so the doctor's wife Pam

brought to our house 2 suitcases of baby clothes and we went on from there. So that is how our life went. It is a very long time ago now but the memories are still as fresh as when they happened.

Life in New Zealand

The first part was written by Olive for Craig on his mission to Taiwan in 1994 at his request so he could use some of it with investigators. In March 2005 I extended the writing to form a life story, adding items from our Family Books, Book of Remembrance and talks given at church. Obviously, the observations of life are from my point of view but I have tried to be as fair as possible. I hope it will help our sons and their families, as Moroni said in Mormon 9.31, "To be more wise than we have been."

One of the greatest influences leading us to join the church was our son Owen. Soon after our marriage I had been told I probably could not have children and we should adopt. I had Sarcoidosis in 1968, an auto-immune disease for which there is no cure, and inability to have babies is a possibility. We adopted Owen who came to our home on 28 May 1971 aged 20 days. Few babies have been welcomed with more love than we gave to Owen. We wanted to do our very best for him. We wanted to find the right church to take him to. For over a year in 1970 and 1971 we had gone to all the different churches we could find in Feilding but were not entirely satisfied. The people were very welcoming and we made several good friends, but found we were not learning and progressing.

18 November 1971

At 10.30am, 2 missionary Elders knocked on our door. As I was just taking Owen to the doctor for his first injection at 11am, I was in a hurry and asked them to call back another day. They asked if they could visit when David was at home too. I was impressed that they wanted David there, as I had previously met book salesmen at the door who preferred to

talk to the woman on her own as it is easier to sell something that way.

The following Saturday Elder Call and Elder Tryon explained about the restoration of the gospel to us and invited us to church the next day. We agreed to go once as we had been to all the other churches at least once and had settled with the Methodists and Presbyterians. We told the Elders that would probably be the only time we would go to their church. We were impressed with the friendliness and sincerity of the people there. They showed great kindness to baby Owen picking him up and talking to him and he smiled continually, which was unusual as he was usually wary of strangers.

Instead of going to church only once, we continued going every week. The Methodist Minister tried to persuade us not to become involved with the Mormons, but eventually accepted our decision reluctantly.

About 6 months later in May 1972 I was asked to teach in Primary and 3 months after that David was asked to teach a Sunday School class of 12 and 13 year olds about the Book of Mormon. It was very unusual to be given callings as we were not baptised members of the church, and have never found anyone since that this has happened to, but it was the right way for David and me to learn. David and I, wanting to be honest, decided we would not teach anything we did not believe in, but found as we taught these lessons step by step we understood the principles we were learning, and could accept them. David's lessons were about the Bible at first, but very soon changed to be all on the Book of Mormon and teaching this class was the main influence in David finding out for himself that the Book of Mormon is true.

We still had the missionary Elders visiting us most weeks to give one of the teaching discussions but found a lot of repetition as new Elders came into the area and did not know what the previous missionaries had taught us.

I was going regularly to Relief Society Homemaking and

David went to Priesthood meetings. We had become good friends with the Branch President Bill Papple and his wife Rose, also with Roger and Roni Conners and several others in the Branch. We felt very much at home there but were still not baptised. David did not feel he was ready and I wanted to wait for David. The Elders often asked us to set a baptismal date but we always declined.

20 November 1972

Just after David had gone to work at 8:30am, 18 month old Owen suddenly vomited everywhere, projectile vomiting which indicated a serious acute illness. Then he started screaming and writhing in pain. I could not pick him up out of his cot as he could not bear to be touched. Nothing seemed to help. Owen would scream with intense abdominal pain and then sink back pale and exhausted for a few minutes till the next wave of pain would come. As a trained nurse I knew that this could indicate an abdominal obstruction and the only treatment I knew for this was an operation.

After about half an hour of this terrible pain Owen was clearly exhausted and had a grey look to his skin. I was really scared he would die and did not know what to do. I went to the phone but did not feel to phone our doctor, and later discovered he was away in Australia.

Instead I phoned a friend at church, Roni Conners. I explained to her how ill Owen looked and said, "I don't know what I want, but I know it's when people come to say a special prayer for someone, and I don't know what it's called." She said it was called a blessing and she would ask her husband Roger to bring Brother Abe Wi Te Oka, who was my friend Noeline's father, to assist him in giving Owen a Priesthood blessing.

They arrived 40 minutes later and gave Owen a blessing

while he sat limp and exhausted on my lap. Owen was told that our Heavenly Father is very mindful of him and loves him and does not want him to be ill. Also that I would be able to stop worrying about him. Then they went home leaving me sitting in the rocking chair, holding Owen, very quiet and subdued.

Within 5 minutes of his blessing Owen suddenly looked up at me and gave me the most beautiful smile. Then he slid off my lap, ran to his toy box and started pulling his toys out and running to show me each one. I watched in fascination as he ran backwards and forwards across the room, laughing and so completely well and overjoyed. This continued for 2 hours and as a nurse I could find no explanation of how someone previously so ill could have so much energy only a few minutes later.

But that was not all. The thing I remember the most from this, many years later, was the look on Owen's face. It was the look of complete joy in living. His whole being was radiant. Even the room felt as though it was filled with sunshine. I just sat and watched Owen for 2 hours, fascinated. Everything else I might have done was secondary. All I wanted was to see and feel that radiance. That was probably the first time I felt the Spirit, but did not know then what it was. It was also the first time I saw the wonderful spirit that is in Owen, but again, did not know enough about the gospel to understand much about it.

A few weeks after this I decided I did not want to wait any longer for David to decide about baptism and on 31 January 1973 I was baptised by Bill Papple at the Palmerston North Chapel. This was done more as an act of obedience to the teachings of the gospel than through a testimony of the truthfulness of the Book of Mormon. I always seemed to have so many questions about the church, and as soon as one question was answered, there was another question to take its place.

In fact it was to be 20 years before I studied the Book of Mormon enough to know for myself that it is true, even though I had read it all through 5 or 6 times before that, and prayed sincerely about it. I have often wished that it had not taken 20 years which is such a large part of anyone's life time, but from the perspective of eternity, 20 years is nothing. However, despite my lack of knowledge, I always lived the very best I could as a faithful Latter-day Saint.

I have always found that when we are obedient to the Lord we are blessed, and within a few months of my baptism I was blessed to have the baby I did not think I could have. We were about to apply to adopt another baby, but found I was pregnant, and on 24 November 1973 our second son Craig was born to us, bringing us much joy and happiness.

LaVerle and Pearletta Hendrickson came from Utah in 1973 on a Mission, and he was made Branch President. During their 18 months in Feilding they got to know the less-active members, especially the 4 older Kereama brothers, Alf, Harold, Russell and Michael, who were all recently married, and the Hendricksons "loved" them into coming back to church. The brothers brought their wives and later on children, and so the little Branch began to grow. The Hendricksons were in their 70's and never grumbled or criticised anyone, but always spoke well of people. I think it was mainly because of them that David was eventually baptised at the end of 1973 after going to church for over 2 years.

21 December 1974

David was confirmed by President Hendrickson, immediately after being baptised by missionary Elder Michael Dallas whose companion was Elder Mark Harris. Michael Dallas came from Hamilton and we later got to know his mother Jackie. About 15 months later we made a 6

week visit to England to see our family, stopping on the way in the Salt Lake area, and stayed for a week at the home of Elder Harris's parents.

27 July 1975

David was ordained to the Melchizedek Priesthood by Bill Papple, and was called as the first Elders' Quorum President Feilding had ever had. His main aim was to encourage the brethren to build the new chapel in Feilding which was completed in June 1977. Later David was called as a District Councilman and then as Stake Executive Secretary.

David was the first Elders' Quorum President Feilding ever had. Our first question was, "What's an Elders' Quorum President?" We were both interviewed together, for David to have the calling, and for me to support him, because they knew it was going to involve David being away from home for long hours organising the men to build the Feilding chapel. We had no idea what an Elders' Quorum was because we didn't have one in Feilding. The men just all met together for Priesthood, as there were only about 4 of them! When we first went there 4 years before at the end of 1971, there was just Bill Papple, Branch President, old Abe Wi Te Oka, Vic Gray and a couple of men based at Ohakea Airforce Base, who came to church when their shifts allowed. One of them was Ken Dell and his wife Viven, and their 2 little girls. There weren't many more women than that either! Just Ami Manuriki, Glynn Garland, Nancy Kereama, Adele Minchin, Rose Papple and Kay Gray. In 1972 Roger and Roni Connors and their 7 children were sent from Utah to set up Seminary in the south-of-Auckland areas of the North Island that didn't have it, and that swelled our numbers, especially with the children, in fact that's when the Branch Presidency started Primary mid 1972. That's when another of our questions was, "What's Primary?".

There is a principle that, "if the homework doesn't have to be handed in and graded, it usually doesn't get done," when David was Elders' Quorum President he had to find out from scratch how to do the calling, read the handbooks, and found he was to interview every Home Teacher every month. So he did. The Home Teaching began to be done, and the Branch kept on growing. Soon the new chapel was built, and then an extension had to be added, and the Branch became a Ward. Over the 25 years or so since then David was the only Elders' Quorum President we have known who has consistently interviewed every Home Teacher every month. The emphasis has to be on the word 'every'. I am convinced it makes a big difference, and is one of the main reasons why Home Teaching doesn't get done. People need to be acknowledged, and during that interview they are made to feel that they are really making a difference in the lives of those they visit. Of course, if you can have a few activities for the Home Teachers every so often that helps to bind them together as well, especially if there is food involved.

A year after David's baptism we visited our Stake Patriarch, President Keith Harrison in Wellington, for our Patriarchal blessings. From there we knew we were to go to the temple. President Harrison explained to us later that Patriarchs are asked not to suggest that people should go to the temple, but that in our case he felt strongly impressed to do this.

17 April 1976

David and I went to the temple with Owen and Craig, and were sealed to each other for eternity. Our special witnesses were Oliver and Christine Ratajczek, President Harrison and his wife, and Michael Dallas who had just finished his mission and lived in Temple View. Brother Joseph Hapi performed the sealing ceremony. Just as we were leaving to drive to the temple David felt in his jacket pocket for the money for the journey and to stay at the temple apartments.

He could not find the money in any pocket or bag so in desperation, the Ratajczeks said they would lend us the money and off we went still worried. Everything went well and when we arrived back home David picked up his jacket and again felt in the pocket and discovered there was a double pocket which he did not know about and the money was all there. We had travelled on faith. In my Patriarchal Blessing I had also been told that we would have another child born to us after we had been to the temple.

23 February 1978

I was rushed by ambulance to the hospital for an emergency caesarian operation. We were overjoyed when Scott David Redmond was born soon after 6pm. On the 24 February at 1am, after living for only 7 hours, and with me still desperately ill from a massive haemorrhage, Scott died, and our lives were plunged into sorrow.

There are few times in this life more filled with sorrow than standing at the graveside of your child. No matter when it comes, it is always unexpected, and we are never prepared. We surprise ourselves with the depth of our anger, guilt and grief.

However this was not a time only of sadness, but also of great happiness, as we drew together as husband and wife and as a family. Immediately after Scott's death I was surrounded by a feeling of great love. I did not know if it was from our Heavenly Father, or Jesus Christ or the Holy Ghost, but I knew that it was not of this world. It was as though the whole room was filled with sunshine. I only ever saw the room as being a beautiful golden apricot colour whereas when I went back to the hospital a year later I found the walls were actually a dingy, pale blue and badly in need of repainting.

People would come into that hospital room and feel the same

feeling of love that I did. Visitors said they had come to try and cheer me up but had gone home feeling better themselves. Nurses would come, several at a time, quite often to chat with me, or even just to talk to each other. People simply enjoyed being in that room. That is not to say I did not grieve. I cried a lot, but when David was there I knew that if I had my husband's arms around me I could face anything.

When I was on my own I communicated completely with our Heavenly Father. It was thought-to-thought communication, not just what we usually think of as prayer. When you are lying in a hospital bed with an intravenous tube in each arm, pumping blood in fast, an oxygen mask on, drainage tubes in you and a special nurse watching all the time and taking blood-pressure readings every 15 minutes, then the only thing you can do is pray.

The beautiful feeling of love surrounded me completely for 3 days and then over the next 3 weeks it gradually lessened until it had gone. I knew I had experienced knowledge of the next world and I no longer wanted to live in this world. When I visited the temple 2 months later I did not want to leave there and have to return home. David sat outside the temple with me trying to persuade me that life was worth living for. When I crossed the road I would walk slowly hoping to be run over and killed. People reminded me that I had 2 lovely little boys and should be grateful, and I was. How grateful I was for them, but at the same time my whole being screamed to have back the baby who had been snatched away from me. Why had he been sent to me and then taken, when so many women were queuing up for abortions? If he wasn't going to live then why wasn't he sent to them? David explained to me that Scott chose to come to our family as this is the family he wants to be with in eternity. Then I felt the great responsibility of having to teach and keep our family together forever. Never again would I be able to drift along hoping it would all turn out all right.

Sometimes I felt overwhelmed by the responsibility.

While David and I were talking in the sad hours after Scott's death I told him of a strong feeling I had had in the months beforehand that there was something special about the baby I was carrying. I had felt he might be severely disabled, but I never ever thought he would die. I also had a feeling repeatedly that we were to have another child about 15 months afterwards, and I wondered how on earth I would cope with 2 babies, with all the natural tiredness of being in my late thirties. I did have another baby, Fraser who was born 15 months and 3 days after Scott, but of course, then I had only one baby to look after.

About 10 months before Fraser's birth I had another unusual experience. To cope with the grief of Scott's death I had thrown myself into whatever work I could find around the house, painting, sewing, spring-cleaning, washing curtains and blankets, writing our family books. I would get up at 4am unable to sleep any longer and work till I sank into bed at midnight. It was the only way I knew to make myself so tired I would have at least a few hours sleep without the horrifying thoughts that often came into my mind about the disintegration of our little baby's body under the earth in that cold grave. I knew his spirit had soared away as soon as he had died. I knew it was only his body left behind, but none of this helped much. On the cold, dark nights of that winter, I would look out of the window at the moon, and be glad that at least a little light was shining on his grave.

One night about 10pm I was kneeling beside my bed having my prayers. I knew that Heavenly Father wanted me to have another baby. I knew that I and all our family wanted another baby. I had known this for several months, but was not ready for it yet. I prayed, "Not yet Heavenly Father. I will soon, but not yet. I'm still grieving over the last baby. I'm not ready yet. Please not yet."

Then suddenly I felt a person, or a being, come and stand

just behind me to my right. I knew the person was young, in about the mid-twenties. I did not know if it was a young man or a young woman, but I felt great love emanating from that person. It was completely accepting, completely undemanding love. I was not even being asked or persuaded to have this person as a baby, but just shown that this was the person who would come to our family if I agreed to it. I wanted to look and see who it was, but as soon as the thought entered my mind to look, and before my brain could tell my head to turn and look, the person had gone. It had all happened so suddenly but I will never forget the time or the place of that feeling.

Of course, I immediately prayed, "Thy will be done Heavenly Father" and 10 months later Fraser was born. Many times since then, and especially as Fraser grows older, I have recognised in him that same undemanding love and I know that he is the same person who came to me before he was born. The feeling I have often felt from Fraser's spirit is that he is so grateful to me for giving him life on this earth. It makes me feel very humble to know that is all he asked of me, and brings me to tears whenever I think about it.

Many of the important things that have happened in my life have been too special to talk about to most people. When I have tried to do this I have seen a glazed look come over their eyes and I know they do not yet have the understanding of what I am talking about. Most of the times when words of importance have been put into my mind, it has happened while I have been praying or reading the scriptures, but not always. Sometimes it has been while doing mundane work around the house.

One evening while sorting through the washing I was standing over a bucketful of dirty nappies. I was feeling very tired and discouraged and felt that my life seemed to consist only of years and years of cleaning up the unmentionable messes of other people. It seemed a life of drudgery to me, long hours, nothing more than a slave, and I thought, "Why

on earth do we have children?" The thought came clearly, straight into my mind, more like words spoken by a voice, "That they might have life, and have it more abundantly." I was stunned. I nearly dropped the bucket. I had heard those words so clearly. It was not just my imagination, but it was not an "out loud" voice either.

Then a few months later I was walking across the laundry in the daytime and tripped over the pushchair that was left lying across the floor from some game of the children's. I noticed all the toys and junk left lying around. I felt irritable. Tired from working so hard in the home and at church. I thought, "Why do I have to do all this? It's just work, work, work." Immediately the words came clearly into my mind, "To whom much is given much is required." I knew that I had been given many good things in my life and had many abilities and I should not complain about being asked to use these to help other people learn, especially my own children. Again, it was just as clearly as if a voice had spoken those words directly into my mind. I am sorry to say that these two experiences did not stop me complaining in the future - but I repented of it faster.

Owen had a wonderful childhood until he was about 6 years old, then 3 things happened that I think changed his life enormously; David left his work; the Papples moved from Feilding; Scott died. Few children were loved and wanted more than Owen was. I can even see it in photos of him, he has the bloom on his skin of a child who is greatly loved.

Then David left the financial security of his job as a photocopy technician and soon after that our good friends the Papple family moved to Wanganui in January 1978. Owen and Hamish were only 3 months apart in age and had grown up like cousins, seeing each other every few days. Owen was emotionally devastated when Hamish went to live so far away and they could only visit in the school holidays. Owen had always been very close to David who at this time was trying to be successful in insurance selling. David said he

did not have time to spend with Owen, even though he was crying a lot of the time, and he would just have to manage as best he could. I felt resentful of David shutting himself off from his family which forced me to carry a heavier load than I thought I should. Then Scott died and life became even worse than we thought it could be.

Over the years I was the one who told our children to tidy their room, do their homework, finish their chores, and they disliked me for making them do this. Also Owen had to compete with a brother who was younger but taller and doing better academically. By the time Owen reached 11 years of age he was a volatile bundle of anger and shouted at me a lot telling me his 'real mother' would not force him to make his bed or feed the chickens. One night I sat for hours writing a story especially for Owen about his adoption and our worries. Owen read it all through and never said a word about it, but he never shouted at me again after that and was a lot calmer.

When our children were little we had severe financial difficulties. David had left his job as a photocopier technician in December 1976 and wanted to try other types of work, mainly insurance selling, or to own his own businesses such as greengrocery or voucher books, none of which produced any money and we soon went through our savings. It seemed the less successful they were, the more determined David became to do them, and he shut himself away from his family a lot of the time to concentrate on the success that kept eluding him.

Whenever there was no money left and the bills were piling up David took a job for a while as a technician or typewriter mechanic, but we had so little money that life became an enormous strain. We still continued to pay our tithing on whatever David earned and never went without the necessities of life and had some extras as well. I learned to bottle fruit, make ginger beer, bake all our own bread, cakes, biscuits, live a vegetarian or low-meat lifestyle and grow a

vegetable garden. One day I came out of the supermarket with the essential items like flour, butter, sugar, eggs and potatoes but had only 5 cents left in my purse. That taught me that we might not have the luxuries, but would be looked after with the necessities.

Another great difficulty we had for several years was that we were expected not only to help the 3 builders to build the new chapel in Feilding, but pay a percentage of the cost as well. Each family in the Branch was interviewed and asked to pay between \$300 to \$500 which was the mid 1970's equivalent of an average wage for 2 or 3 weeks. On top of being asked for that, in those days, not only did we pay tithing and fast offering, but what was called budget. This was to buy lesson books and pay rent, electricity and general running of the Branch. I think our allocation for the building was \$300 to be saved up over the year, so not only did we have to pay a lot towards the church funds, but our family was already existing on so little money we were desperately in need of every dollar.

We saved the money literally coin by coin. We held cake stalls and sales of work. We baked bread and apple pies and sold them locally. We walked the half hour journey home from town, never taking the bus no matter how tired we all were, and saved the fare. We never bought ice creams or lollies for our children and saved the money instead. Everything seemed to centre around money, or the lack of it. I remember mixing a cake with 3 children helping at the sink bench. One of them broke an egg into the mixture but missed the bowl and instead we all watched helplessly as the egg slid down the plug hole before we could stop it. I was so upset and burst into tears and cried out, "We don't have any more eggs, and that one cost 15 cents."

In 1982 there was enough money saved for the chapel to be free of debt and be dedicated on 20 February. Over the next few years the Branch progressed to become a Ward with a growing number of members so it was decided to extend the

chapel building. A meeting for church members was held in the chapel and the amounts of money needed were detailed in front of us. All of a sudden I felt I had had enough of everything and did not see how I could go on any more. We had survived many years of constant financial worry and hard work, and endured the death of Scott, and I just did not have the strength left in me to take any more. I held on to the seat to stop myself running out of the chapel screaming the words that were going round and round in my head, "You've taken everything we have got. We have no more money. What more do you want? Do you want our blood as well?" As soon as I heard that word in my head, blood, I remembered that was exactly what Jesus Christ had given for me, all of it. That brought me to the depths of humility and I knew I would do whatever was asked of me.

January 1985

David re-sited our house to enable him to use our acre of land to re-site more houses. Eventually there were 8 homes there, including 2 newly built houses. Over the next 9 years we lived in 5 of the re-sited houses which meant a lot of moving of belongings, painting, wallpapering and making furnishings, most of which I helped with as well as working full time as a nurse.

One of the defining moments of my life was when the first house was re-sited which had been our home for 13 years. The movers jacked it up on stilts, drove a huge truck under it, removed the stilts and drove it to its new location at the other end of our acre section. First, though, they had to drive it out onto the street to turn it around. This caused a lot of interest among the neighbours and some even brought chairs out onto the street to watch. All went well as the truck drove the house to the end of the street then proceeded very slowly to turn around and come back. The street sloped very slightly and the truck started to slip. Then the unthinkable happened

as we watched the house slowly dip sideways and it looked as if the whole building would slip off the truck on to the road.

We had been told we did not need to move furnishings or belongings from the house while it was being moved as it was not leaving our area, so we were watching our entire home about to be destroyed in front of us. In that moment I looked around at David, Owen, Craig and Fraser and knew that as long as they were safe and we had each other we had all that mattered. Then as we continued to hold our breath the truck slowly righted itself and drove the house back on to the section to be safely secured in its new position.

August 1985

By August 1985 our financial position was so bad that the Inland Revenue Department did not believe our income amount for the previous year. They said if it was that low we should be on a Benefit. I did not want our family to be dependent on the state, so instead I went out to work as a staff nurse at the Palmerston North Hospital. I worked in the Children's Clinic and always felt that if I had to work anywhere, then there could be no better place than where I could help children, counsel with parents and strengthen families. David worked on renovating houses on our acre of land and became "Mr Mum" and did not like it. He said that housework was the most boring, repetitive, thankless task anyone could do! One day I came home from work and heard him shouting at the boys, "Stop walking on that kitchen floor. Can't you see it's wet. I've just washed it." I knew we had arrived at some understanding!

I had meant to go back nursing for only 6 months but stayed 8 and 1/2 years. David re-sited and re-built houses in this time but due to a legal dispute because of the dishonesty of some neighbours and their lawyer we lost about \$20,000 which at that time was about a quarter of the price of a 3

bedroom home. Our lawyer told us we had right on our side but would never get the people to pay up, as they would plead poverty, so it was better to drop the case. I was sure the worry of it all was making David ill and I pleaded with him to let it go. It takes a strong man to do that and I am glad he did it.

Interestingly, that neighbour had to come in to hospital with her sick child some months later, and I was the nurse assigned to look after them. I knew I could ask another nurse to take over my duties instead, or I could make life uncomfortable for this woman who had been part of us losing so much money, but I decided I had my own standards of integrity and did not need to sink to her level. I treated her and her child politely and kindly and did everything I could for them. Then I noticed her looking at me with tears in her eyes and I knew she was sorry for what she had done.

Being out of the home for 10 hours every day at work and travelling to the hospital brought with it not only such tiredness that I often felt it would kill me, but also much less time to do the things at home that I still wanted to do. I have always had extensive callings in the church, Primary President, Seminary Teacher, Stake Communications Director, Gospel Doctrine Teacher, Ward Historian, and had always been actively involved in our children's schools and on P.T.A committees. I always felt I learned a great deal from these experiences and they made for a more interesting life, and I did not want to give up anything even though I was out at work full time.

1989

One evening in the winter of 1989 I was kneeling praying about how to manage to do all these things and try to write our family books, work on family history, and spend more time with our children, when into my mind came the words, "Well, you've only got a couple of years to do it all in." I was devastated. I thought it meant I was going to die in a couple

of years. The words had been so clear, just like a voice in an ordinary conversation. It didn't say two years, but it was 'a couple of years'. How could anybody cope with knowing she was going to leave her children still very young?

Fraser was only 10 at the time. In 'a couple of years' he would be 12. I remembered the sad song I had heard while teaching Seminary, 'I'll build you a rainbow.' It was about a little boy whose mother died and I could never listen to it without crying. I thought of my friend Ruth in the next street who died when her youngest son was about 12, and the great sadness there. Now it seemed to be happening in our own family.

I did not know what to do and did not feel I could talk to anyone about it - after all it was only a few words - nothing concrete. I told David about it and he said, "The trouble with you is you worry too much. Wait till something definite happens." But I did not want anything definite to happen if it meant illness or death.

For the next two years I felt as though I was waiting for something to happen but did not know what it was. I got our family books and book of remembrance up to date. I started to work on our family history and we did the temple work for our closest ancestors. I felt that if I had to leave this life so soon, I wanted to leave behind a written record, something our children could read later and know me as a person, and not gloss over my weaknesses. It must have been the same feeling Mormon had when, near the end of his life, he wrote, "He hath made manifest unto you our imperfections, that ye may learn to be more wise than we have been."

I wanted to get my life in order. I started to clear out cupboards and give away clothes and other belongings I did not need. If I was going to die, then I did not want a lot of junk for other people to sort out afterwards. There were so many things I wanted to teach my sons. How well I realised that we learn better when we are happy, but we learn quicker

when we are hurt. I knew that I could not make choices for our sons about school subjects, choice of career, whether or not they went on a mission, or who they married, but if I could have only one wish it would be that each son would take his wife to the temple often.

As the two years passed I found to my surprise that I was perfectly all right and alive! I had to go into hospital for some cancer tests but these were all negative. I wondered why I had been told about the 'couple of years'.

Then I realised that it was not about me. It was because I had only a couple of years before our children began to leave home permanently. At the end of 1991 Owen met Gwen and a few weeks later moved to Hastings where they lived for several years. About a month later Craig left for University in Hamilton and then went to Taiwan on a mission. I sometimes wished I had known how to interpret the 'couple of years' but would I have done anything differently? Probably not.

21 March 1991

On the 21 March 1991 I had another spiritual experience that came about through a death. My closest friend, Noeline Cameron-Te Rangi had died following a brain haemorrhage she had suffered 3 weeks previously. I was asked to speak at her funeral. Each morning for 3 days, as I prayed before dashing off to work, it was given to me by inspiration exactly what I was to say in my talk. At the funeral when I stood to give my talk I noticed that the chapel seemed flooded with sunshine and that even though there were about 300 people crowded into the chapel there was not a sound throughout the whole of the talk. I could feel people actively listening

We all stood as the coffin bearers and congregation left the building and I still stayed standing at the front of the chapel.

There was the most beautiful, calm feeling there as though we were part of the sunshine. Nancy Kereama who had conducted the singing was standing next to me and she felt the same feeling. We were the only two people still standing in the whole of the chapel and we did not want to move, even though we knew we must soon go to the cemetery. Nancy turned to me and said, "I don't want to go." I said, "I don't either." It was as though sunshine was flooding in the windows over us. So we continued to stand there a little longer in silence feeling this same beautiful, sunshiney feeling that I recognised was the same feeling I had been surrounded with at the death of Scott. I began to realise that this must be the Holy Ghost. I wondered why it had taken me almost 20 years since first meeting the missionaries before I learned this for myself.

September 1994 - Sacrament talk

Here is a Sacrament meeting talk given by Olive in September 1994 a few months after we had moved to Te Awamutu where most people did not know our family.

I have been asked to talk on how I, as a mother, can sustain my sons as they develop in the Priesthood. The word "sustain" means, support, stand beside, encourage. To me the example of that is when we teach our children to swim, or ride a bike. We stand beside them to support them with our hands, and we encourage them with our words and our presence, until they have the courage to swim or ride on their own. That is what the word encourage means - to give courage.

I am the mother of 4 sons, but you know only one of them in Te Awamutu, and that is Fraser. On the chapel noticeboard you will see the address to write to of another of our sons, Craig, who is a missionary in Taiwan. We support him with letters and prayers, and parcels containing Marmite and

other New Zealand items which cannot be bought in Taiwan. We also support him with money. It costs us over \$100 a week to keep Craig on his mission and in the 16 months he has been there we have NEVER regretted paying this - in fact, looking at it from a financial point of view, I do not know how we have been able to do this, but the way has always been provided for us to do it. It costs about \$20,000 for every missionary you see walking round the streets. Some of that is provided by the church, but most is worked for at great sacrifice by the missionaries and their families. We must not waste that.

We have another son, Owen, who lives in Hastings. When Owen was a teenager he did everything he shouldn't but he is one of the nicest people you could wish to know. Although he does not go to church, he will always welcome the missionaries and other church members into his home to visit, and he does not go against what he was taught as a child. In his Name blessing when he was 2 years old, Owen was told that he would have an enquiring and incisive mind, and be able to understand and search out truth. Also that he would be perceptive and hold together those he holds dear. As we have watched Owen grow up we found this to be so, many times.

Our third son, Scott, did not live long enough to have a Name blessing as he died as a new baby. Although it was over 16 years ago, he is never forgotten in our family, and we know that as our existence does not stop at death, Scott is able to progress in the place where he is now.

Our fourth son, Fraser, you know well. Although he is only 15 years old, I first met him 16 years ago just after the death of Scott. I felt a strong presence standing beside me while I was praying one evening, and knew this was the spirit of someone who wanted to be born into our family. At that time of grieving over the death of our baby I did not think I could cope with having another baby who might die too. But as he stood there, with great love, and completely undemanding, I

knew that I did not want to stop him coming to our family, and prayed to Heavenly Father, "Thy will be done."

About 2 years after Fraser was born I had a very early miscarriage and often felt sad that I would have had 5 children, but now had only 3. However, around that time Owen who was 10 brought home from school his good friend Bruce, who became part of our family and "one of our boys". I valued Bruce's kindness and honesty, his ideas and his willingness to work hard.

I look back over our sons' childhood and realise now the things that were so important in their upbringing. At the time many of the things seemed only little and it was not until later I realised how important they really were. One of the most important things to do is simply to be alongside them. Be there at their music concerts, swimming lessons, gym classes. Become a leader in Cubs, Scouts or Guides. Help at school football and netball. Really get to know your child's school teacher - after all your child spends 6 hours a day with that person who becomes like a second parent to them.

Fraser had problems with deafness and had to have grommets, which are tiny drainage tubes, in his ears so was not allowed to go swimming until he was about 8 years old. He found his swimming lessons difficult and said to me one day, "Mum, when I have to dive into the water, I look at you smiling at me and encouraging me, and I hold a picture of you in my mind as I go under the water, and then I am not scared."

Our children are growing up in a world far tougher than it was 20 years ago, even 10 years ago, and they need to carry pictures of encouragement in their minds. They need to hear the words in their minds, "I love you," "You're wonderful," or "That was great, what you did just then." Say it as soon as they have done something good, and they will want to do that again. Have you noticed how a 4 year old is told what a clever

boy he is when he has done the ugliest, splotchiest painting in the whole playcentre. Yet a few years later he is told he got 4 wrong in his maths or spelling words, not told he got 16 right. So often we say, "Hurry up," "Tidy your bedroom," "Your clothes are a mess," "Work harder," and yet we miss all the good things they are doing because we think that as good parents we must say this to teach them to do better.

We need to see how life is from our child's point of view and we can only do that when we really listen to them. We need to listen, listen, listen, and talk, talk, talk. Even when, as they grow older, they usually want to talk at 1 o'clock in the morning! Craig and I used to talk for hours about anything and everything. One Fast Sunday, when there was not much else to do, we sat in the sunshine on the front doorstep talking. We were still there talking 5 hours later! Often Craig would want to talk late at night when I was so tired after a busy day at work, but now he is gone I would not have missed those times for anything. When Owen phones us it is wonderful just to hear his voice. When Owen, Gwen and Carl come to visit us we cancel whatever else we had planned, and just sit and talk together. There is no more important event than just to be together.

Go to the library together and come home with lots of books and just lie around reading. If your children are watching T.V. watch the programmes with them. How else will you discover what rubbish they may be watching. A good thing to do if you can is to video some programmes in the daytime, so that you can play them back in the evening, instead of the programmes that are not so good.

I have been a Seminary mother for 10 years, since Owen first started to go to Seminary. That means that for 10 years I have got up at 5.30 or 6am to light the fire and warm the clothes, and make the Milo to get our sons on their way to Seminary. Originally, this was when I was working as a mother at home, but for most of the time I have worked full time as a nurse at the hospital as well. I stand by the

principle that I do not ask my children to do something unless I am prepared to do it myself. Remember the saying, "You can't push a rope uphill."

In 1979 President Spencer W Kimball said we should encourage our children to learn another language, especially Mandarin Chinese. This was emphasised again in the 1990's but by the time I heard that, Owen had left home with his friend Bruce to work in a tomato nurseries in Hastings, so I encouraged Craig to learn Mandarin Chinese at university and believe that because he did, it was a major factor in his being chosen to serve a mission in Taiwan. When he finishes his mission he will have more chance of a good job as an interpreter, or teacher of English to the Chinese, or in business with Asians, or to go to China, which is what he really wants to do one day.

Craig was not sent to Provo, USA, to the Language Centre as he had done that year of university Chinese. When he arrived in Taiwan, though, Craig found they spoke and read the older style of Chinese and not the modern Mandarin he had studied. This was really tough on Craig as he had to learn Chinese as well as missionary work when he arrived in Taiwan, but he worked extremely hard to do this, getting up at 4.30am to learn Chinese before starting at 6.30am on his missionary studies. He also made a frame to hold a piece of paper on the front of his bike so he could learn Chinese words as he rode along. He said he was glad he had been sent straight to Taiwan and not to Provo, as he learned the Chinese that is spoken by the people there, right from the start.

Craig was the first New Zealand missionary to be sent to Taiwan for 30 years. Mostly they were from America. The previous person was Hine MacDonald, who Craig did not know then, but met in the Auckland Chinese Branch when he returned from his mission, and she offered him a room to rent extremely cheaply in the attic of her Rest Home. She was like a second mother to Craig, then Owen, then Fraser,

as they all moved to Auckland over the following 3 years.

Craig then encouraged his brother Fraser to learn Chinese and because Fraser would be the only student in the whole school of about 1100 students doing this, I decided to learn Chinese alongside him. That is how it came to be that I embarked on one of the most difficult, frustrating and discouraging experiences of my life, which I can only get through by constantly praying, often in tears, asking Heavenly Father to help me.

I wish Owen had been able to learn another language. As he is so good with people, I am sure he would be good at languages too. I am proud of the fact that Owen wants to progress in his life now, and this year has done some extra-mural papers at university. Owen recently cracked two bones in his spine when he fell from a tree he was chainsawing and is on ACC but even so he is trying to support himself and get off a benefit. Owen learned early in life to help himself to be independent. At the age of 12 he went round the streets with a barrow, selling bananas and vegetables that his father bought for him at the market. In that way he raised all his own money to attend a Scout Jamboree which cost about a week's wages.

I value my sons and am grateful they are such lovely people. They have many talents and abilities and have worked hard for their achievements. Owen was the top runner in athletics at his school, Craig was top in art and economics and Fraser has been top in maths. But all this did not happen overnight. A businessman who got to know Craig just before he went on his mission said to me one day, "What a wonderful boy you have there. I'd give 10 years of my life for a son like that." I smiled at him and said, "Thank you, but it took twice as long as that to achieve it." He looked startled for a moment as he realised what I had said, then smiled and said, "Yes, I'm sure it did, but it was certainly worth it."

For those people struggling to teach young children, I can

only encourage you to continue to teach what you believe. What I want most in life is to be a wife to my husband and for us together to be parents to our children. This has not been easy for us. In fact I will probably never tell you how much difficulty we have had in our lives, but you can be assured we know about it from experience. A highlight of our lives has been as we have gone to the temple with Owen, then Craig, then Fraser, as they have reached the age of 12 years. Our children know that if I were ever allowed to ask only one thing of them in their life, it would be "Take your wife to the temple often."

26 March, 1993

On Friday, 26 March, 1993 Craig entered the Missionary Training Centre as a missionary. He travelled to Hamilton with Heather Johansson and her daughter Clare who were visiting Owen Hutchison for his 19th birthday. Owen Hutchison had been Craig's room-mate in the dorms at Church College for the past year and he and Clare got married a few months after this. Before Craig left on this exciting, but sad day, he spent time with each of the 3 of us, as Owen was not living at home by then, and we had a family prayer together. Craig said the prayer, and during it he said -

I am thankful for my Dad and for all that he has done to help bring me to this time of my life. I pray that he will be able to do the work he is starting out in carpet cleaning and that he will have success in it.

I am thankful for ... here Craig started to cry and we waited for him to be able to get the words out. We thought that as he had just mentioned his father he would next mention his mother, but he did not. He went on to say ...

I am thankful for my brother Fraser and for all the times we have been able to share. I pray that I will be able to learn to

be more patient like he is. I am thankful for the great ability that he has, and pray that he will be able to motivate himself to make the most of all his ability.

During this part of Craig's prayer we all felt a light shining on us. It grew gradually stronger and we felt its warmth. After the prayer we all spoke about this and said it had been like the sun shining on us, but when we went to the window and looked at the sky, we found it was a mass of grey clouds.

Then Craig said I am thankful for my Mum and for all that she has done for me and all her hard work. I pray that she will be able to go on hanging on, and that she will be able to have the help that she needs.

I am thankful for my brother Owen and pray that one day he will want to return to church and find the teachings of the gospel, but this will only be brought about by love. I know Owen believes in Jesus Christ and am thankful for this.

In March 1994 Craig wrote to Olive from his mission - According to my righteousness and hard work, I will be privileged to work together with my brother Scott in my work as a missionary. I prayed about this in the temple and know it is true.

18 December, 1997

David, Olive, Owen, Craig and Fraser all attended baptisms at the temple with other Young Single Adults from Mount Roskill Stake, Auckland. It was such a lovely occasion for all of us to be together in the temple for the first time ever. While chaperoning the young sisters Olive sat next to Celeste Anderton and got chatting. A few months later when Celeste and Glen McCracken got married Olive sent them a wedding card with a short note on marriage which became the basis for the short little book Love is the Reason. Never did we

guess that nearly 7 years later Owen would marry Celeste's sister Moana.

22 Feb 1998

Owen was ordained to the Melchizedek Priesthood by David, assisted by Craig, Fraser, and others at Pah Road, Auckland. One of the things he was told was, Through your charity, Owen, and your gentle and unchallenging nature, you will be able to help people who are seeking the gospel. As you let your light shine forth to others you will be an encouragement to them and they will want to find out more about what you believe.

David was really happy to be able to ordain Owen and we all felt very proud and grateful for this moment. Owen has worked hard and gone through a lot to have been able to achieve his progress and we all love him very much. It's great to see the friendship and respect and love our sons have for each other. That does not mean there are no differences of opinion but they manage to sort them out fairly quickly, as far as we know!

Another reason this was a special day was because it was the first day we met a newly baptised sister in their ward called Cancy Bernardo and her friend Liz Santos who had introduced her to the Church.

8 October, 1998

At the temple we did the sealing work for Olive's parents. When my mother visited New Zealand in 1982 she thoroughly enjoyed going to Allan and Gail's farm and liked them a lot, so I wanted them to be there for her sealing. First I took her name and David took my father's as they were

sealed as husband and wife. Then Gail and Allan acted for my mother's parents and I acted for my mother as she was sealed to them. Then the final sealing was for me to be sealed to my parents and Allan and Gail acted as my parents. We were all very happy, especially me, so it was a great surprise to me when I suddenly "heard" the word daughter and the tears started welling in my eyes as I realised that for the first time I ever could remember, that I was to my parents their daughter and they were proud of me and loved me. This word daughter kept repeating itself over and over in my mind and I cried and cried.

After that sealing was done we all had to stop for a few minutes for me to recover. As Gail said afterwards, it is very rare for me to be overcome with tears, so it was an unusual experience. After this we did more sealings for the temple names. I do not remember much about the rest of the evening only how that word daughter affected me, and I'm very glad David and Gail and Allan were there with me.

1998 - Ill health

The year 1998 began another long bout of ill health for me. I had had a few major illnesses in my life starting with meningitis at the age of 5 years. We arrived in New Zealand in February 1967 and in July I found a breast lump which x-rays showed was not cancer but further tests showed I might not be able to have babies. We then spent 3 months living in Auckland while David did extra training for his photocopier technician work. A few months later, January 1968, I was seriously ill with Sarcoidosis, a virus that attacked my lungs. Breathing was difficult and fluid built up in my lungs. By gravity the fluid went down to my legs, making them extremely swollen and too painful to walk. It took me 20 minutes to shuffle on my bottom to the toilet downstairs and back, and I always phoned my neighbour Nancy Underwood, if David was at work, so that if I did not

phone back afterwards she would come and see if I had fallen down the stairs.

I was not put in hospital as I was a nurse and could look after myself at home but 6 other people were in hospital and some died. I was in bed 3 months and off nursing 1 year with annual chest x-rays for 10 years. I was very homesick and lonely and lost a lot of weight, down to 6st 10lb which is 43kg. All they could do for Sarcoidosis was hope my immune system would build itself up again and I would get well. There was no cure, still isn't one today. It is affiliated to Lupus which is a severe auto-immune deficiency disease.

Almost 30 years after having Sarcoidosis I was ill again with Candida which spread throughout my body, probably in my blood system. November 1997 was a stressful month with David's business starting back with fly spraying and me phoning all day to get him appointments, then several birthdays, and all the Christmas cards and presents to make and send. I tried the doctor's treatment for Candida for 3 months with no cure so in desperation I consulted a Homeopath. Anne Macdonald advised me to stop eating anything with sugar in it, also bread and any yeast products like marmite, brewers yeast, cheese. No dairy products either, except plain yoghurt. I began to wonder what on earth was left to eat but kept to it faithfully for 2 months until at last a test showed I was clear of it.

Anne prescribed homeopathic medication and said I had candidiasis right through my body and my immune system was extremely weak. David had it too but he was a lot stronger in his immunity so would get better quicker. It was very difficult not being able to cheer myself up with a biscuit, or an icecream on a hot day but I certainly learned how diabetics feel. I lost over a stone going from 64kg to 52kg but gradually I got better, even though it took about 2 years to achieve this.

In December 1998 Dr Kennedy told me that my thyroid was

working very slowly, and had at some stage been damaged and started "to shut down all the major organs of my body", which explained why I had felt awful for so long. So Anne Macdonald treated me with homeopathic medication for my thyroid trouble too and I continued to have blood tests by the doctor to monitor it. As time went on it was realised that I needed medication from my doctor as the homeopathic system was not enough, so I went onto Thyroxine tablets for the rest of my life.

I remembered going back to work at the hospital in 1985, when I spent every weekend in bed with what I thought was flu, but later realised it was not. That went on for several months and I did not know what caused it. It is very likely there is a link between Candida, Fibromyalgia, and Chronic Fatigue and Immune Dysfunction Syndrome (CFIDS). The main symptoms of those diseases are extreme fatigue; muscle weakness; joint pains; swollen glands; fevers; sore throat; numbness of the extremities, inability to cope with much stress; memory loss; insomnia.

Years later I am able to recognise more easily when I am unwell before it gets too bad, but am still amazed how quickly it takes hold of my immune system and how badly sugar affects my health. Candida was the fore-runner of the auto-immune illnesses I have had at different times for the rest of my life including Giant Cell Arteritis and Polymyalgia much later on in mid 2018.

June 2000 - Sacramento talk

When we were born on earth, we had all memory of our previous life misted over so we could not remember it any more. Presumably, when we die that premortal memory will be reinstated, and joined together with our earth-life memories. We will then know who we were as a spirit before we came here. The worst thing we will then have to live with is the "if onlys". If only I had tried harder. If only I had done more. If only I had kept going for longer. When we do not

live up to the potential our spirit had before we came to earth, it is like watching black-and-white T.V. when we could be watching colour. We are holding ourselves back from wonderful learning experiences.

What we do with our own lives is up to us, but it is worse if we fail with our children. When we do not teach them absolutely the best we possibly can, we hold back their progress as a spirit. One of the most amazing experiences I have had, has been working with newborn babies and looking deep into their eyes to communicate thought to thought, spirit to spirit. It is incredible to realise they had so recently been in the spirit world and who they really were. Were they one of the great leaders? What great experiences and knowledge did they have before they came here? They may have had great authority in the premortal life, but they gave it all up to become a helpless baby. It must be so frustrating for them to have to experience the powerlessness of being a baby, having to wait until someone else is ready to feed, clothe, and change you.

When people go deep-sea diving they have to put on heavy protective clothing which is very cumbersome and awkward. That must be what it feels like for a spirit that comes into a body, until it gets used to it. No wonder babies do not speak for a year. They are probably still in shock!

When we think about the spirit of our children, and who they really are, then we want to teach them the very best we possibly can. We need to work out what we consider are the essentials of what we need to teach. Unfortunately it was not until we had our 4th child that I heard one of the most profound statements about raising a child. A child psychologist said that "by the age of 4 years children need to know they are completely indispensable to the total happiness of their parents." That is not to say, their parents would not survive without them, or that the world must revolve around them, but that they are of such great value

that their family would be incomplete without them.

Conveniently, if you look at your left hand and hold up your thumb and first finger you make the letter L, so you know it is your left hand! The main reasons we came to this earth begin with the letter L and they are shown by the remaining 3 fingers. We came here to Live, to Love, and to Learn. The little finger shows we came as a little baby. The ring finger demonstrates love that goes on forever, even into Eternity. The strong, middle finger indicates the power of learning. We will learn many things, but the greatest is how to love - ourselves and other people.

A scientist friend of ours, Jim Dunlop, said, "Children cannot learn in a vacuum. They will either go to the positive side, or the negative side." I often think of that when I see children sitting in church with nothing to do. If they have nothing constructive and positive to do they will become bored and destructive. It is no good adults saying, "Keep quiet." They are the ones who should have provided something constructive for the child to do. It should be thought about before getting to church. Put together a small bag of things that make no noise at all, not even when they are dropped. Most toys are no good because they make some sort of noise, and bunches of keys are really noisy to give a baby. Picture books, and colouring-in books are the obvious choice, but we put into our bag things like pieces of string and knitting wool, rubber bands and cotton wool, hair rollers and pieces of coloured felt cut out in different shapes.

I remember our first Stake Conference when Owen was only 10 months old, and how hard we tried to occupy him all that time to keep him quiet. Some of the time he slept, and the rest of the time we produced a succession of quiet objects to look at. At the end of the meeting the people in front of us got up to go out, and for the first time realised there was a baby behind them. They could hardly believe he had been there all the time.

Our children learned they could be as noisy as they liked at home, but in the chapel they had to be quiet. I did not talk to them, because to me there is no point in telling a child not to do something when you are doing it yourself. I had all sorts of interesting things to do, and they only ever saw those things in church. The bag was called my church bag, and our children looked forward to Sacrament having been passed and they could have something out of the bag. If they talked or made any noise with it, the thing was quietly but firmly taken away from them and put back into the bag, and they were left with nothing. After a few minutes of boredom they were able to have it back again, or something else, and the process was repeated, so they very quickly learned to sit quietly. This was all done in a nice way, with no telling off. However, if they really misbehaved they were taken out, so I know how it is to have to do "the long walk" out of the chapel with a yelling, kicking child under your arm!

Most of the time David was in leadership positions in the church so was sitting up on the stand, or visiting another chapel, so I had to manage on my own. I often resented the fact that I had to struggle with 3 children on my own, but in the end it was worth it, and I grew closer to my children through it all. I often think people with little children look at those of us whose children are grown up and think we never had those same struggles. Well, I can assure you we did, and would love to help others but have to wait until we are asked.

We need to let our children know we love them, and we are proud of them, and very grateful to have them in our family. I believe we have done ourselves a great dis-service over the issue of the word "pride". We are so keen to stop ourselves from being proud, that we constantly do ourselves down, and other people. New Zealanders are famous for producing people who are wonderful "tall poppies" and then chopping them down so no-one will become conceited. We need to stop being so scared of the word "proud" and realise it is good to be proud of our children, and of our own efforts. Certainly we need to give thanks to God for the ability we

have been given, or our children have, but we also need to acknowledge that achievement to ourselves and our children.

Some of the things I have learned in life which were not given in talks.

When I originally wrote my life story I stopped around the age of twelve. That was mainly because I had an unhappy time after that for several years and did not want to write about it. Looking back as an adult I do not think I was a rude or lazy teenager but my parents did not want me to get conceited or stray into bad habits. During the years when I was 13, 14 and 15 I had to stand in front of my parents two or three times a week while my father lectured me for an hour or so about my shortcomings and that I was not doing well enough. He told me he would break my spirit, so I used to take myself away in my mind to cope with what he was saying.

It was at this time I started having what was probably Anorexia Nervosa. I wanted to get so thin I would fade away. Years later a psychologist told me it was caused not by low self esteem but no self esteem. I was usually only allowed to go to my room when I was crying so I used to vow to myself that no man would ever make me cry again. I never let anyone see me crying after that, in fact, twenty years later when we visited England and were at my brother David's home I had a phone call from my parents that upset me, and ran out of the room crying. My brother was amazed and told me it was the first time he had ever seen me cry.

My school work went gradually downhill and I felt I was a failure at most things. When I was about 16 my father went into hospital for nearly 6 months with TB spine which was a terrible shock to him. During that time we had to help more in the home with cooking, washing and shopping while my

mother worked longer hours at her job of housekeeping for other people, and making the 2 hour journey to the hospital twice a week. When my father came home he no longer lectured me and my life was a lot better from then on.

I was always very wary of men and my opinion of them was not improved by the many men in trains who undid their trousers and exposed themselves. They never did this if there were men around, and it amazes me now that none of us women ever said anything. We just looked the other way and held on to our English reserve, not wanting to cause a scene.

When I was about 20 I came off duty at the hospital late one evening and was not able to travel back to the nurses' home with the other nurses. I was trapped alone in an underground train with a man with dark, wild, staring eyes, and because he was partially undressed I was terrified he was going to rape me. I managed to get out of the train and ran for my life.

A few days later, when I told David about it, he was very concerned but told me to put it to the back of my mind as nothing had happened to me. I tried to do that but because I never really talked it out of my system, I spent the next 20 years of my life waking up at night fighting to get away. Then I went to a psychologist who made me relive the scene and questioned me over and over about it. I was a shaking, terrified mess for an hour but I never had any nightmares after that.

It seems that men do not understand the impact their behaviour has on women. A great many men are enticed into viewing pornography in magazines or on the Internet thinking they are not being unfaithful to their wives. Of course, their thinking usually changes when it is their wife, sister or daughter being looked at by other men, and they realise the women they have been treating like 'things' are all really someone's wife, sister or daughter. It is similar with dishonesty, with men thinking it does not matter if their wife

does not know. They never seem to realise that it takes something away from their spirit and their wife recognises something is missing from their relationship even if she does not know what has caused it.

I am grateful David has always been a good person. We have had a lot of arguments and made many mistakes but he has always tried to be a good person. I told him before we got married that I would never stay with anyone who hit me, but would walk straight out of the house within minutes. It was one of my earliest memories of my father hitting my mother when I was about 2 or 3, and although there was terrible strain for them with the War on, and it may have happened only that once, I never forgot it. David was adamant that he would never hit a woman, and certainly not me, but I wanted to make sure he knew why I was so definite about this.

There is only one time when David and I nearly came to that situation. We were in the bathroom which was at the other end of the house, away from our children, arguing about something. As the situation became worse it was as though there were dark grey clouds moving into the room. I was really scared and pleaded with David to go out of the room. I told him I knew he was so angry that if he stayed he might hit me and he would never forgive himself. I knew one of us must leave the room and he needed to show himself as well as me that he was strong enough to walk away from this situation. He did not want to go as he saw it as giving in to what I wanted, but eventually as I pleaded with him he walked out of the room. I was proud of him for having the strength to do that.

Life was very difficult a lot of the time due to great lack of money, and we never had the support of family near us. We were hardly ever able to go out because we did not have the money to pay for a babysitter, so we relied on church activities as our main entertainment. David sold vegetables to friends at church as well as doing whatever work he wanted to do. I could have gone back nursing, even night

duty, but wanted to stay at home with my children. Partly this was because church leaders encouraged mothers to stay at home with young children, and partly because I had thought for so long that I would not be able to have children and enjoyed being with them and teaching them.

For years discouragement took hold of me, leading to depression, but I cannot remember if it was before or after Scott died. I thought I was no good and that David and our sons would be better off without me. One day I was looking at a razor blade in the bathroom and wondering if I had the courage to end it all, but knowing also that I did not want to. I was thinking, There must be a better way than this, but I did not know what it was. Just then the phone rang and it was Marilyn, a friend from church wanting to know if we had some bananas for sale. When she heard my voice she quickly realised how depressed I was and came round to help me. I have thought since then how strange it was that my life was saved by bananas, but really it was God inspiring someone to contact me and help me. We should always listen to the quiet inspirations we are given and follow up on them.

Also I think a lot of our arguments were about us each trying to prove we were right so we would feel better about ourselves. I remember one of the most stupid arguments we had was over the best way to make a 2 litre bottle of orange drink. I said put the water in first, then the orange powder, and shake it. David wanted to put the powder in before the water. We argued back and forth for ages about it, probably about half an hour, each convinced we knew the best way. Now I look back on that and wonder how we had the energy to bother. Most arguments are not really about the 'thing' you are arguing about. Mostly we want to be heard and valued. They are about how you think the other person feels about you, and therefore how you feel about yourself.

Another disagreement went in an entirely different direction. We needed to paint the corrugated iron roof of our house. It was blue and David said it would be easier to paint it the

same colour. I wanted a change and preferred it to be brown. We argued about it and could not agree. Then as the days went by I began to see it from David's point of view that it would be a lot less work for him to repaint it the same colour. I told David this expecting him to be relieved, but instead he said he had realised I was at home more than he was, and saw the roof more, so if I wanted it brown that was what he would do. So there we were now arguing the other person's point of view, and we were able to laugh about it. In case you are wondering, the roof was painted brown, but by then neither of us was sure whose idea it really was.

Even though we had arguments we did not like that and tried to teach our children not to quarrel. I remember when Owen was playing with Hamish Papple when they were only 3 years old. They disagreed about something so Hamish hit Owen on the head with a toy hammer. Naturally, Owen objected to that and hit Hamish back and so it went on. I sat them down, one on either side of me, and asked them to tell me what was the matter, one at a time, without interrupting each other. One had his say while the other listened, then the other had his say without any interruptions. The negotiation went on for over 10 minutes. They both realised how long it was taking them away from their play and quickly decided the argument was not worth the hassle. From then on if ever they started to argue I asked them to come and sit down and talk with me, and they would quickly look at each other and tell me they did not need to do that again!

I was always impressed how well Owen, Craig and Fraser got on when they were all flatting together in Auckland. It was such a tiny little 2-roomed flat they must have got on each other's nerves, but they made an agreement that they would not speak negatively and they kept to that.

In the late 1990's we went to a Te Awamutu Branch activity. During one item we were given pen and paper to write something nice about the person whose name was at the top of the paper, then pass it on, so that in the end they had a

whole lot of good things to read about themselves. It was interesting that several people mentioned that David was reliable and I was always ready to help and had a nice smile. In reality I probably do not want to be any different but I have often felt the strain of always being a 'good example' as a member of the church.

I realised after Scott died that one of the greatest needs people have is to be listened to, then they can usually work out their problems themselves. I set out to learn how to be a good listener. I achieved that, and am happy people feel safe confiding in me, but who 'listens' to me? I often feel I have given so much over the years I am 'all given out' and my spirit needs to be replenished but I do not know how to do that. I know how to give to other people but not to myself.

David 'lives inside his head' most of the time, and has never been very aware of what I really needed. He always saw it as a weakness that I craved appreciation, but I do not seem to have an internal measure of the value of what I have done until someone else praises it. When I was a child my parents deliberately did not praise me. When I was nearly 40 mother told me that it was because they did not want me to grow up conceited. The nearest my mother came to giving me a compliment was when we visited England in 1975 to show our parents two more of their grandsons. My mother had always said to me when I was a child, "You'll be no good as a mother. I pity your poor children. You've got no patience and no method, no organisation." One day as my mother watched me with our children she said, "Well, you've turned out better than I thought you would." This is the nearest thing to a compliment I can ever remember from my mother. When she came to New Zealand to visit us in 1982 I asked her why I could never remember my parents ever praising me or saying I had done well in something. I expected her to disagree, but instead she said, "Of course not. You don't want your children to grow up conceited."

Adults probably do not realise how much children overhear

or how they interpret what they hear. When I was 9 years old my mother was out shopping with us and met a friend she had not seen for years. The friend commented it was nice my mother had 2 boys and 2 girls and my mother replied that David had been born first and then they had 'wanted another boy but had Olive instead'. I always felt I had been a disappointment and never got over that feeling. When I became a mother myself I always made sure I said positive things about my children to other people so that whatever they overheard would build them up.

David and I are learning more about each other now, which I am glad about, especially since we started to learn more in 1998 about personality differences. We talked about things right back to just before we got married, when David returned to England after being away in New Zealand for over a year. I felt like he was a stranger when he returned for 3 weeks to get married and go back to New Zealand. I felt like a bag of groceries that was to be picked up from the shop and run home with.

While David was away I had gone out a couple of times with his best friend John Kiss but only very casually, and realised that other people found me attractive too. As a child I had been told, particularly by my father, that I was ugly with 'a face like the back of a bus' and no one would want to marry me. So when David gave me a jewel box he had made for my 20th birthday and told me he loved me I could not believe I was hearing those words and pretended I did not hear him so he had to say it again.

The reason David went to New Zealand was because I could not decide if I was ready to get married. I knew that when David put his arms around me I felt safe and secure and the wonderful feeling of being in love, but did not know if I was really only in love with being in love. Although I had grown up with boys at church as friends, I had never been out with anyone, never even held hands or kissed anyone else apart

from David.

David had been away for over a year and in that time we had both changed and became more independent of each other. Understandably, David wanted to get married and return as quickly as possible to the house he had bought in Wellington. He had always been sure that I was the one he wanted to marry. I was not at all sure. I would be leaving my family and friends, and my new-found independence. However, I really did want to get married, make a home and have children. Both sets of parents were very keen on the marriage, and I would have to face two irate mothers if I did not go ahead with the wedding which they had already arranged, so I felt there was really no choice to make.

If I could have been convinced that I meant the whole world to David then I could have confidently left England behind with all the people who mattered to me, but at the back of my mind I knew that it was not like that. I knew there would not be another woman, but have always felt that I was secondary to whatever else David wanted to do with his time or money. He does not have what I would call 'a generosity of spirit' and I do not know if that is something you are born with or can learn.

We have been happy a lot of the time, but I have rarely felt I was his 'one and only'. After Scott died David could not do enough for me and just wanted to be with me all the time. It had been a great shock that I had almost died and he had so nearly lost me. Although an extremely sad time we also had a lot of happiness as we focused only on each other and our sons Owen and Craig, but gradually after about a month we had to return to the 'real world' almost like returning from a holiday. One month out of 40 years is not much but I am glad we had that much.

One of the most important words to me is 'value', and the expression of that value has to come from David. He is the most important person to me to express that value, and if he

does not say it, then it has not happened. Because it usually does not occur to David to express praise for me, as he does not mind if anyone else praises him or not, I often feel what I do is of not much worth. I used to think of that phrase, Mind over Matter. David does not mind and I do not matter.

As David and I discuss more about our different personalities, I realise there are some things he simply does not know about, and is not being deliberately unfeeling, as I used to think. I wish we had known all this 40 years ago and been able to discuss it then. Something I would change is not to have been so 'capable'. I never let anyone see me upset or cry as it would have shocked people, who thought of me as organised and in control. I particularly learned that when Scott died. If I cried other people became nervous and did not know what to do, so stayed away from me. If I had let them see me upset they might have given me more help and not burdened me so much. However, I was a 'pioneer' almost alone in this country, and knew I had to get on and manage as best I could.

Over the years David and I went to 4 or 5 counsellors to help us communicate better but it did not really change much. The last counsellor we saw early in 1992 was probably the most astute one we went to, but after 2 visits he told David not to come back because he did not want to change. I was amazed that he would come straight out and tell David that, but he said David should find someone he really respected, and listen to that person's opinion, because he could tell David was not going to listen to him so it was a waste of his time seeing us.

After that, I did not know where to turn to try to improve our marriage. David was not doing much work on the re-sited buildings, and not only not bringing in any money, but spending quite large amounts of the money I earned. I was exhausted from working full time as a nurse and looking after a family, and resented David doing what he wanted, when he wanted, while I had to rush out to the bus at 7.30am

having struggled to get the washing on the clothes-line before I went. I decided I had had enough and would be better off if we split up. David was really surprised when I told him that, and quickly saw what he stood to lose if I went ahead with that idea. However, later that year Craig, who was away at university in Hamilton, realised what was likely to happen and pleaded with me not to do it. So I promised him I would not. It was so difficult to keep that promise, but now, many years later, although there might have been advantages to me, overall I am glad David and I did not separate. When you do that it is like taking your family photo and tearing it in half. You get rid of some of the problems, but usually others come in their place.

Although David and I have gained a lot by learning more about our personalities and understanding ourselves and each other more, I realise there are some things he simply doesn't know about, and is not being deliberately unfeeling, as I used to think. I thought he had the sensitivity of a mosquito and he thought I was always wanting approval and praise. I wish we had known all this 30 years ago, and been able to discuss it then. If there's one thing I probably would change too, it would be not to have been so 'capable' and to have burst into tears more. I never let anyone see me cry. It would have shocked people, who saw me as an organised, in-control person, even though I wasn't underneath. Other people would have given me more help and not burdened me so much. However, I was a 'pioneer' alone in this country, and had to get on and manage. Anyway, you can't 'put the clock back' and it's easy to be wise after the event.

Sep 1999

Kiersten Leslie asked my opinion about the direction women are going in, and about standards. I said there was only one standard I was interested in and that was the standard of excellence. Over the years I have been told I am a

perfectionist because I like things done 'right'. I have been told I set a standard that is too high. People have said they can't do things because they're 'only human'. Then yesterday it suddenly came to me. If someone said to me, "You can't expect me to be able to do as well as that, I'm only human," I would say, "Yes, but you're not meant to stay that way." We are meant to try our best to do well, and become more perfect, because we are not meant to stay this way. That is the whole aim of our life here on earth. So I told David what a profound thought I had just had, and he was suitably impressed.

4 December 1999

Owen, Craig and Cancy visited us unexpectedly on 4 December 1999, as they were on their way from Auckland to Hamilton, to the Temple to do some baptisms for Cancy's relatives. Owen was going to do the male names. I produced the usual big family lunch and thought we would spend the available 2 hours just sitting chatting, but Craig had other ideas. He spent a lot of time on the computer changing things, but I'm still not sure what. Then he took David in there and explained things to him. Then when I thought it was time for them all to leave for the temple, Craig told me he had 40 minutes-worth of things to explain to me and I would have to concentrate as there was only 10 minutes left.

He knew I had collapsed after giving blood a couple of days before, and had been tired since then, and as they had to leave for the temple I thought it was some sort of joke. When I realised Craig meant it I told him I would not be able to concentrate on anything at all, and it would be better to leave what he could till he visited us a month later at Christmas. I watched Craig's face as he sorted out what to work on and what to leave out. It was like watching a computer sorting through a programme. Then I was instructed how to do a back-up a slightly different way. Craig spat out the

instructions and I obediently wrote them down.

Craig told me to get a new kind of back-up disk from the cupboard, back-up on this as he had just instructed me, and not use the old kind any more. To ensure that I would do as he said he took my old disk and erased everything off it. I felt as if all the work I had ever done on the computer was gone, even though I knew it was now on the new disk. I just wanted to hold on to the old disk until I had got used to the new way, but Craig demanded that I hand over the old disk to him for deleting and I felt my choice was taken away from me.

If they hadn't had to hurry to the temple I would have objected very strongly to the way Craig was speaking to me, but thought it best to let it go. However, by the end of about 10 minutes I felt like a 9 year old child again, being reprimanded by my father. It damaged my spirit. I felt utterly sad that my father had constantly spoken to me in that belittling way, my husband had often done it over the years, and now my son was doing the same thing, and I don't suppose any of them ever meant to hurt me as much as they did, or ever realised the extent of the destruction they caused. It took years to repair it, and is one of the reasons why I have been unwell for so many years with the after-effects of the auto-immune illness Sarcoidosis.

After showing me the new way to back up the disks on the computer, Owen and Craig hurried out to the car and we were saying goodbye to Cancy when she found a gift they had left on the table. It was a wall-hanging that Owen and Craig had bought on the way there. It said, Mothers are real angels here on earth. They had each written a nice message on the back of it. It would have given me real pleasure if only I had been given it, and not found it after they had gone, especially as, by that time, I was only just holding myself together and trying not to cry. Within a few days I went down with flu and tonsillitis. I just didn't have the strength to fight it.

1998

Since 1998 I have been writing to John and Dof in England. Dof is short for Dorothy. Johns is my mother's brother who I have never had any contact with for 50 years, due to family disagreements. It has been interesting, but sad, to find that he had a similar upbringing to me in that his confidence was constantly undermined by his parents, especially his father, who was my Grandpa Roos. John, like me, was the only one in the family to pass the exams to go to High School, instead of Secondary Modern School where they did more 'practical' things like cooking and metalwork. John and I have found that we were constantly "taken down a peg" in case we ever got conceited, and in the end became far less confident than our brothers and sisters, and didn't start to achieve our potential until much later in life. It's the Tall Poppy Syndrome. If it does well, chop it down!

John had to give me the sad news that my cousin Norma had committed suicide a couple of weeks before. I wish someone had been able to help Norma before it was too late, but would anyone really have made any difference? When you're depressed you shut in on yourself and don't talk to anyone. You desperately need to go out and talk to people, but that's the very last thing you feel capable of doing. You think that even if you did tell someone how you feel, they would not understand the magnitude of how it appears to you, and would therefore not recognise the amount of pain you were suffering. The one person Norma wanted to matter to, her husband, stayed thousands of miles away from her with his work. It's so often the way with people. It's "mind over matter". I don't mind and you don't matter. I felt really sad for several weeks and couldn't get Norma out of my mind.

22 July 2000

Here is part of a letter to Fraser from Olive written 22 July 2000. Fraser was serving a mission in Melbourne, Australia for 2 years.

I find when I am tired my memory is really terrible. I used to be so organised when I was nursing at Palmerston North Hospital, but since not being well in the last 2 years, my memory is sometimes pretty bad. Most of the time it's all right, only when I'm tired. The tiredness hits out of no-where. I can recognise the signs more easily now, but am still amazed how quickly it comes on, and how long it takes to get over it. Sometimes several days. The main signs are -

I feel like I haven't got the energy to drag myself up one more hill when I'm out walking; or if I'm indoors it's when I feel like I must sit down quickly or I'll fall down because my legs suddenly start to ache and shake; or if I feel really sad and just want to cry for no apparent reason.

Lately I have tried to work out more dates and details about my genealogy, as I would like Craig to have that information while he is in England for a year, in case he is able to go to the records office in London at some time in the next few weeks. I need someone to be on the spot to actually look at my grandparents' death certificates. They may have the name of a parent or spouse on them that I haven't got yet. Also I had a few letters to get in to the post, and I've been trying to read more of the Joseph Smith story, which is at a very depressing part of them being burned out of their homes and chased from Missouri.

All these things are not much in themselves, but all add up to make me tired. So yesterday evening it hit me when I was standing in the supermarket trying to decide which brand of toothpaste to buy. All of a sudden I felt the ache come back into my legs, and a sudden feeling of weakness, and I thought, "I'd better get out of here, and get home, before I

fall down. Don't want any embarrassing things to happen in public." So I left the toothpaste to another day, went through the checkout and walked home. I felt very tired as it's all uphill, but once I was walking I knew I would be all right if I just kept going. I try to go for a walk every day to keep my joints mobile. Sometimes David or other people offer me a lift in the car, but if I miss a day, I feel stiff.

I don't know if scanning photos can be classified as my work. I often wonder what my 'work' is. If I try to tell other people what I do all day, I find it doesn't sound like much, so I just stop telling them. I find that rather difficult. When I was a mother, most people valued that. When I was a nurse, just about everyone knew what that was, and valued that. Now I don't think I have much value from other people, so I have to look inwards more often, which may be good practice for me, but tiring, and not giving me what I need in the way of energy.

May 2001

I have learned now that my body becomes physically ill when my spirit is damaged by people who profess to love me.

I used to think of this when I went to our homeopath consultant Anne Macdonald, that she would tell me what she thought was wrong with me, and even sometimes ask David what he thought, but no-one seemed to ask me, and it was my body they were talking about. I have often been amazed that she never asked me why I think I am ill. I know why it is, but no-one seems to think I know anything. I am sure people could often tell you why they are ill if they trusted you enough to tell you.

In reality, I am glad Anne never asked me in front of David, so I never had to tell her that it was the way David treats me, as if I'm just a sort of servant, someone who would only be

missed when the dinner does not appear in the evening, or the clean clothes are not there. I'm sure David doesn't mean to be so unkind, and is unaware of how it comes across. He says it's because he 'can't get near me' but I know that I put up a wall as a shield against being hurt any more because I haven't enough energy to stay healthy as well as cope with David's lack of interest.

It's as if David's like a submarine. He stays submerged for a while, then comes to the surface, puts up the periscope, looks around, sees everything's all right, and goes back down again. Often that 'coming to the surface' happens on a Sunday, so people think he's a nice, quiet, helpful person, and they think that's what he's like all the time, but he's not. It's amazing that for so many years of my childhood I vowed I would never marry someone who was as distant as my father was, and guess what, David is just like him.

David has hurt me so many times, and I know this is to be expected in any relationship, but I no longer have the emotional or physical energy to cope with it. David has made so many major decisions over the years with absolutely no thought about consulting me at all. Decisions about emigrating to New Zealand, giving up his job at Xerox, re-siting houses, and buying things. I remember when I was working full-time as a nurse, I had to phone the bank to query our statement and found David had spent \$6,000 on buying Herbalife products which he thought he could sell. Only 10 years before that when I was not out at work, I had spent \$20 on makeup and David had exploded in anger and said he couldn't afford it, and who did I think was going to pay for it. I had to take it back to the shop and ask for my money back, and felt so embarrassed doing that. It has always seemed there is one set of rules for me, and a completely different set for David, especially about money. My trust in him has gone. I simply don't know what to do about that. It would take a long time for me to learn to trust David again.

For so much of my life it has been an unending struggle. David sits in front of his computer reading about maths or diseases, and doing just what he wants to do, regardless of the fact that I need help. If it's something he doesn't want to do, he simply doesn't do it. It has always been totally unfathomable to me that David is so self-centred. He just does what he wants and I think it honestly does not even occur to him to consult me, I'm talking about major things like a job, or where to live, not little things. I am amazed that he cannot seem to see what is right in front of him. He's spending hours and hours reading about how to help other people's health, while I am fading away right before his eyes - except that he's not looking. I realise that this is judgmental of David and he has had his own problems to deal with, but what I have written can be read in only a few minutes, but covers many years of sadness. I wish I had known a way to change that, but I never knew what to do.

Problems in our marriage arose from our being completely opposite of each other in our personalities but a lot of our difficulties came from our childhoods. David was born a year after his brother Michael died at 17 months from whooping cough, and all the trauma that caused. David did not thrive and as a 2 year old was sent to a convalescent home for several weeks. That would have been a terrible separation not only for a little boy but for a mother having just lost her previous child around the same age. When David was allowed to return home his mother doted on him and it probably resulted in him being a bit 'spoilt'. I remember David and his friend John saying when they were in their late twenties they could not see any reason to leave home and go flatting because they had all their washing, meals and everything done for them at home. For me a huge problem was lack of confidence after many years at home of being told I was ugly and no good, and nobody would ever want to marry me. So when somebody did want to marry me I kept waiting for it all to go wrong, and almost certainly helped it along the way.

I have often wished I had had someone older and wiser to tell me what to do to be happy. I simply did not know who to turn to. Perhaps if we had stayed in England it might have been different, I don't know, and it will never change anything now. I wish I had 'stood up for myself' more to David, and I wish I had not been so independent and put on a brave face. I had arrived in a country where I knew nobody except David, had great money worries and health problems, with none of my family and friends I grew up with who I could turn to. I simply had to cope. There was no other option. One time when I told David I felt like walking out and leaving he said, "It's no good you going because you will never be any happier if you do because wherever you go you will always take yourself with you. You are your own worst problem." It was a harsh thing to say and upset me a lot, but it was true. I still did not know what to do about my life to be happy. Perhaps that is true of many people.

Looking back over the years I see I have learned the most from the times of death and difficulty. I learned to pray while pioneering a life in a new country and being new to the church. I turned to prayer to help with the difficulties of bringing up children, often feeling alone and isolated. I prayed my way through our baby Scott's death, my almost-death and my friend Noeline's death. I learned that outside the time-restrictions of this world things happen instantly and knowledge is given 'thought to thought', from one mind to another. It happens so much faster than speaking.

I learned the value to our health from keeping the Word of Wisdom and am grateful that I grew up in a home where most of it was practised before I ever heard of the Church. I learned of the strength that can be brought into our home when we attend the temple. I learned that even when Family Home Evening seems to turn out a disaster we are rewarded with blessings when we struggle to keep holding it.

Making our money stretch to buy food, clothes, pay bills, and

help finance the building of the Feilding chapel when we hardly had enough money for our own basic needs, all helped to convince me that we are to pay tithing. Before Craig's mission I had already paid for the year of business studies at Waikato University for him, although he was able to have free board and lodging at Church College, Hamilton, because he helped with tutoring the students after school. To then pay for his mission for 2 years seemed an impossible task because David did not have a job and I had to keep the family on my nurse's pay, but within 9 months all the money was in the bank. To this day I still do not know how that happened, and I no longer try and work it out.

When it came to Fraser serving a mission in Melbourne, Australia, I did not have to pay for that because Owen said he would like to do that as he had not been able to go on a mission. Owen did not go to church for several years in his late teens and early twenties, and by the time he came back to church he was past the age limit. David paid for about a month of the mission for both Craig and for Fraser, but he did not have a job so did not have any money. He could have gone to work in a hardware store near us but he refused to work in a shop. That was a shame because he would have enjoyed talking to people about building and renovating and certainly had enough experience to do so, but because he had been a technician for Xerox photocopiers he felt it was a big step down to work in a shop.

A few paragraphs written by me to Owen March 2002

I have been reading Mormon 2: 26. It is after some terrible battles Mormon has had to lead his people through, while still only a young man. He was sick of it, and sick of the fact that the people could not see any link between living righteously, and being protected and helped to succeed. The

last part of the verse states, Yea, we were left to ourselves, that the Spirit of the Lord did not abide in us; therefore we had become weak like unto our brethren.

Owen, you know so much more than most other people around you, you should soar like an eagle. You must work harder to gain more knowledge. You can't lift someone else unless you are standing on higher ground yourself. You have done so well in your life in the last few years that I have been overjoyed to see how well you have done. Now I am no longer willing to watch you not fulfilling your potential. Even though you are now grown up, my job as a mother has not finished. Not until Heavenly Father says so.

Here is one of the quotes I have lived my life by -

A mother loves her child most divinely, not when she surrounds him with comfort and anticipates his wants, but when she resolutely holds him to the highest standards and is content with nothing less than his best.

I love you and I sincerely want the best in life for you. I want you to be entitled to the guidance, comfort, friendship and protection, that can be given to you by the Holy Ghost, which was a gift you were given over 20 years ago. If the gift of the Holy Ghost came in a box, ask yourself, would you have the right to open it? Are you praying, reading the scriptures, working on your calling, doing home teaching, paying tithing, fasting, praying and paying fast offering, all of that diligently enough to entitle you to open the box? Or does the box have to stay half shut because you are not doing your part? It's your box, and only you can decide if you will open it or not.

I firmly believe that during the next few years you will be a tremendous help to many other people who will see that they have a hope of changing their lives because of the understanding and guidance you will be able to give them. You will not just sit and listen, and send them away empty and frustrated. You will tell them how to change things. They

will listen to you because they know you know. That will come across to them. You will not need to tell them. They will pick that up. The Holy Ghost is ready and waiting to do that work, using you as the voice piece. Don't keep him waiting. Get on with the learning and studying you need to be doing right now.

2001 Our dogs

On 27 January David and I had the task of taking our golden labrador dog Zara to the vet for her final time. It was one of the saddest and worst days of our lives. We had 3 golden labrador dogs during our marriage. First Honey whose mother was a pedigree dog called Sunburst of Zara and whose owner interviewed us very strictly before he would allow us to have her. We took Honey everywhere with us and loved her like a child. The only place we never took Honey was to church and she was always annoyed with us when we left her. One day she showed her displeasure by finding the only thing we had left out which was a bar of soap in the bathroom, and she ate it, which did not do her inside much good. Another time she got into our bedroom when the door had been left open and jumped up at the chest of drawers that had a mirror attached. She saw another dog in the mirror and jumped at it barking and scratching the chest of drawers with her claws. The scratches remain to this day over 50 years later. Apart from this Honey was a perfect dog and when Owen arrived she would sit beside his pram and guard him with her life. When we went to England for a few weeks in 1975 we left Honey with friends. They were very distraught when Honey was killed by a truck driving past their house. They think she heard some children nearby and tried to get to them.

We were not sure we could get another dog after Honey because she was so special to us, but our children Owen and Craig were 4 and 2 at the time and we wanted them to grow

up with a dog, so 6 September 1975 we got another golden labrador Amber. She was lovely too, but never quite had the same place in our hearts as Honey had occupied. She also ran away a lot and eventually the sad time came 12 July 1984 when we could not find her anywhere even though we walked the nearby streets calling for her. Later we got a phone call from the police asking if we were the owners as a policeman had reported a dog who had run straight in front of his car and was killed instantly. He had taken her to the vet who dealt with her body before we knew about it. Amber was always frightened about loud noises such as fireworks. The place she ran out of was a building site and she may have been scared of a loud noise and run straight out onto the road and was hit by the car.

David saw an advertisement in the local newspaper 18 October 1984 for a golden labrador puppy so the next day we went to Shannon in the Manawatu to have a look at the six of them and, of course, we bought one and called her Zara. She decided immediately that I was her new mother and hardly let me out of her sight. When I went out into the garden to peg out the washing I had to sit her by the door so she could still see me or she would cry and cry. She was carried around in someone's arms almost all the time for weeks.

A year later I went to work full time as a nurse at Palmerston North hospital and David did renovating of houses on our acre of land. During that time Zara was chained up to a kennel outside and when she was a year old a dog jumped the fence to get to her and the result was that she had puppies. David acted as midwife while Zara had the puppies and that helped him bond closely with her. She had 10 puppies, all black, which was too many for her to cope with so 4 were taken to the vet to be put down. We found good homes for all the puppies except one called Max and kept him for about a year until he and Zara collided with me while running across a nearby playing field and they broke my collarbone. So after that Max also went to a good home, on a

farm where he could use up his energy.

David always loved Zara and I felt jealous of the time and attention he gave her instead of me when I was the one out at work from early morning to night. But I had to accept that that was how it was. Zara had a lot of arthritis which made it painful for her to walk as she became old. She lived to be over 15 years old which is said to be about 105 years in comparison with people years.

The day came on 27 January 2001 when Zara was obviously in so much pain that she could hardly stand up and David and I decided it was unfair to keep her here any longer. We took her to the vet and stayed with her while she was given a final injection. I thought it would be like when we had taken our old cat Tui who was 20 years old and dying of kidney failure. We stood stroking her and she purred as the vet put the injection into her vein and she gradually stopped breathing. With Zara it was completely different. Because Zara was so ill and so old when the vet put the injection into the vein it clogged up and she could not get all the fluid in. So then the vet had to try and find a vein that would take the injection, which was a very traumatic situation for all of us, especially for Zara. A friend who had a small farm near the chapel in Te Awamutu said we could bury Zara in her garden so that is what we did. It was one of the saddest days, most awful days of our lives.

2001, 2002, 2003

The years of 2001 and 2002 and 2004 were the weddings of Craig and Cancy in Hamilton, New Zealand, then Fraser and Monique in Toronto, Canada, and then Owen and Moana in Hamilton New Zealand. David and I always said we could not have chosen better daughters-in-law if we had walked through Heaven and picked them ourselves - maybe we did!

2003

In 2003 David and I wanted to serve a short mission that would fit in to the 6 months of winter when David did not do his fly spraying business. We had moved from Feilding to Te Awamutu in January 1994 because we had been going to the temple in Hamilton on the overnight bus for 20 years and it took a week to get over the long journey. So we decided to sell our house in Feilding and move to the Waikato area instead. I loved my job as senior staff nurse in the Children's Clinic at Palmerston North hospital where I had worked for nearly 9 years but it was time to move on. David set up his own carpet cleaning business which then went on to doing fly spraying of houses and farms in the Waikato area.

I spent hours on the phone setting up appointments for him to do this work but it was mainly between October and March. Therefore we had the other 6 months for a mission. Our bishop and stake president did not know what kind of mission we could do for only 6 months because David did not want to work in the temple or do a proselyting mission. So in the end we visited all the less active members we could find and simply helped people wherever we could. One of our most successful series of visits was to Renee and Mel Brown. Eventually Renee came back to church and Mel also came quite often. They had 3 children and Renee served as a Seminary teacher and is now a Relief Society president. Renee and I have been friends all those years and although she is nearly 40 years younger than I am, there has never been any age difference when we are talking together and we enjoy each other's company.

In July 2003 Owen came from Auckland to visit us while we were in the third house we had rented because we did not have enough money to buy a house. Owen said that he and Craig had discussed the matter and were now able to pay back money they had borrowed from me 6 years before when

my mother died and I inherited several thousand dollars which I lent to our 3 sons for their computer learning. We realised we would only have enough money to buy the cheapest house available but David could do it up and I could furnish it cheaply.

On the following Thursday we saw a house advertised in our local paper, went to see it with the estate agent who was surprised because she had only just advertised it the afternoon before.

The house was dark and gloomy and cold but it was all we could afford so we bought it. Friends from church came and helped wash all the walls and windows because the previous owner smoked incessantly and the walls were brown with smoke. He had been put in a psychiatric unit permanently which was why the house was sold.

Then we painted all the walls from one end of the house to the other. All the bedrooms were pale yellow and the living area was pale apricot to make it seem warmer. We installed a fire and ripped up the filthy carpet in the living room and replaced it. We allowed ourselves only 3 weeks to do all this as we did not want to take any more time than that from the mission. We have always been sure that the house was a direct blessing to us for serving a mission in the best way we could. I always know exactly when we moved into this house because it was the day Ethan was born and we got a phone call from an unusually excited Craig about his new baby, just as we were packing the last few things into the truck.

Rehana Waitai helped David clear out a trailer load of weeds and long grass from the garden, and an old mattress and furniture that had been dumped there for years. Then David built a large carport. He designed and built it all himself and asked for help from our neighbours only to put the huge support posts into the concrete base. I helped David put sheets of corrugated iron on the roof by balancing each sheet on the fence and then pushing it onto the roof frame with a

broom.

David went back to his fly spraying business for the 2003 and 2004 season and we continued to make changes to our new home and enjoyed inviting friends in for meals. We were happier than we had been for many years because we had our own home and because David was 68 he received Superannuation so we had an income and he added to that with money earned from fly spraying.

September 2004

In September we were excited to go to Auckland for the wedding of Owen to Moana Anderton at Bastion Point with the reception on the grass there after the ceremony. It was lovely sunny weather for most of the day except for a sudden flurry of rain just as we were setting out all the cakes, bottles of grape juice and glasses on the tables. The legs of the tables sank into the wet ground, tipped sideways and all the glasses slid off with a crash. We rescued the undamaged glasses, swept up the broken ones, unpacked and plated the 10 large cakes and carried on celebrating.

One concern was that David had had a skin cancer removed from his throat, then lifted some heavy shopping and had great pain in his shoulder and arm so could not drive, so I had to drive around Auckland, not knowing where I was going. Later it was thought that perhaps that skin cancer was the beginning of cancer in his bowel that spread to the rest of his body but we did not know it at that time.

January 2005

In January 2005 I choked on some food and it hurt for several days so my doctor sent me for a scan. I was relieved

the results showed there was nothing wrong and said to David that from now on we should make the most of whatever time we had left in life because choking showed how quickly life could stop. I was to remember that suggestion very clearly in the months that followed.

27 April 2005

I came home from shopping on 27 April 2005 to find David had collapsed on the couch in great pain. Tom Vennik and Allan Holden came and administered a priesthood blessing and I phoned for an ambulance. After several hours at the hospital emergency department David was taken to the operating theatre and diagnosed with bowel cancer that had perforated causing septicaemia.

He spent 10 days in ICU then to the high dependency ward and back to ICU after each of several abdominal operations in the next 6 weeks for massive infections. During that time a tracheostomy was performed to assist with breathing difficulties but something went wrong with it and David could not swallow even a teaspoon of water after that. After a month in a ward he went to the rehabilitation ward and finally home after 3 months.

Over the next 5 months David enjoyed a quiet time at home, gradually able to eat a few teaspoons of soup and had milk feed via a tube into his stomach, but had to return to hospital several times for various problems with the colostomy he had been fitted with. On 9 December I had to take David back to the hospital and knew it would be for the last time. A month later he died on 8 January 2006 with Moana and our family friend Dorothy Downer and myself at his bedside. Owen had just taken Alma and Jacob out for a few minutes but returned immediately.

I had been beside David all day every day for all the months

he was in hospital. It was 3 months in Intensive Care Unit and the surgical ward. Later there were a few days at a time to stay in, and finally the last month in the hospice ward. The staff never told me not to be there and I think they were glad I was able to look after David and save them the work. I assisted with all his care and held up a sheet so he never saw his own abdominal wound, which was the worst wound I have ever seen in all my years as a nurse. That is why it took 3 months before it healed enough for David to go home.

David was really glad I was with him every day and after the tracheostomy when he could not speak I found notes he had written telling the nurses he did not want anything done until I arrived. When the tracheostomy wound in his throat healed and he was able to speak after several weeks, the first words he said were, "Olive I love you".

We grew closer together and it did not matter what I did or how I looked as long as I was there. One day David became restless and lifted his head off the pillow looking all round the room. I was sitting beside the bed reading and he could not see me so I stood up and asked what he wanted. He replied, I just wanted to know you were there.

One evening when I was about to leave to go home after arriving at 11 am, I asked David if it was all right if I went home now. He let out a big sigh and said, It's never all right when you go. I thought back over all the 40 years of bringing up a family, disagreeing about how things should be done or not done, the crippling money worries, the illnesses and all the other things that seemed important at the time, and realised that most of the things we worried or argued over really did not matter. We had created a family unit that would continue on throughout all eternity and that was what really mattered.

The following months were difficult to get through and I often felt overwhelmed and exhausted. I had been so busy for so long it was difficult to suddenly stop. After any death,

whether that is the death of a person, or a marriage, or a job, it takes about a year to come to terms with the changes. Then another year to find ways to create a new way of life. After Scott died, our son who died as a newborn baby, I created a description of what it is like so other people would understand a little better. It was like somebody had dug a large, deep hole right outside our house so that whenever we wanted to go out of the door we had to walk around the hole. We did not ask for the hole to be there, it happened suddenly and was beyond our control. We could not get rid of it but had to find ways of adjusting our life to cope with it. In the early days we found it difficult to walk around the edge of the hole but knew we had to do that. As time went on we found that although we had to walk round the hole, and it was always there, we could still do other things and go out and meet people and get on with our life.

It was a lonely life. There was nobody to tell the little things that happened each day. There was nobody to discuss the little decisions about what to have for dinner, or if the car tyres needed more air in them. One of the saddest times was when I went with Fraser and Monique to visit Owen and Moana and family in Auckland. When we all went for a walk in the park, Owen walked with Moana, Fraser walked with Monique, Alma and Jacob rode together on their bikes, and I walked by myself. They all talked to me and included me in all the conversation but really I felt so lonely that I wished I could have been a hundred miles away.

Years before that when I heard of somebody having had their spouse die 10 years or so before, I thought what an awful long time that was to be on your own, but as the months turned into years for me, I found I made a new life for myself. I could still do all the things I wanted to do, I just had nobody to do them with, or tell them about afterwards. Like the hole, I had no choice about what had happened, I just had to make the best of it and create a new way of life for myself.

I was fortunate in having good friends who helped me a lot in this way. Quite often they invited me for dinner or I had several of them come to dinner at my house. We also started having lunch at each other's homes once a month and called ourselves the Golden Girls. That was until we realised the golden years of our 70's were not quite so golden after all with so many health challenges, and changed it to Ladies Who Lunch.

I had to rely on friends because my sons and their families all went to England with their work and I was left on my own. That was something else that I had never expected but it was their right to make their own decisions. I have found that whenever I have felt sad and lonely, if I can think of something to do for somebody else it lifts my own mood and I feel better. So many times I had to do things I did not know how to do or thought I could not manage, such as clearing out all the items in David's shed. I felt overwhelmed not only with physically lifting heavy items out of the shed, but working out what to keep and what to give away or throw out. Often I would be in tears but had a prayer and kept on working. It was a case of cry and pray, then try again. So that is how it has been in the many years since David died. I never think I have a strong faith, but the little bit I have, has kept me going and I hope it will continue that way as long as I live.

2006

In November 2006 Owen and Moana were sealed in the temple in Hamilton with a lovely reception after that in the nearby chapel. The next day I was called as Relief Society president for Te Awamutu ward, and was also called as a temple ordinance worker. Busy time.

2007

In March 2007 Isaac was born and in July I went to Manila, Philippines for 6 weeks to visit Craig, Cancy, Ethan aged 4 and Joshua aged 2. I loved being Grandma at last and found that Cancy was expecting another baby but unsure about giving birth in Manila. We looked at all the hospitals available and I was very concerned about the standard of care in all of them, some much more than others. So Craig and Cancy decided to return to New Zealand for the birth in December and Kyla was born on the 12th.

2008

In 2008 Monique was unwell with a miscarriage so I looked after Isaac a lot as I lived only a few minutes away from them. Then they moved to the next street from me so it was even nearer. When Monique was expecting Nathan she had a lot of terrible sickness so I went and got Isaac up and brought him back to my house for the morning, then after lunch took him back to his home for a sleep, brought him back again and cooked the dinner. We all had dinner and I put Isaac to bed before going back to my house.

I absolutely loved looking after Isaac and it was no trouble at all. We enjoyed being together whether at my house or going to the shops or park. It was the same after Nathan was born and I was able to carry him around singing to him to soothe him. I was glad to be able to help Monique at such a difficult time in her life. I never had any help when my children were little as all my relatives lived in England, so I have always been glad to help my daughters-in-law in any way I can.

2009

From mid 2006, through to 2009 and 2010 I had terrible neighbours all around me. The house in front of mine was let to someone from the Women's Refuge with her 3 teenage children. The same night they moved in there was screaming and shouting and the police and ambulance were called. We later found out that her previous partner had discovered where she had moved to and came at midnight and beat her up. The drinking and shouting and loud music continued for the 4 years they lived there.

The house behind mine was owned by a woman who kept screaming because she thought people were chasing her. Eventually she sold the house and moved away but the new owners let the house to their teenage son and nephew. They brought in their teenage friends with loud music and shouting, but they also grew and sold marijuana. I was continually at the police station asking for help, and was even assigned my own police officer but there did not seem much they were able to do about the situation. Even when the neighbours got a gun and fired it randomly around outside the police said that if I liked they would come and talk to the neighbours about it, but I preferred them not to do that as it would make the situation worse. I was too scared to go out of my house on that side, and could not even go and put washing on the line.

Eventually at one of their parties, one of them accidentally shot the other. That happened to be an evening when I was babysitting Isaac and newborn Nathan in November 2009 while Fraser and Monique went to the chapel. When I got home about 10 pm I found a police car in our road and a policeman standing on the drive I share with the neighbours. He was guarding 5 people from the next house who were soon taken away in another police car. So at last the police were able to step in. Even then it took several more months before the young neighbours were all moved off somewhere

else.

Then to my amazement the house on the other side of me was let to people who also sold drugs from their garage and caused a lot of noise. As neighbours we all got together and went to the police station and were asked to write down car numbers of people calling at the house. Eventually there was a big fight so the police were called and those people were evicted as well.

2010

Soon after Nathan was born Fraser decided to go to England to work with Craig. He thought it would be for only 6 months, maybe a year but I felt sure it would be much longer, maybe 3 years. Even I could not have guessed it would be over 10 years! I wanted them to have the opportunities they thought they could have but knew I would miss them all terribly. They sold a lot of their furniture and put the rest of their belongings in a storage unit in Feb 2010. Monique went with Isaac and Nathan to stay with her parents for several months while Fraser got settled. Fraser flew over to Toronto every 2 months for a few days then moved to Monique's parents for a year and 2012 they all moved to Euxton, north of England to live across the road from where Craig and Cancy had moved to with Ethan, Joshua, Kyla and Amy.

It was a time of enormous sadness for me when Fraser and Monique and their children left Te Awamutu mid February 2010. I simply loved looking after Isaac and we had great fun being together either at my house, or at the park or shops. I had 3 years of being a Grandma and that was all I have ever had with any of my grandchildren except for occasional visits. When Craig and Cancy visited us for the weekend when Ethan was 5 months old and came to church with us I remember happily carrying baby Ethan around to show him

off to all my friends. Similarly, when Kyla was a baby, and Nathan and later Beth, I loved to look after them. I did not see Joshua or Amy as little babies, and did not know Alma and Jacob until they were 5 or 6 years old, but enjoyed having Alma and Jacob come and stay for a few days in their school holidays. I have never said much about it because my sons have the right to make their own decisions about where they live, but it has had a huge impact on my happiness and well-being. I have had no husband, sons, daughters-in-law or grandchildren since 2010 and although I have lovely friends and have been fortunate to be able to save enough money to visit my families overseas for a few weeks each year I have missed so much of my grandchildren's growing up years. I have often wondered why my sons did it, and mostly it comes down to money, or the search for it. As far as I can see they have not made any money and have missed living in New Zealand all these years. Maybe one day they will make the money they hope for, and I certainly hope for success for them, but I do not think it will be in my lifetime and I have missed so much because of their decisions.

2011

In April 2011 Craig asked me to go and live in their house for 6 months to look after their children while he went to work in Cebu, Philippines and Cancy worked in their computer business as well, but in England. By this time they had Amy who was born 1 January 2010. I looked after them for a few weeks and then Craig decided he needed Cancy to fly to Manila to work there with him. I insisted they have Amy with their mother but I looked after the other 3 children for 2 months.

Considering I was nearly 70 years old it was exhausting but I was glad to have the opportunity to do it and be with my grandchildren. I remembered all over again how tiring it is to be the mother of young children. That had little to do with

my age, but it is simply a fact of life that looking after a family and a home is exhausting. Then couple that with the fact that so many women go out to work, and it is no wonder there is so much stress around. I found I could manage as long as I was very organised. Kyla was only 3 and missed her parents very much. I took her to nursery every morning, after taking Ethan and Joshua to their nearby school. I walked back to their home around 10 am to do the housework, prepare meals and go back for Kyla soon after 2 pm before walking to school for Ethan and Joshua. Then we all went to the nearby playground for half an hour which they all loved. Often we also walked to the library and took out many books as all the children loved reading. After homework and spelling were done we had dinner and baths and I read stories to them before they went to bed around 7.30 pm. Mostly I read *The Animals of Farthingale Wood* which we all enjoyed. After about a month the school year finished so we had more time to go out to the nearby forest and to the library and playground but during the school term there was more time pressure. When the children were in bed I got everything ready for the following day of school, with a slice of bread and butter for play lunch in the fridge, reading books signed, shoes cleaned and ready to put on. Then while the summer evenings were still light, I mowed the lawns as Craig did not do that because he said the garden was not important. I wanted the grass short so the children could play out in the garden as it was summer time, so I mowed it which was hard work.

The owner of the house had planned on renovating it but when he realised there would be children coming into it he left it in its run-down state and Craig and Cancy were grateful to have somewhere to live. They had stayed at the Preston temple apartments for 3 weeks while trying with great difficulty to find a place to rent after arriving from the Philippines around 2009. I washed all the windows and paintwork and painted them. I also took down all the curtains and washed them and soon the house felt much

lighter and brighter. A few weeks after Cancy went to the Philippines I decided to paint the kitchen walls white instead of the dark mustard yellow so I bought the paint and paintbrushes and painted it. I did not tell Craig and Cancy about it because I thought it would be a nice surprise for them. How wrong could I be! When Craig returned to England he was very annoyed that I had done this but I will never forget how Ethan's face lit up with a big smile when he came home from school and saw the white kitchen. He said he loved it and it looked just like his school friend Kyle's house.

Cancy returned with Amy and continued working on the business from home with me helping with the housework and meals. Craig returned from Cebu in time to baptise Ethan in September. Just days before I was to return to New Zealand a friend Cynthia Johnson at their Chorley ward discovered I had not seen anything of the church history sites in the north of England and took me out for 2 days to see many places around Preston and nearby villages which was very interesting. She even hired a private guide, Peter, to take us around many historical sites.

Christmas day 2011 I realised I could not see much out of my left eye but could not go to an optometrist as they were closed. When I went 3 weeks later a CT scan showed I had bleeding at the back of my eye. It took 4 months for me to be seen at the hospital by which time the bleeding had resolved. I told the eye specialist it was an answer to prayer, because I had had a priesthood blessing. After a few months I had more illness symptoms but they also were resolved.

2012

I decided to serve a mission but did not know what kind of mission to do. I was serving as Primary president following my release as Relief Society president, and was still a temple

ordinance worker. I asked other sisters in the temple for their opinions and one, my friend Sandra Beijerling, suggested I ask her husband Daniel. Little did I know that Daniel was the Pacific area manager for FamilySearch Support missionaries and before I knew it I had a form to fill in to serve a mission with them, working from home.

I started August 2012 and said I would do it for only one year because I wanted to visit my families in England in July 2012. I was given time to visit England for 2 months and that pattern continued for 6 years while I served about 15 hours or more a week answering phone calls from all over the world but mostly from USA helping fix people's problems with their computer while working with the FamilySearch website.

2013

Every year from 2013 to 2019 I was able to go to England for about 2 months. Except for 2018 and 2019 I visited Owen, Craig and Fraser and all their families as well as my sisters, brothers and friends.

June 2015 I was able to go to England for 3 months to help Monique before and after the birth of Beth. In fact, I almost had to deliver her at home, but the ambulance arrived just in time, and rushed Monique off to Preston hospital where Beth was born half an hour later.

Because Beth had Down syndrome she was very sleepy and not at all interested in feeding so it took several weeks to get that established. I was able to be Monique's baby-nurse so I looked after the housework, cooking and washing so all Monique had to do was look after the baby.

2018

I was glad to serve a mission but it was a lot to organise my time to fit in those hours and look after a home, garden, visiting teaching, temple ordinance worker and being Primary president and I was relieved to be released from that after about 8 months and was a Primary teacher instead. Even though I was glad to help, it never got easier and I often felt worn out with all that I was doing and May 2018 I went to stay with Fraser and Monique and family for 3 months and was taken ill.

For 5 weeks I felt very cold, with pain all over me and especially in my head. It hurt to eat so I could only swallow cereal and soup. I had double vision for 1 week, unable to read ordinary print or cope with sunlight for several weeks otherwise it set off migraine-like bright lights in my eyes. Fingers and feet cold, numb and cramped, legs cramped.

After 5 weeks the pain was less in my body but still almost constantly in my head so I went to the family's doctor and she had me at the hospital emergency department within 2 hours. After several hours in the hospital they diagnosed it as Giant Cell Arteritis, sometimes called Temporal Arteritis, where some of my red blood cells were enlarged and blocking the temporal arteries in my head.

They were concerned I would either have a stroke or go blind so I was immediately put on a massive dose of Prednisone 60mg a day which saved my life but gave me huge side effects. I was so giddy I could hardly walk in a straight line and so shaky it was difficult to get food into my mouth without dropping it. I did not have to stay in hospital overnight but had to go back the next day for more blood tests and scans.

A week later they also did a temporal artery biopsy which proved the diagnosis and a gastroscopy to find out why I was anaemic and breathless. I was sent to a hospital specialist

who was totally against my travelling to visit relatives and friends around England, which was a great disappointment to me.

Monique and Fraser and children went to Toronto, Canada, for 5 weeks to visit her parents because her father was so ill. I spent most days going to the Preston temple and visiting Lynda Clarke across the road from Fraser and Monique's as we had become good friends.

When I returned to New Zealand and was transferred to my family doctor Paul Kennedy and a hospital specialist Dr Silva, it took 2 months for my blood test levels to return to the same as they were when I left England. I was still giddy and shaky and could not hold scissors to cut out, so asked my friends to come and help and we started making crafts together one afternoon 2 or 3 times a month. It was a help to me and they enjoyed it too. For the first few months after the diagnosis of Arteritis I was able to reduce the level of Prednisone 10mg a month but when it got to 20 mg after 4 months it could be reduced only by 5 mgs and then after another few months by 1mg at a time. The giddiness and shakiness continued but slightly less.

I was sad when my Bishop Josh Brown and our stake president John Kendall decided I should be given an honourable release from serving a mission. I did not want to stop but realised I could not put the energy needed into getting well while I was doing so many other things. So I was released from my mission and not given a calling, but able to visit people for ministering.

Before I returned to New Zealand, and while I was still very ill I discovered that Craig wanted to divorce Cancy. This caused great distress to us as a family because we have all loved Cancy for 20 years. They had been married for about 17 years. Craig and family moved from England to Georgia, near Russia, and later back to Manila, Philippines and Cancy stayed on in Georgia where the family had been living for the

past year. They had all loved living in Georgia where Craig was able to have an office and living area provided free of charge, or very low cost, as the government wanted to encourage overseas businesses to work there.

On my way back from England I had booked to return via Manila, before I knew of the divorce, and listened to Craig talking about Cancy but still could not see why he wanted a divorce. All couples get annoyed with each other, quite often, but it does not have to lead to divorce. I asked Craig why he wanted a divorce and he said he had not been happy for several years and he wanted to be happy. I immediately answered that being happy was not a good enough reason for divorce, and he had 4 children to think of.

After a few months Cancy moved back to Auckland, New Zealand where her brother Davy let her live in his house and use his car because he and his family had moved to Melbourne, Australia, for specialised treatment for his autistic son Liam. Cancy's sister Ginny and her husband Jared had their own business Streetsmart looking after rented flats and houses so they gave Cancy a job there and she was good at it.

The custody arrangements were not sorted out quickly enough for Craig who wanted to return to working in Taipei, Taiwan, where he worked after Manila until the beginning of 2019, so he moved himself and 4 children to New Zealand. He asked to come and live at my house but I was not well enough to do that, so Owen and Moana offered for them to live in their garage until they found a house to rent. As it was summer it was all right to live in the garage and they had the use of the bathroom next to it. As my friend Karen had just had to move her mother to a rest home and was giving away most of her furniture it was an ideal time for me to get Craig set up with beds. They emptied Fraser's storage unit in Te Awamutu and used the furniture from there as well. After about 3 months Craig found a house to rent in Huntly and they all moved there. They decided to train an Assistance

dog, a 6 week old black labrador puppy named Hui, for a year and they all adored him.

During all this time in 2018, Owen and Moana had decided to return to live in New Zealand after 6 years in England, having sold their house in Hemel Hempstead, as Alma was serving a mission in Argentina speaking Spanish and Jacob was serving a mission in France and Switzerland speaking French. They returned to spend Christmas in NZ, mainly with Moana's family in Auckland but also came to my area as they wanted to buy a house in the Waikato rather than Auckland.

Owen had to return to England to finish his contract for another 4 months and to their great surprise they found that Moana was expecting a baby, after 14 years of them wanting that to happen. Owen returned to NZ and they found a house to buy in north Hamilton and moved in just in time for the premature birth of Caleb on 31 July 2018.

Because he was 2 months prem and has Downs syndrome Caleb had great difficulty swallowing and breathing so was put on continuous oxygen with a tube up his nose and milk feeds through a tube up the other side of his nose. Owen and Moana spent all their time at the Neonatal Unit at Waikato hospital except when Owen was working with his company in England. He worked at nights as it was day time in England. Owen had to go back to England in October for 3 weeks just a few days after Caleb came out of hospital still on continuous oxygen, so Moana's mother, sisters, sister-in-law and I all stayed with her for a few days each to cover that time. Caleb had signs of croup so had to go back into hospital and while there they tried him without oxygen and he managed without it.

In December Caleb had to go back into hospital to have a tube inserted into his stomach so his milk feed could go directly in that way. This was because Caleb had managed to pull out the tube from his nose and it was realised that he

would keep doing that if the operation was not done. In all this time there was a great deal of learning for Moana and Owen to have to undergo and they did extremely well to cope with it all.

Christmas 2018 was spent in hospital so it was not until December 2019 that we had our first Redmond family Christmas in Hamilton, at the home of Owen and Moana because Alma and Jacob had returned from their missions. Owen, Moana and Caleb went to Europe to meet Alma and Jacob after being released from their missions and they all then flew to various places to visit Switzerland, Paris and Rome, sometimes with their friend Garry Snailham who had been like a grandfather to the boys while in England.

2020

So the year 2020 has rolled around. Long years ago we could never have visualised being alive in the year 2020, in fact, when the year 2000 was approaching people worried that computers would not be able to switch over from the 1900's to the 2000's and life as we knew it would stop! It didn't, of course!

As I write this conclusion to my life story it is the unusual date of 29 February which happens only once every 4 years. A week ago it was another unusual date for me, the 23 February. That was the date of the deaths of 3 people in the generations immediately connected to me. My Grandma died 23 February 1966 and 30 years later her daughter, my mother Freda died during the night and was found by a neighbour the next day on the 23 February 1996. One of my sons Scott died as a baby an hour after midnight which was just into 24 February 1978.

For the past nearly 2 years I have struggled with a new challenge called Giant Cell Arteritis. I had never heard of it and neither have most people because it affects only about 1 in 10 thousand people, mostly over the age of 60. The red cells in my blood became enlarged - giants - and started to block the arteries in my forehead causing great pain in my head. The doctors don't know why that happened but it may well be related to another serious illness I had in my twenties called Sarcoidosis. For the Arteritis I was given huge doses of steroids to reduce the inflammation and prevent blindness or paralysis. It is difficult for me to walk because of breathlessness and I am giddy and shaky all the time. I have chairs positioned across my living room to hold on to as I walk. If I stand still I automatically hold on to something - or someone - whoever is handy! Occasionally I feel slight pains in my head, but nowhere as bad as in the beginning of the illness when the pains were hitting my head every minute for a few seconds each time and I could sleep for only 3 hours a night. My sight was affected and I could not bear sunlight and had to wear sunglasses even indoors.

Sometimes I feel scared it is going to start all over again. My symptoms become much worse when I am faced with the anger or criticism of other people indicating that there is a strong element of emotional distress causing physical pain or illness. Anger is so corrosive, like hot lava erupting from a volcano, hurting all in its path. Those who are hurt retaliate causing more anger. My energy reserves are depleted by anger and criticism and like a bank account that has gone into overdraft, it takes a long time to build up again.

However, I have learned positive things from these events. To keep my muscles from wasting away, as they did when I was first ill, I force myself to go for a half hour walk each morning and evening. It is not easy to walk because I have had scoliosis, a crooked back, all my life which is getting worse as I get older and my spine presses on my lungs making it more difficult to breathe. Also I have mitral valve prolapse which means my heart is not working properly. To

take my mind off the breathlessness while walking I listen to talks of all kinds, science, religion, history, and I recently subscribed to an audio-book club to listen to books read out loud on various subjects. I am glad of all I have learned during this time. Another remedy is humour. A lot of my life has been sad and I have learned to counteract that with humour. I enjoy reading jokes and funny quotes and then sharing them with other people so we can all laugh together.

So my conclusion to this book section is that life is not at all funny most of the time so we have to search to find laughter. It is a skill to be learned 'by doing' the same as cooking or driving a car. There are many terrible things happening all over the world, but wherever we live in the world we all smile in the same language. I love to find funny things and smile by myself or with other people. In essence, I would say that 3 very important aspects of my life are learning, laughter and love.

Times I have felt inspiration

While I was staying in Euxton, England in 2011 a discussion arose in a Sunday School lesson in Chorley about inspiration felt through the Holy Ghost. As other church members spoke about answers to their prayers, they were so definite that I felt inadequate because I had not received such strong answers to my prayers. I remembered a time when Fraser spoke in Sacramento meeting on his return from his mission in Melbourne, Australia, and said he felt the Holy Ghost strongly at times on his mission and wished he had known more about recognising that before he went. I later explained that I did not know it myself so could not tell him what I did not know. I decided to write down the times I had felt inspiration, or answers to my prayers, or when I noticed the tender mercies of the Lord. I thought it would be only a few things but was surprised to find the memories came thick and fast.

I learned from writing about these events that our answers do not come with blinding lights as for Paul on the road to Damascus, or Joseph Smith in the Sacred Grove, but ordinary moments where we may miss the special answers simply because we are busy and they do not come accompanied by the angel Moroni. Also, we are expected to pray and then go to work. We need to pray as if it all depends on God, and then go to work as if it all depends on us. Answers to our prayers often do not come when we are on our knees but when we are on our feet after saying Amen.

Owen's illness as a toddler 1972

On Monday 20 November 1972 the day started off very badly

but gave me an incredible insight into spiritual matters. Owen, aged 18 months, was lying in his cot. It was 8.30 am and David had just gone to work at Rank Xerox, as a photocopy engineer. Suddenly, Owen vomited everywhere - forceful, projectile vomiting - and started screaming and writhing in pain. Nothing seemed to help and this went on for about 30 minutes. It came in spasms. Owen would scream with intense abdominal pain and then sink back pale and exhausted for a few minutes, until the next wave of pain came. His face looked grey, and he lay so still and lifeless that I was scared he was going to die. As a nurse I had seen extremely ill people, and thought Owen had symptoms very similar to an intestinal obstruction, for which the only cure would be an emergency operation.

I immediately phoned Roni Connors, wife of the Seminary Director for New Zealand who was based in Feilding, to ask for a priesthood holder to come and give a special prayer. We had been attending church for a year but I did not know what a Blessing was, nor had I seen anyone have one, but knew that it was vital for Owen to have it at that time. I did not phone the doctor as I had a strong feeling not to, and later discovered that our doctor was away in Australia.

About 45 minutes later Roger Connors arrived, bringing with him the elderly Abe We Teoka, Noeline's father, who was the only person he had been able to find who was not out at work. They gave Owen a blessing as he slumped pale and limp, and completely exhausted on my lap. They commented that they were amazed to see him like that as he was normally so full of energy.

In the Blessing, Owen was told that our Heavenly Father was very mindful of him and loved him, and did not want him to be ill. Also that I would be able to stop worrying about Owen.

Then the brethren went home and Owen and I sat in the rocking chair, with Owen very quiet and subdued. Suddenly, within 5 minutes of his Blessing, Owen gave me a really

lovely smile, slid off my lap, and ran over to his toy box, and brought me one of his favourite toys. Then he ran back and got another one. Then he started diving all the toys out of his toy box, and running backwards and forwards across the room, laughing and so completely well and overjoyed. This continued for 2 hours and I was so fascinated I spent most of that time sitting watching Owen, and enjoying the beautiful feeling in the room. Then Owen had his lunch and mid-day sleep with no trouble at all, and none ever after that.

As a trained nurse, I was amazed at the speed and strength of Owen's recovery, as he was clearly exhausted by the violence of the pain. However, the thing I will always remember most is the look of complete joy in living, on Owen's face as he ran around the room with his toys afterwards. His whole being was radiant, and the room seemed to be full of sunshine. I felt I had caught a glimpse of the happiness of Heaven that day. It was probably the first time I felt the Spirit, but did not know how to recognise it as such. Also, it was probably the first time I saw the wonderful spirit that is in Owen, but, again, did not know enough about the gospel to understand it.

Visiting teaching Delia Mataki

I was baptised January 1973 so officially joined the Church then, but had already been teaching in Primary for a year by then. When asked if I would be willing to teach, I agreed to do that but did not know what Primary was. I looked at the lesson book and decided there were things I did not know anything about and could not teach, so would have to leave them out. By the end of the year I understood and agreed with everything in the book and asked to be baptised. David had also been teaching a class of teenagers in Sunday School but was not baptised for another 2 years.

In 1973 I was asked to go Visiting Teaching with Debbie

Dittmer. We were both in our twenties, new to the Church and knew nothing about Visiting Teaching. We were assigned to visit Delia Mataki who we had never heard of because she did not come to church. All we knew was that she had a child, not much money, and her husband was not a member of the church. When we knocked at her door Delia seemed not very happy to see us but invited us in. We talked for a few minutes when suddenly she burst into tears and ran from the room. We were astonished and did not know what to do. We had heard that her husband, Peter, did not want anything to do with the church. We wondered if he would come and vent his anger on us. I suggested to Debbie that we should leave. She refused to let a man threaten her and said we should stay where we were. While we were deciding whether to go or stay Peter came back into the room. He explained that Delia wanted us to visit her but it reminded her of what she was doing wrong and made her upset. We realised they were probably not married and this was a cause of concern to Delia.

As the months went on we continued to visit Delia and she started coming to church again while her husband went to his church. Over the next 10 years or so Delia would come to church for several months, and then drift away, then back again, and so on. Even when she was actually at church Delia spent quite a long time sitting in the corridor chatting to other people, not interested in learning anything. When I was called as Sunday School teacher for the adults, I used to go into the corridor and invite them all into class. After a few weeks of doing this I heard Delia say to the others, "We'd better go into class now. Here comes Olive." A few years after this Delia was called as Relief Society president and her children all attended Seminary and their other classes. We moved away from Feilding at the beginning of 1994 while Craig was serving a mission in Taiwan. Around 1998 when Craig had been living in Auckland for 3 years after returning from his mission, he met Cancy who had joined the Church only a few months before that. Cancy's father was born in

China and her mother in the Philippines and they moved to New Zealand from the Philippines when Cancy was 15 years old. Her parents were Buddhists but when Cancy was about 20 her best friend from school days, Liz, took her to church and introduced her to the missionaries. They would sit and teach Cancy but she did not realise this as she thought they were just chatting with her. After a few months Cancy was baptised. Although Cancy knew Craig wanted to marry her she felt inspired to serve a mission and went into the Missionary Training Centre in February 2000. We went to the MTC with her as her parents were not members of the church and she wanted us to show them around the Visitors Centre. To our great surprise and delight, who should be in the MTC but Delia and 2 of her sons. She explained that Simon was in the same intake as Cancy, and Rereti would be in the next intake 6 weeks later. I could not help thinking back over the almost 30 years since I first knew Delia and so often felt like giving up on her, thinking she was never going to get anywhere. Now here she was with 2 sons ready to serve missions. I could not see the potential in her family, but Heavenly Father could and He did not give up.

Patriarchal blessings Feb 1976

Before my Patriarchal Blessing was given to me the Stake Patriarch Keith Harrison asked me what I wanted in my life. I thought carefully and realised that what I wanted most was for our children to grow up happy in our home and to want to return to it for visits when they were grown up and had their own families. How little I could have realised that they would all leave, not only our home but this country, and go and live on the other side of the world with their families. It is a good thing we do not know the sadness that will one day come into our lives. After I had my blessing and then David had had his, we sat talking to the Harrisons and they commented on what strong spirits our 2 children had. They

said that Owen had a strong spirit but Craig had an even stronger spirit. Brother Harrison also told us that when giving the blessing to each of us he felt a strong prompting to urge us to go to the temple. He tried to resist it because it had to be our desire, but felt he was to say that, so he did.

David and Olive to the temple for first time 17 Apr 1976

We travelled to the temple the day before our temple visit. Oliver and Christine Ratajczek travelled with us in their car. Before we set out David checked his pockets for the money we had saved for the journey and accommodation. It was \$300 which was a lot of money to us. He could not find it. The more he searched, the more we panicked. It seemed we could not go. Then Oliver and Christine said they would go to the bank and lend us the money and we could pay them back later on. We reluctantly agreed to do this because there was no other way to get to the temple, but we were so down-hearted about losing the money and could not understand how that had happened. We had a lovely first visit to the temple, nice accommodation and good journey there and back. When we returned home and took our luggage out of the car, David carried his suit indoors and felt in all the pockets yet again. This time he discovered the top pocket in his jacket had a double pocket and inside the inner one was the money. If we had given in to our worries we would not have gone to the temple. I am so glad we were determined to go and had friends who helped us carry that out.

Car breakdown 1977

Our family lived in Feilding near Palmerston North for 23

years and travelled to the temple for most of those years. Mostly we travelled on the overnight Stake bus but occasionally drove in our old car. One time the car stopped in the middle of a forest area and nothing David could find in the engine gave a clue as to why it had stopped or what he could do about it. There were no other cars on the road and we felt very isolated. After several minutes I asked David if he had had a prayer and he answered, "No. I've been too busy trying to fix it." We had a prayer asking for help and before David had even said Amen a car pulled up behind us with the driver offering assistance. While the 2 men looked in the engine the woman in the car came and comforted me. Then they told us that they would tow us to the next small town where they knew the garage mechanic. When we arrived the mechanic was just shutting up his garage for the day but looked in our car engine and explained that the part needed to fix it was an old one he did not think he had in stock and would take another 2 or 3 days to get sent in. We were very disappointed but the people who had towed us there thoughtfully offered to have us stay at their house if we had to wait that long for the spare part. The mechanic hunted around his garage and to his surprise found the part needed and proceeded to fit it. Our kind rescuers went on their way and the mechanic continued working on our car for over an hour. It was only when I started walking around the garage to while away the time that I realised his wife and little boy were patiently waiting in their car to take him home. We were given answers to our prayers in the right people driving past at the exact time to take us to someone they knew who could help us, who had a specific car part he did not even know he had in stock.

Scott's birth and death

After Craig was born we hoped for another baby but this did not happen for 4 years. We were overjoyed to find we were to

have another child but the pregnancy was full of problems. I remember saying at 6 months that I thought the child would have many physical problems and may be in a wheelchair and we would have to make his life as good as we were able to. I always thought the baby was a boy and it never, ever occurred to me that he might die. I had to stay in bed for 6 weeks before he was born, due to bouts of bleeding, and to try and hold on to his life but in late February I started to haemorrhage and phoned Glynn Garland to come and help me. She was like a grandma to our children as well as being our Relief Society president. Glynn phoned the doctor who came to the house straight away and immediately called the ambulance. Being a small town there was only one ambulance available and that had just left town with a heart attack case. So it was over an hour before they came back for me. As a nurse I was very aware of my blood pressure going down steadily, as I was literally bleeding to death, and there was nothing I could do about it except pray.

Once at the hospital I was rushed from the ambulance to Emergency Department for intravenous drips to be put in and then rushed to maternity theatre and then to main theatre with each place deciding I needed more specialised treatment than they could give me. David had arrived from work by then and looked extremely worried. I wondered why I did not feel worried but calm the whole time. When I woke up from the caesarian surgery I was overjoyed to learn that my baby was alive, which I had not thought would be the case. David phoned our friend Jim Dunlop to assist him in giving a blessing to me, and then to our baby in the Neonatal unit before he went home to phone everyone to say our baby had arrived. The next day he had to phone them all again and say that our baby had died. I remember when the doctor came to tell me the sad news, I kept wanting to ask if he had the right mother because I had felt so sure our baby was all right. I was certain he had made a terrible mistake. David returned to the hospital and as the hours went on we cried and prayed and tried to make sense of it all. Even in the

midst of all the confusion and distress I knew that we had to consciously give Scott back to our Heavenly Father and not just have his death happen as if there had been no reason for it. In that way Scott was not taken from us, but we gave him back. We were helped to arrange the funeral for the following day but I was still far too ill to be able to go to it.

Throughout that sad time I felt surrounded by a warm light and a feeling of love. I even knew the colour of it. It was an apricot glow. A year later I returned to the maternity department looking for the room I had been in, which I knew was right next to the phone box. A midwife saw me looking at the room and commented that it needed painting because it was so dilapidated with pale blue paint flaking off the walls. I was shocked and could hardly believe it was the same room because I was so sure the room I had been in had been a shining apricot colour. The previous year nurses would come into my room to chat because they said they felt happy there. One afternoon I had about 4 or 5 nurses sitting on chairs, and even perched on the radiator chatting because they liked to be there. Visitors had come to see me and commented that they felt happier than they had expected to. I did not know exactly whether it was the love of Heavenly Father, Jesus Christ or the Holy Ghost, but I realised that the feeling was not of this world. Because I had intravenous drips in my arms and other medical equipment attached to me I could hardly move and could only pray. I found that my prayers were different from usual in that they were so quick, almost not using words, but as if it was thought to thought and bypassed words. For 3 days that warm loving feeling was there the whole time. Then over the next few days it gradually diminished until, as I grew stronger physically, it was no longer there.

Over the next few weeks I grew to depend on David completely and as long as he was there I was all right. Again I had to stay in bed at home for about 6 weeks to recover from almost dying. David had to return to work but worked as short hours as he could so he was home to look after Owen

and Craig who spent time with their Nana Ev Cavanagh or friends from school and playcentre. All our neighbours did not visit because they had not spoken to us for several years since we joined the church and had told us that as we were Mormons we were no longer welcome in their homes. Nobody from church visited me at home because they knew how ill I had been and thought I should rest. So it was a lonely time at home, but all I wanted was to have David, Owen and Craig there and my world was happy. It was a time of learning what was really important in life and nothing else mattered much.

However, I suffered all the losses experienced after the death of someone as close as my own child. I remembered waking up after the anaesthetic when I had been so close to death and felt as if I had to make myself come back to the earth. I had lost so much blood for several hours before the doctors could find where the damaged artery was, that they said the blood was pouring out like a garden hose. I had to have several blood transfusions with a special pump to make the blood go in quicker. I don't know how near I was at that time to the next world but I experienced a feeling that I did not want to leave wherever it was, and did not want to stay on this earth. In fact, when I was well enough to go out again after several weeks, I remember walking across a road very slowly knowing that a car was coming and hoping it would run me over. When David and I went to the temple after about 3 months I remember sitting on the seats outside and not wanting to go home because I did not want to leave the security of the temple. I felt angry and confused. I tried not to be angry because I knew I must accept what had happened but I was desperately hurt and wanted to see something to show for my pain. I kept all the curtains drawn because I wanted to smash every window in the house. I wanted to hear the glass break and see the smashed glass. I even wanted to be cut by the glass and see the blood as some physical evidence of the pain I felt. I was angry because I had wanted our child so much and knew David and I would have

been good parents, and confused because I did not know why we could not keep him. I commented to David that there are so many girls in this country who are having a baby and so worried because they did not want that to happen. Why couldn't they have had my baby who was going to die, and I have theirs? Then David answered that it was because Scott chose to come to us so he would be part of our family forever. I had not thought of that. It did not take away the pain but at least gave me an answer as to why it had all happened. At Scott's funeral our friend Jim Dunlop spoke about Scott who he had been asked by David to assist him giving a blessing before Scott died. Jim later became the New Zealand temple president and understood more than we did. He said that when he stood before the hospital incubator that Scott was in he felt the presence of a very strong spirit in Scott and felt he was one of the great ones and was needed back in heaven very soon. He said that he hoped one day to meet him and know more about him.

As the months went on I could only cope with my life if I kept busy. I washed every blanket and curtain in the house, and then started painting the house. I could sleep for only about 4 hours a night and then had to get up and work to keep myself occupied. I used to look out of the window at night and think of the moon shining on that cold grave at the cemetery. I had to stop myself thinking about it so I would not run outside screaming and crying and worrying everyone. I did not talk to anyone about it, in fact, I am not sure I knew who to talk to about it. It took half an hour to walk to the chapel and one day I walked there for the Relief Society daytime meeting, looked in the door and saw people sitting there, then promptly turned round and walked all the way home again for another half hour. I could not face going in even though they were all my friends. I could only express my life as if I had found a huge hole dug in the garden just outside our house. I did not know why it was there and had not asked for it to be there, but had to walk around it every time I wanted to get to the gate. At first it was almost

impossible to walk around it but as time went on I learned to rearrange my life to come to terms with the fact that it was there. It was as if there was a hole in my chest, just underneath the skin, and it was full of tears. The tears were never shed, they just stayed there like a frozen lump. I don't know how long that feeling was there, maybe 2 or 3 years or more, I really don't know. At the time it seemed to go on forever.

Looking back on the death of Scott who was with us only until the next day, and then many years later the death of David, who I had been married to for 40 years, I realise how much I learned from those events. They were not events that happened and then were over and done with, but ongoing experiences to endure and learn from. The death of Scott happened suddenly so I was not able to pray for him to live but David was ill for many months with cancer of the bowel and I spent every day at the hospital with him from mid morning to early evening. Again, though, I could not pray for him to live because I had to pray for what was the will of our Heavenly Father, and I had to accept that, almost impossible as it was to do so. I used to go to the hospital chapel often to pray. If our Saviour had not endured as much suffering as He did during his life as well as his death, He would not have had the experience necessary to understand the suffering of any of us. He was born in a stinking stable and eventually buried in a borrowed tomb. In between He spent 3 years with no home of his own, out in all weathers, trying to teach people about their eternal future, when what they really wanted was someone who would free them from the political oppression of the day. Eventually He was betrayed by one of His best friends, who was paid the amount of money that bought a slave. He was ostracised by the religious leaders of the area and sentenced to death by a political leader who knew the sentence was unjust, but was too afraid for his own life to change it. Even before all that, Jesus had endured many hours almost alone in the Garden of Gethsemane where, in a way that I do not understand at all, He

experienced the suffering of all people. Jesus was tortured and killed in the barbaric way that we would not do even to a murderous criminal. Then when you would think it could not get any worse, before He died Jesus was forsaken and left completely alone by His own Father in Heaven so that He would understand how it would be for anyone on earth to be alone, and without God, and also so that He could complete the act of the Atonement through his own free will and choice.

There must be several reasons why Scott died but it gave me experience to understand a little of what bereaved parents felt when I returned to nursing children and their families several years later. I no longer felt fear about what to say or not say to them. I sat with them and cried with them and they knew they could talk to me at any time and gain comfort, even though we did not have any answers as to why illness and death happens the way it does.

One of the many things I learned from the death of Scott was that I was determined to do all I could to be with him again. Wherever he was, that was where I wanted to get to, and with the rest of my family as well. I wanted no substitutes and was willing to do whatever it took. Many years passed before I realised that each person in my family had the right to choose for themselves and to make their own decisions in life about their eternal destiny.

On the night Scott died, David and I had a strong feeling that another baby would be sent to us very soon. I had felt for several weeks that there would be only 15 months between the two babies, and had wondered how I would cope with tiredness, being then 36 years old, but, of course, had no idea that Scott would die.

One evening in early August, while I was praying, I had the definite feeling that the spirit of our next child was next to me in the room, just behind me. It was not a feeling of a baby, or a man or woman there, but of a spirit right next to

me, slightly behind me and on my right. It only lasted a few seconds but was quite definitely there. As soon as I thought to turn my head, it went.

I was praying because I felt I was not ready yet to have another baby for another few months. However, the spirit in the room had a feeling of great love and acceptance, not pushing or persuading in any way, and I knew it was wrong to prevent a spirit from coming to our family without very good reason, so in the end I prayed that whatever Heavenly Father wanted would be done. Ten months later Fraser was born and there was 15 months and 3 days between the birth of Scott and the birth of Fraser.

Our children

When our children were little there was always a bucket full of dirty nappies to wash. Disposable nappies were a luxury only used on holidays. One evening I was standing at the laundry sink rinsing out the nappies. It had been a long day, my back ached and I was tired and irritable and thought, "Why do I have to work so hard? It's just work, work, work." Straight away the words came into my mind, just as if a voice had spoken them to me, "To whom much is given, much is required." It was not said nastily at all but I felt chastened.

Another time I was in a hurry to get out the door to go somewhere and found that Craig aged 7 had tied the pushchair to other things in the laundry with a long piece of string, tied in lots of knots. As I pushed the pushchair to the door a whole lot of folding chairs and pieces of wood came clattering behind it, all tied to the pushchair with string, and I could not get out. I was so cross and thought, "Why do we have these children?" Immediately into my mind came a scripture, "That they might have life and have it more abundantly." It was not a voice but was a definite thought, too strong to be ignored. Again it was said in a nice way but I

felt chastened.

Our lost car 1981

Feilding celebrated 100 years since the founding of the town with a huge fireworks display. At the end of this we left among the crowd of thousands people and I realised I did not know where our car was in the hundreds of vehicles there. I walked up and down the huge parking area in the dark with 3 young children wondering what on earth to do. After about 10 or 15 minutes I was nearly in tears as it was dark, the children were tired and I did not know how to find our car. Suddenly Craig, aged 7 years, said, "We haven't prayed about it. We should do that." I nearly did burst into tears at that, realising that I should have thought of it myself long ago. As soon as we had prayed it was as if we knew just where to go to find our car and were there within a couple of minutes.

Feilding chapel building

The years surrounding the death of Scott and birth of Fraser were unbelievably stressful. Not only were we still reeling from the shock and grief of Scott dying in 1978 but David had decided in 1976 to leave his secure, well-paid job as an electro-mechanical technician for Xerox photocopiers where he had worked for over 15 years, and become first an insurance agent, then a greengrocery deliverer with his own van, then a typewriter mechanic, then back to photocopiers, then a house re-siter. Most of those jobs were either not paid at all or poorly paid so we were often behind with phone and electricity bills and had little food and no savings left. Fortunately our house mortgage was fully paid off. I remember a time when Glynn Garland, who was like a grandmother to our children, arrived on our doorstep with a basket of vegetables from her garden asking if we could use

them. Another time I bought the basic groceries of flour, sugar, milk and some meat, and came out of the shop with precisely 5 cents left in my purse to last the rest of the week. We had decided to pay tithing just before David was baptised in 1973 and had done so ever since. We never reached the point of having no food, but times were very difficult indeed.

To compound the stress, the Feilding chapel had been built in 1977 but not paid for, therefore, not dedicated, so we were all asked to contribute to the cost of this. Each family was interviewed and when it was our turn David and I were aghast that we were asked to contribute \$300. We had no idea how we could find that money and felt totally overwhelmed as it was at that time 3 weeks wages for a normal job, and David did not have a normal job. Sometimes I had come out of the supermarket having bought only the most basic foodstuffs for a week and had only 5 cents left in my purse. However, we committed ourselves to find the money somehow. Over the following year we baked and sold bread and apple pies and gradually made the money we needed. We walked instead of taking a bus with the shopping. Our children knew they could never have an ice cream on a hot day in town, and we just generally went without. I shall never know how we did it, but we set to work and found there were ways that opened up to us to complete our commitment.

The Dedication of the Feilding Chapel was held on 20 February 1982. There were at least 4 past Branch Presidents or Bishops there, Bill Papple, Brett Bennison, Ric Morehouse and Alf Kereama. Another, LaVerle Hendrickson, who was the Branch President in 1973 before Brett, had returned home to America. Also, long since returned to America, was Paul Gage who built the chapel with all the members helping. Ric Morehouse was the Branch President who became Bishop when the District was changed to a Stake in March, 1979. He said it was his job to get the new chapel paid for, ready for Dedication. He spoke of the daunting task of asking families to contribute between \$300 and \$500 which was 2

or 3 weeks' wages. Many members were very distressed about how they could manage this kind of money, but held market-day stalls, and just generally went without to pay the money.

Over the next few years the church membership grew in Feilding and it was decided to extend the chapel with a cultural hall and build on more rooms. So once again we had to save for the building. This was all at a time when we not only paid tithing and fast offering, but had to pay into the ward budget to buy books for Primary, Sunday School and other lessons. At one point I felt so overwhelmed by our financial situation that during a meeting in the chapel about finances I almost screamed in helplessness. The bishop, who was Allan Leith, was explaining how much money was needed and how we all needed to give generously. He said how much he dreaded having to say this because he knew people had given so much already, not only in money but in time as well. We not only had to pay for the chapel originally, but help build and paint it as well, and provide meals and money for the building-missionaries building it. With the extensions the rules had changed and members did not do the actual building. This was done by builders, but the members had to pay more for it. It was as much as I could do to stop myself standing up and shouting at the meeting, "You've had all our time. You've had all our money. We haven't got any more. What more do you want? Do you want our blood as well!" Then as I was thinking this, the thought came straight into my mind that Jesus Christ had given his blood for us. That completely silenced me.

Dwan Young's visit to Feilding chapel

The General Primary President in the 1980's was Dwan Young. She visited Feilding chapel in 1981 or 1982. We all went to listen to her. Owen was about 10 years old and was so fascinated by her talk that at one point he was literally on

the edge of his seat. He even slipped off his chair and picked himself up off the floor without even noticing, he was listening so intently. After the meeting Dwan Young spoke to us mentioning how lovely our children were and how quietly they had sat throughout the meeting. David told her it was because they had a good mother. It was nice for me to hear him speak like that.

Olive's mother's visit 15 July to early Sept 1983

In July 1983 my mother came from England for a 6 week visit. Her air fares were paid by Glynn Garland who had some trees growing on land which had been left to her many years before by her father. The trees were felled and she asked us if we would let her use some of the money from them to pay for my mother to visit us. Of course we wanted that but felt guilty using Glynn's money. She said she wanted to use the money to help others because her husband had a good job as a dentist so they were not short of money and she knew we could never afford to pay for my mother to come here and neither could my mother. As it happened, about a year later Glynn's daughter Julie needed someone to look after her little 8 month old son Christopher during the day for 2 months while she attended a secretarial course to get her back into work, which we were happy to do. Glynn did not want my mother to know she had paid the air fares, so we told my mother the money had been allocated through someone to do with church. My mother never liked the Mormons and was only too happy to take some money from them. It was not a happy visit as my father had died 8 months before and my mother was tired, depressed and kept criticising me, so it was a real struggle for me to keep going during it. David, Owen and Craig were out of the house during the day so it was only Fraser and me at home. My

mother thought I babied Fraser, and spoiled Craig, and the only children she liked were Owen and his friend Bruce. She liked David and thought he had a lot to put up with because I was moody and depressed all the time. Of course I was depressed, I spent all day being criticised for not doing things right, or had to listen to my mother criticising my brothers and sister for what they had not done right. Later, near the end of her visit, my sister Hazel phoned me to check details of my mother's flight home and she told me that our mother was exactly the same when she went to visit Hazel, complaining about everyone else. I wished I had known that before. It was a very difficult 6 weeks for me but I was grateful my mother had been able to see our way of life in New Zealand, and in the Church. She never agreed with it, and having been to a sacrament meeting she commented that she could not see any difference between that and the Baptist church where I had been brought up and did not know why I left it. Another comment that was very significant to me was when we were discussing bringing up children and I said I could never remember any time when she or my father had praised me or told me I had done well. I fully expected her to say that of course they had but I could not remember it. To my amazement, instead she said, Of course we didn't. You don't want your children to grow up conceited. After that revelation I understood more about my own lack of self-esteem and made sure I did all I could to build up my own children's self-esteem.

Scout jamboree 1984

Owen went to the 10th New Zealand Scout Jamboree, on 1 January which was held in Feilding for boys from all over the Pacific. Owen had to save \$320 in nine months to be able to go to the Jamboree, which was the equivalent to nearly 2 weeks wages after tax, so was a lot of money. We had told him that we would help him in any way we could but could

not afford to pay for him ourselves. We did not think he would be able to save up enough money but he saved his paper run money and sold fruit and vegetables to houses around the nearby streets after school and at weekends and saved \$323. He did extremely well and not only were we very proud of him but he was rightly proud of himself. His behaviour changed too and he was less irritable and aggressive. It is very likely he was the only boy of 12 who had saved up all the money for the Jamboree himself. About a year later Owen started Seminary a year earlier than usual as it was a trial to see if it was better for students to start early. The following year the trial was discontinued and students started at the usual age. Owen had always struggled with reading but improved amazingly during his first year of Seminary.

Craig's lost watch

When Craig was about 10 years old he came home from school saying he had lost his watch which he had only recently been given. He was very upset about it. He said his class at North Street school had gone to the playing fields near St John's church for their football games and when he went back to school he realised he did not have his watch. We walked back to the football field and searched around the area where Craig said they had left their belongings. We walked up and down the whole area searching carefully. After half an hour I began to think someone had taken the watch and it was not on the grass, but decided we should still keep searching. I told Craig we should have a prayer about it because Heavenly Father knew where the watch was and now that we had done everything we could, we needed more help. As soon as we had had the prayer we continued walking up and down the grass searching carefully and soon I felt something hard under my foot. I thought it was a stone, but it was Craig's watch. I think of it as similar to finding a

needle in a haystack, considering the huge size of the 3 football fields and the small size of the watch.

Book of Mormon challenges

Even though I had joined the Church I did not have a testimony that the Book of Mormon was the word of God. I prayed, and fasted and prayed, many, many times but never had the sort of answer that other people spoke of when they had a 'burning in the bosom' or they 'knew' that the Book of Mormon was true. One of my friends, Adele Minchin, said that when the missionaries knocked on her door and gave her a Book of Mormon, she picked it up and knew straight away that it was true. How I longed to know that too. I read the whole book many times but still did not know it was from God. In 1984 I went from Feilding to Temple View, Hamilton, for a conference for stake Public Communications directors, which I had recently been called as. In this calling I wrote articles for 13 newspapers in our stake area about people in all the wards and branches. I did this for nearly 2 years and when I left I was offered a job as a reporter for the Evening Standard newspaper in Palmerston North, but declined as I had recently returned to nursing in Palmerston North Hospital.

While at the conference I spent a few days in the temple apartments attending the temple. I completed ordinances for relatives of Glynn Garland and really enjoyed being in the temple. During this time I prayed a lot to know if the Book of Mormon was true. On my last day there I was discouraged because I had no recognisable answer given to me. I still believed that it was true, as I had for many years, but had never had a feeling sweep over me that I could say, "Now I know!" That was what I wanted because I thought that was what I needed to have, basically because that was what other people spoke about. I prayed during the endowment session, I prayed in the celestial room, I prayed while sitting in the

lounge, I even prayed in the changing cubicle while getting dressed. By this time I was becoming desperate because I was about to walk out of the temple and had not had any answer. I walked slowly out of the temple to the main door, saying goodbye to a man sitting at the front desk. Just then he stopped me and said, "I have just been reading an interesting part of Doctrine and Covenants 6:23." He then read the verse about, 'Did I not speak peace to your mind? What greater witness can you have than from God.' Suddenly, somehow, this was the answer I had been seeking and I left the temple very happy, but wondering why I had had to wait right up until I got to the door before getting the answer. I suppose that is the way of things sometimes.

I wish I could say that I then knew forever afterwards that the Book of Mormon is the word of God but I still kept hoping and praying for the strong feeling that I heard about from so many other people. One day while sitting in the temple, praying in the celestial room it was as though a light had been turned on right beside me. I thought someone must have come in and turned on a table lamp. I did not open my eyes but felt as if words came into my mind, "You know. You know you know." The words were said with a smile. When I opened my eyes, there was no table lamp.

Just before Craig went on his mission in 1993, I listened to a Daniel Ludlow tape Craig had brought back from Church College dorm friends. It explained how to colour-in verses in the Book of Mormon to personalise it and make it "your own Book of Mormon" using different colours to represent different types of subjects. I chose red for verses that were important to life in general, orange for verses important about my children, gold for verses about the Plates, purple about Jesus, blue about the Jews, green about travel, brown for battles and black about Satan. Soon after I learned about using different colours, President Ezra Taft Benson died. He was the 12th President of the Church and for 9 years he implored people to read the Book of Mormon. He said, "If you will read the Book of Mormon for half-an-hour a day,

every day, it will change your life in a way you never thought possible." He had asked this for all those years and I had not done it. Yes, I had read it almost every day, for 10 or 20 minutes, but not for half an hour and not every day. So I decided I would do it.

After moving from Feilding to Te Awamutu I stopped going out to work. With the time I had at home I decided to read the scriptures for longer times and committed to read the Book of Mormon for half an hour every day. One night after returning from a church Ball and dropping into bed around 1 am I suddenly realised I had not read the Book of Mormon. It was a real struggle to get out of bed and read but I knew I had made a commitment, and I knew Heavenly Father knew that too, so I did it. After that day it was as though the Book of Mormon opened up to me and although I had read it about 6 times I now found meaning to verses I had not noticed before. Before long I realised that at last I 'knew' the Book of Mormon is the word of God. Since that time in 1994 I have read it about another 20 times, finding new understanding each time, and I know that Joseph Smith could not possibly have written it. In fact he could not even have written a few pages of it. It took me 22 years but at last I had the testimony I had wanted for so long.

It never ceases to amaze me that I find things I had not realised before. Not only that, but when I read the Book of Mormon I find inspiration comes to me about other things in life I am trying to work out. For instance, I wrote a small book, "Love is the Reason" about how to understand the important people in your life, starting with yourself. It was written while I read the Book of Mormon. As I read, and prayed, inspiration came to me about what I was to write, and I immediately wrote it down, which is why I consider it to be an inspired book.

I look back over the many years I sat reading story books to our children and how they loved being read to. When I read the scriptures it's my time to sit next to my Heavenly Father

and hear what He wants to tell me. I would be so hurt if I wrote to my children and they didn't bother to read what I had written. When I look at how the world has been created with such order and precision, I know there is an incredible amount of intelligence and creativity available to me, just waiting to be used, and I would be foolish not to do so. I now know what I'm doing and the direction I am to take in my life. My greatest wish now is to help people come to know what I have learned. I want it to change their life as it has changed mine so they can reach the potential that lies within them.

Fraser's baptism 1987

Fraser was baptised by David on 7 June 1987 after church services. Unfortunately, the water was not warm, due to a fault in the furnace the previous week, so Fraser had to be baptised in cold water. To add to the difficulties, there was a fault in the plug and the water kept running out, so it was only just over 50 cms deep, so it was very difficult to get Fraser completely under the water. Each time David tried it, Fraser's feet came up out of the water. After the 2nd time, Fraser's teeth were chattering with cold and he was very upset. Bishop Allan Leith told David to hold his foot over Fraser's feet so they would not come up. So David balanced on one leg and baptised Fraser for the 3rd time and was successful, much to everyone's relief, especially Fraser. However, Fraser said later that there was a patch of warm water in the font, just where he was standing. It was a special moment for me when I heard about this. Heavenly Father is aware of our circumstances even when we do not realise it.

Fraser was Craig's challenge 1990

In February 1990 I had not been home long from work as a

hospital nurse when Fraser came to me in the hall with his school bag packed and said he was leaving home. He explained that Craig was so unkind to him all the time that he could not stand it any more and was going away. Fraser said, "There are only 3 people in the whole world who are kind to me and that's you Mum, Owen and my school teacher Mrs Bowling." Fraser was really upset, but determined to go.

I had a quick prayer then rushed off to speak to Craig explaining how Fraser felt. Craig said Fraser was always grizzling about everything and we should let him go if that's what he wanted to do. I then had a flash of inspiration which I was always grateful for ever after. I told Craig that it was no accident that he and Fraser were in the same family and that Fraser could be the best thing that had ever happened to him. He looked totally disbelieving and asked how on earth that could be? I reminded Craig that he liked a challenge and that Fraser could be his greatest challenge. If he could get on with Fraser he could get on with anyone. If he could find something they both liked doing and do that together so that in the end Fraser thought of Craig as his greatest friend, then he would have won the most amazing challenge in his life. I held my breath while I watched Craig think about all this, then a slow smile spread across Craig's face as he realised he could do this. I disappeared quickly before there were any more questions!

From that day on Craig began very slowly to change his attitude to Fraser. It took about a year just to get over the old irritation on Craig's part and distrust on Fraser's, but as the years went on it was incredible to watch. Two years later Craig taught Fraser 5th form maths in the school holidays before Fraser was even in the 3rd form. Craig was amazed to find that Fraser was so good at maths he learned a whole year's work in less than 2 days! Craig showed tremendous pride in Fraser after that and Fraser's best time in his life was when Craig invited him to spend a couple of days in Hamilton with him when he was at university in 1992. Fraser had always loved Owen very much, but now he idolised Craig

too and missed him terribly when Craig went on a mission in 1993.

Only two years to do it in

Some time in about 1988 I was praying and thinking of all the things I wanted to get done in my life, and in particular of the things I wanted our sons to know. Suddenly, into my mind came the words, "You've only got two years to do it in." I was horrified. I thought I was going to die. I realised that in 2 years Fraser would be only 12 years old and I did not want to leave him at that young age. I did not know what to do or who to turn to for comfort and advice. I told David but he said that I did not have enough evidence to go on and there was no point in worrying about something that might not happen. That did not comfort me at all, and as in so many times previously, I realised I would have to manage on my own. As the 2 years progressed I could see that it was not that I was going to die but that our older sons were going to leave home, and I would have only another 2 years with them to try and teach all that I thought they needed to take with them in their adult life.

Christmas 1989

We knew that with Owen being 18 and Craig 16 they would not be in our home much longer so wanted to make that Christmas really special. We all tried really hard to be positive and help each other to make it a special occasion. We decided to go to the beach at Foxton which was only an hour's drive away and where we had spent many short holidays when the boys were little. We took garden spades and had a great time digging large tunnels and constructing huts with driftwood. Our Christmas dinner was very simple - tuna sandwiches with tomatoes, then cake. When we

returned home we were ready for our proper Christmas dinner and to open our presents which we did with great appreciation and love for each other. Then I went to the kitchen to finish cooking. Craig came and told me that he had just felt a strong impression that Scott had been nearby. I immediately rushed back into the living room with Craig, but of course, the feeling of Scott was not there. I was very disappointed but the impression was not for me and I had to learn to accept that.

Our rush home from the temple

On 25 April 1990 David and I were in the temple, where we had spent 2 days, when I had a strong feeling that we were not to travel back the next day but to leave straight away and get home as soon as possible. We had just finished all the family names we had taken to the temple and had planned to have a little holiday for a day without having to hurry home, but able to stop wherever we wanted to and take our time. However, the feeling I had was so strong that we drove the 500 kms straight home right away. Owen, Craig and Fraser were most surprised to see us turn up a day early. We ran into the house and asked if they were all right and they were even more baffled to see our concern. We could never understand why it was that we had been prompted to go straight home and felt cheated out of our 'little holiday'. Years later I was telling this to the Duffins and Steve said they had had a similar thing happen to them. He said that we had done the right thing, even though we may never know why, but that in following that inspiration we had probably stopped something worse from happening. Even if that were not the case, it had demonstrated that we had the faith to follow inspiration when it was given to us.

Noeline's funeral

On 18 March 1991 my best friend Noeline Cameron died at 5am. I had awakened at that time with a sort of green flash that went across my mind as if it flashed across the room too. Two hours later I had the phone call to say Noeline had died in hospital from a brain haemorrhage. She had been desperately ill with it for 3 weeks. The next day I had a strong feeling that I was to speak at the funeral in 3 days time so I started preparing my talk. Two days later when Noeline's relatives phoned to ask me to speak they were very surprised that I was already prepared.

The service was really nice with a beautiful feeling in the chapel as though the sun was streaming in the windows. There were about 300 people attending. Once I stood up to speak I did not feel nervous and felt the inspiration of the Spirit in helping me speak clearly and calmly. There was absolute silence during my talk and I could feel people listening intently. Several people said afterwards how much it had helped them and I knew it was the influence of the Spirit.

After the funeral service, we all stood up as the coffin was carried out of the chapel. I had been sitting at the front to give my talk and stood with Nancy Kereama, who had also been sitting at the front to conduct the music. We waited while everyone slowly moved out of the chapel, and then we continued to stand there, as we felt as though we were standing in a beam of sunshine streaming in the window, and yet when we looked, there was no sunlight. We did not speak, but continued to stand there, not wanting to move. At last, when everyone had gone, Nancy's son Jacob came in and asked us why we were still there. We turned to each other and said, "That was the Holy Ghost, wasn't it?" We both had felt the same thing, independently, and without speaking, and both knew what it was, and that we didn't want to move away from it. It was such a lovely feeling, that

now when I try to explain what it is like to feel the Holy Ghost, I don't say it is a "burning in the bosom" as some people explain it, as I have never felt that, but as though you are standing with the sunlight streaming in the window on you, and you don't want to move away from it.

Mae Flutey

Mae Flutey moved from Christchurch to Feilding in 1974 and I was assigned to go with her Visiting Teaching. She did not like this because I had 2 energetic little boys with me. I dreaded going with her because she was always so cross. Later, when I knew more about her I realised how homesick she was for Christchurch which she had known all her life. She was then in her early 70's and found it difficult to make new friends. She had only moved to Feilding because her daughter and family had been transferred there with work. A few years later they were transferred again and she was left on her own. So she became part of our family, like an extra grandmother. As time went on we grew to care a lot about each other and knew each other until Mae died aged 96 in 1998.

There was a specific incident that stopped me dreading going visiting teaching with Mae Flutey and that helped us become friends. We used to travel to the temple near Hamilton, on a bus hired by our Palmerston North stake. It was a 24 hour round trip. We would set out at 7 pm from Feilding chapel, arrive at Hamilton around 4 am then wait in the visitors' centre for 2 hours until we could go into the temple for the first session. We would attend 2 endowment sessions, trying unsuccessfully to stay awake all the time, then have a meal, visit the clothing store and return home on the same bus around midday, arriving back at Feilding chapel at 7 pm. It used to take us about a week to recover from this sleepless journey and after doing this every 2 or 3 months or so for over 20 years, David and I decided to move north to Te

Awamutu.

Our stake Relief Society organised a special temple trip just for the sisters. At Feilding chapel I got on the bus looking for a seat. Usually I sat with David, but this time I was on my own. All the seats were taken except for one next to Mae Flutey near the front of the bus. I really did not want to sit there, and she was not very enthusiastic to have me sit there either, but there were no other seats. So I had to! As the journey went on we chatted about our families and life experiences. After arriving at the temple we had about an hour to wait for the first session so Mae and I walked around the temple assembly room looking at the pictures and chatting. Within a short time we were walking arm in arm with nothing but good feelings for each other, and those feelings continued for the rest of her life until she died nearly 20 years later.

One evening when Mae was about 90 I was coming out of the chapel after a Relief Society meeting. I was tired after nursing all day and wanted to get home but had a strong feeling to visit Mae who lived only 200 metres from the chapel. I decided not to as it was after 9 pm and I thought Mae might be in bed. Again the feeling came that I should go there. Again I decided not to but the feeling was insistent so I went. On arrival at Mae's home the place was in darkness but her bedroom window was open so I called through that softly so as not to frighten Mae. When she opened the door I asked why she was sitting in the dark. She explained that over the last few days the bedroom light had broken, then the kitchen light, and then the living room light and she had been using candles and her torch. I was shocked that Mae had not called me to help her but she said she knew I was busy with work and family. I found new light bulbs and stood on a chair in the bedroom to put the bulb in. Mae told me to be careful and not fall. Soon I heard Mae talking quietly and thought someone had come in the front door to see her. I went quietly to the door and realised Mae was praying. She said, "Dear Lord, please look after her and don't let her fall. She's a

good girl. I am an old woman and can't do anything if she falls. Please look after her." I felt so humble to be prayed for so sincerely. It was a blessing to hear that - and I so nearly missed that experience to help someone.

Our car was stolen

On 3 January 1992 David and I took Fraser and his school friend Damian Velluppillai to Fantasy Land at Hastings. Craig was busy at home so did not come with us. It was over 2 hours' car ride from our home in Feilding but we hoped to see Owen and his friend Bruce Taylor when they finished work for the day, picking apples in an orchard there. The boys canoed on the boating lake and rode on a little train that went all round Fantasyland. We walked all over the place, into a castle and on an old sailing ship, played mini-golf and after 4 hours enjoying ourselves went out to our car, only to find it had been stolen. We were in shock, stranded 150 kms from home. The police came and took details and drove us to the home of church friends Alf and Marilyn Kereama who gave us dinner and the offer to stay the night. I phoned Damien's father to let him know what had happened and he immediately offered to come and collect us. I declined his kind offer as it was such a long journey for him, but he heard the shock and despair in my voice and decided to come anyway. We arrived home at 11 pm. The police found our car wrecked, a few weeks later, and after a few months a man was charged with multiple thefts including ours, and imprisoned. I felt depressed about it for several days but our friend Caroline Garland who married Graham after Glynn died, put it into perspective for me. She reminded me that nobody had been injured, as we would have been if it had been a car crash. It was a car that was stolen and wrecked, not one of our family. It would cost us money, but one day we would be able to make that money up again. Caroline said, "None of you were hurt, none of you were in hospital or

spent months recovering. It is a shame it has happened, but it is only a car, not a life." As it happened we had been due to go on holiday to Rotorua and Tauranga, but realised we could not go now with no car. One of the doctors at the hospital, Warwick Hunter, lent us his second car as his family were going on holiday and didn't need it, so 24 hours before we were due to go, we found we could go after all and packed very quickly. Looking back on this series of events I can see that we were looked after at every step of the way by people being kind to us, the police and so many friends.

Scratched glasses

On 21 February 1992 I went with Craig and Fraser on a hired bus to the temple for them to do baptisms. On the way there I trod on my glasses in the dark and scratched the lens very badly. I was upset as it was difficult to see out of them and I knew we did not have the money to repair them, but then in the temple I saw a lady who was blind, so stopped feeling sorry for myself.

Owen's pictures

I remember the famous Footprints poem which talks about the two sets of footprints merging into one when the person was carried by the Saviour. I was given the poem by Owen which was a special treasure to me because he was in his late teens and not going to church but I knew he still believed in Jesus Christ even though he did not want this to interfere with his way of life at that time. A few years later he gave me a picture of Christ at His Second Coming, which again was special because Owen did not attend church but knew these things were important to me, and he had not forgotten this.

Craig's mission decision

We had a lovely time over Easter and my birthday in April 1992. Craig travelled overnight by train and surprised me on my birthday morning. After a few days it was time for him to return to university in Hamilton, staying in Church College dorms. At the railway station Craig turned to me and said "I hope you've had a good birthday Mum. Was it a nice birthday?" I said "It was wonderful and the whole weekend was really lovely". Craig said, "I wanted you to have a really good birthday this year as I won't be able to come back next year" I said, "Do you mean you're not coming back from Hamilton till next year?" Craig said, "No, I mean that next year I will be on my mission so I won't be here for your birthday so I wanted to make it specially good this year." Although it was sad to see Craig leave on the train I felt very happy and proud of him for making his decision. Life goes along like that train. At first it moves off quite slowly but gradually picks up speed till it's rushing along so fast, and you wonder where the years have gone.

Fraser read the Book of Mormon

By 25 May 1992 Fraser and I finished reading the Book of Mormon, spending an extra hour or two that evening to complete our goal. We had been reading a bit most days since September and Fraser wanted to finish it before he became a teenager!

Car break down

On 17 February 1993 David and I left Fraser at home for a

few days looking after our dog Zara, so we could take Craig to the temple for his first time the next day. We took Craig's friend Owen Hutchison with us in the car as he had been staying nearby with the family of Clare Johansson, who he later married. Craig's friends Jase, Mary and Quin were at the temple for him too. It was a lovely experience and we had a further few days in Temple View, staying with our friend Dorothy Downer who we had known for 20 years. We set off home on the 20th in our old car which I had previously said I did not think would last the journey and David had told me not to worry so much. Half an hour later near Cambridge we smelled burning rubber and the water in the radiator was boiling. We knew we needed to be towed to a garage but were stranded in the countryside with no idea where to go. We prayed asking for safety and assistance and eventually flagged down a car. The driver could not tow us but told us there was a garage 2 kms away and as it was all downhill we let the car coast all the way there. Craig had to push the car at one stage and then try and get in it while it was going which was quite exciting for him!

The garage owner phoned someone to come and look at the car. He said it was completely finished and not worth repairing and offered us a small sum for it to use as parts. We took his offer and then had to work out how to travel the 500 kms home. A girl in the garage found there would be a bus but not for another 9 hours so David and Craig decided that I should go on the bus with the luggage while they hitch-hiked home. The girl took me home with her when she went off duty and I phoned Dorothy Downer who came and collected me. She gave me a meal and drove me to the bus. After a long journey I arrived at Feilding at 4.30 am to be met by Heather Johansson instead of the taxi I had asked her to order for me. When I got home I found David and Craig had already arrived several hours before.

The next day we struggled off to church and fulfilled our assignments which was a surprise after only a few hours sleep. So it was not until later that I heard about the

hitch-hiking. They had covered the whole journey in 5 rides arriving at Turangi by 8.30 pm. It had rained on and off a lot of the way so David went to look for a bus shelter or somewhere to shelter in for the night as they did not think they would get a ride now it was getting dark. Craig was on his own at the side of the road with his thumb out but there was only about 1 car every 10 minutes by this time.

Suddenly a girl of about 19 stopped her car for Craig. He explained what had happened to our car and that his Dad was further down the road so she rearranged her luggage in the back of the car to make room while Craig ran to get David. They discovered as they travelled on that the girl had been at Church College in 1988 and 89 and knew Owen Hutchison, but did not go to Church anymore. She said she had driven right past Craig as she never gave rides to hitchhikers, but something made her turn around and go back for him. She gave them a ride to Sanson as she was going to Levin. From there David and Craig walked to the Koko's house at 11 p.m. sat chatting till 11.30 p.m. then were taken home arriving about midnight. Then they had a shower and dropped into bed. Craig was very pleased with his hitchhiking ability and with the fact that he had taught his Dad how to do it too!

At the time I could not understand why our car had broken down when we were doing a 'good thing' in going to the temple. Later I realised that everything I had asked for in our prayer had come to pass. I asked for safety, which we had, and to be helped with all that we needed, which we had. Everyone everywhere helped in a kind of chain of events so we were never left without help. It was as though we were passed from hand to hand until we reached home in safety.

Craig's mission

Craig left to go to the Hamilton MTC on 26 Mar 1993. He

was taken there by the Johanssons who were driving to Hamilton. Before he went we gathered for a prayer which Craig gave, very emotionally. During Craig's prayer we all felt a light shining on us. It grew gradually stronger and we felt its warmth. Afterwards we all spoke about this and said it had been like the sun shining on us, but when we went to the window and looked at the sky, we found it was a mass of grey clouds

Craig did not go to Provo, USA, to the Language Centre as he had done a year of Chinese study at Waikato university. The beginning of his mission was very difficult for Craig as he had to learn Chinese as well as missionary work when he arrived in Taiwan, but he worked extremely hard to do this, getting up at 4.30 am to learn Chinese before starting at 6.30 am on his missionary studies. He also made a frame to hold a piece of paper on the front of his bike so he could learn Chinese words as he rode along. He said he was glad he had been sent straight to Taiwan and not to Provo, as he learned the Chinese that is spoken by the people there, right from the start.

Craig was the first New Zealand missionary to be sent to Taiwan for 30 years. Mostly they were from America. The previous person was someone Craig later met who worked in Church College library. Later, after his mission Craig met Hine McDonald in the Auckland Chinese Branch and she offered him a room to rent extremely cheaply in the attic of her Rest Home. She had served a mission in Hong Kong about 30 years before and spoke Cantonese. She was like a second mother to Craig, then Owen, then Fraser, as they all moved to Auckland over the following 3 years.

In his mission setting apart prayer, Craig was told that he would soon be able to communicate with the Chinese people. I thought at the time that it would be similar to the gift of tongues, but much later realised it was a blessing accompanied by all Craig's hard work and study. Some blessings are simply given to us, but many come only

through our own diligence.

Paying for missions

When Craig left for his mission in Taiwan I was still working as a staff-nurse in Palmerston North hospital. Craig had not been able to save up for his mission as he had been helping us with the houses David had resited, and had been away at university. So, as David did not have a job, it fell to me to save up for Craig's mission. I had a percentage taken out of my pay and straight into a bank account but I knew it was not going to be enough to pay for the whole mission. However, I continued paying and saving all through Craig's mission, even after I had left the hospital to move north to Te Awamutu. I am not good at maths but even I could work out that I could not pay the thousands of dollars needed for the mission, and yet there was always enough money in the savings account to pay each month. I shall never know how I was able to pay for it, and have long since stopped trying to work it out. I simply know it was a blessing given because Craig was willing to go and I was willing to pay.

When Fraser went on a mission he also had not been able to save up for it because he was working with Craig and Owen on computer work. Then Craig went to America and then England, and Owen went to work as the office manager of Hartson's bakery. As Owen had passed the age limit for a mission when he returned to church, he said he would like to pay for Fraser's mission, which he did and blessings came to him too for his diligence.

Chinese visitors 1994

While Craig was serving a mission in Taiwan from 1993 to 1995 he often told people that if they were going to visit New

Zealand then to contact his mother. One person phoned us from Auckland asking if we could collect her as she had just arrived and had nowhere to stay. This was about April 1994 when we had recently moved to Te Awamutu from Feilding and were renting a 2 storey 3 bed roomed house. I was stunned at this completely unexpected phone call but as it happened David was in Auckland that day for his work demonstrating Kirby vacuum cleaners so he collected Xin-Xin Wu and discovered she had a 7 year old daughter, Chi, with her as well as lots of luggage. They lived with us for 3 weeks while we found them a house to rent because we also discovered they had a husband and 2 little boys, Ifan aged 9 and Yihan 5, arriving from Taiwan in 3 weeks. It was a busy time finding beds, mattresses, blankets, table and chairs, crockery, cutlery and cooking equipment. When the rest of the Wu family arrived I took them to the local school to enrol and then went with each child to their classrooms to introduce them to the children, who were very welcoming to them. They stayed in Te Awamutu for a year before moving to Hamilton and we lost touch except for seeing each other on rare occasions at stake conference. It was therefore a pleasure to meet Chi 20 years later in the temple and find she had married and had 2 little girls. After that I also met Yihan in the temple after he had served a mission in Canada. He said his brother Ifan had served a mission too.

One day around July 1994 after daytime Relief Society I came home to find 9 Chinese people on the doorstep. They had also been sent by Craig to visit me. I had no idea what to give them for lunch but that was no problem because they decided to go to our local KFC and took me with them. Some of them lived in Auckland and they had heard there was a temple in Hamilton and wanted to go and see it. I explained this was totally different from the Buddhist temples they were used to, which anybody can go into, but they still wanted to go. I took them to the Visitors' Centre and they watched a film about the temple and seemed content to view it from the outside. While we were outside the Visitors'

Centre looking up at the temple, one of the ladies started talking to me earnestly about the peace she was feeling. She said she had recently been diagnosed with breast cancer and was frightened about her future. I had very limited Chinese having been studying the language by Correspondence School with Fraser for only 6 months, and she had difficulty with English but suddenly we were able to converse with complete understanding of each other. As soon as I returned home I phoned the Auckland mission home and asked for Chinese speaking missionaries to visit her which they did. When Craig returned from his mission 8 months later we took him to visit the lady and they conversed comfortably in Chinese but Craig later said she was not ready to make changes in her life regarding the Church. However, I will always remember the freedom of language I felt to be able to talk to her about a major problem in her life with the cancer.

David and I were very proud of the fact that Craig was bi-lingual in Chinese when he returned from his mission in April 1995 and he was able to help in the Chinese branch of the Church in Auckland while he was living in the rest home of Hine Macdonald. She said he could live in a room in the attic which he was grateful for because he did not have a full-time job at that time, was doing translation work and teaching English to Chinese people, and could not afford to pay rent. Later in 1996 Fraser also moved to Auckland to work with Craig on computer work and shared the room. Then in 1997 Owen also moved there and the 3 of them were crammed into the little attic room. Hine was like a second mother to them. Hine had also served a mission in Hong Kong nearly 30 years before and was glad of Craig's help with Chinese Church members. They organised temple trips for members of the Chinese branch and one special day in 1996 David and I met them at the temple and witnessed Craig translating the ordinances from English into Chinese for the first temple sealing of a couple in the New Zealand temple in their own language. I had tears in my eyes as I pondered on the fact that when our children are babies we have no idea

what they will achieve when they grow up.

Fraser spoke up about a TV programme

Some time early in 1996 after we moved to Te Awamutu, David was watching a TV programme about the North American Indians. It had a lot of cruelty in it and I could not bear to watch it. I asked David to turn it off but he said he was interested in it and if I did not want to watch it I could go in another room. I tried that but could still hear the screaming of women in the film. I went back into the room and asked David again but he repeated that he wanted to watch it and I did not have to if I didn't want to. I was so upset, not only by the screaming and cruelty but because David still kept the programme on. Fraser was also watching the programme but becoming increasingly concerned about what was happening. Suddenly he said to David, "Dad if this programme is worrying Mum don't you think you should think about that, and if the programme is not the right sort of thing to watch, don't you think you should turn it off?" David sat in silence for a few minutes thinking about what Fraser had said, then he turned off the TV. I was stunned that a 16 year old boy had spoken with such maturity and clearness. David seemed surprised too.

No argument

I was helping an elderly lady in Te Awamutu to wrap her Christmas presents in 1996. She knew which church I belonged to but she went to the Anglican church. She said she did not agree with what she had heard about the Book of Mormon and then commented to me, "But I suppose we could argue about that." With a smile I replied, "No we couldn't." She was surprised and asked why not. I replied that there was nothing to argue about. She said she did not

understand what I meant. I explained that if someone tells you about some medicine that would help you, you might not think they know what they are talking about, but if they are wearing the uniform of a nurse then you know they have studied and have knowledge to give you. It is then up to you whether or not you believe them, but does not change the knowledge they have. I said that because I have read the Book of Mormon several times I have knowledge about it, which people do not have if they have never read it themselves. Therefore, they are in no position to challenge what I say, which means there is No Argument. Over the years I have found that people want to dismiss the Book of Mormon as untrue but have never read it themselves. They base their opinions on what other people have told them. That is not good enough for me. I took someone to church one day because she needed a ride. On the way she explained that her extended family were annoyed with her for being baptised a few weeks before because they said it was not true. I said I had not seen any of them at church so how did they know about it. She replied that they had never gone to church but had heard about it from other people. I laughed and said that if I had a big decision to make such as buying a house I would go to a real estate agent, not to a check-out person in the supermarket. That person would know about items in store but not about buying houses. It is the same with joining the church - you have to gather information from correct sources before you can make up your own mind.

Auckland sky tower casino

August 1997 on television we saw the opening of the Sky Tower in Auckland. It was very glamorous with women in evening gowns and men in suits. When David had to go to Auckland and Craig, Fraser and I went with him, I really wanted to go to the Sky Tower and see all the glamorous people. The men folk went to the computer shops they were

interested in and I had an hour to have a good look around the Sky Tower. I was welcomed warmly but was disappointed to see people in ordinary clothes playing at machines. They kept putting money in and pulling a handle. I could not see the point of that so walked on. In another huge room I saw people at many different tables, playing some sort of card games with a wheel spinning around. I decided I must be on the wrong floor so I went up in the lift to the next floor. Still no glamorous people. I passed a small room with 2 men in it. The door was wide open and I could see the walls were lined with closed-circuit TV screens, each aimed at different gambling tables. As soon as the men saw me they slammed the door shut quickly. I realised then that this whole building was simply a gambling casino aimed at taking money off ordinary people, and the glamour had been only for the opening night. I decided to go to the toilet before leaving. As I was adjusting my clothing I looked at my temple garments, and realised it was not the sort of place I should be in. I had gone there with innocent intentions, but could so easily have been drawn in further. A thought occurred to me that the Holy Ghost would not have been able to accompany me in there and I was on my own. I realised the meaning of the words from scripture about 'stand in holy places'. If we don't, we are left to our own devices which are not strong enough to stand up to the Adversary.

Temple blessings

A wonderful day occurred for us on 18 December 1997 when David, Olive, Owen, Craig and Fraser all attended baptisms at the temple with other Young Single Adults from Mount Roskill Stake, Auckland. It was such a lovely occasion for all of us to be together in the temple for the first time ever. I floated around on cloud 9. When we came out of the temple the Christmas lights were all turned on completing a wonderful experience.

On 8 October 1998 our friends Gail and Allan Leith joined us to do the temple sealings for my parents. David and I completed the sealing to spouse, then the final ordinance was for me to be sealed to my parents with Allan and Gail acting as my parents. We were all very happy, especially me, so it was a great surprise to me when the tears started welling in my eyes as I suddenly 'heard' the word daughter and realised that for the first time I could ever remember, that I was to my parents their daughter and they were proud of me and loved me. This word daughter kept repeating itself over and over in my mind and I cried and cried.

After that particular sealing was done we all had to stop for a few minutes for me to recover. As Gail said afterwards, it is very rare for me to be overcome with tears, so it was an unusual experience. After this we did more sealings for the temple names. I do not remember much about the rest of the evening only how that word daughter affected me, and I am very glad David and Gail and Allan were there with me.

Memories of visits to various temples around the world in April and May 2000 then September 2001.

The celestial room in the London temple was my favourite as I was not expecting it to look so golden, and it just about took my breath away. The Hong Kong temple was very understated in a typically Chinese way. The people there were so very happy to see us, whether or not they spoke English, and wanted to help us in any way possible. I could feel their goodness, and mentioned to a young couple one evening that I felt they had to be very strong and good people, not only to be able to survive the difficulties of living in somewhere as crowded as Hong Kong, but also to take the gospel message to China when the time comes. The main

feeling I took home from visiting all these temples was utter humility that people wanted to help me so much. At times I was literally taken by the hand and led from place to place when people realised I had no idea where I was, or did not understand what they were saying. People in each temple loved their own temple so much that they wanted to show it to me as well, and went out of their way to do so. The Toronto temple gardens were the loveliest I have seen anywhere and we were told that bridal parties often go there for their photos even though they are not members of the church. I felt the Preston temple rather a sombre place with its dark wood but the baptismal font sparkled with light from its white and silver decor and the celestial room was golden. Los Angeles temple seemed rather business-like and was an oasis of calm in the madness of Hollywood, near the largest, busiest motorway I have ever seen in my life. Kirtland temple is not used as a temple any more but was such an incredible place to be in. To stand in the same place where so many miracles happened, and to sit on the seats used by such valiant people was a dream come true. Palmyra temple was a place we did not want to leave with all its wonderful history. In Utah we were driven to several temples but only looked at them from the outside. They were Bountiful, Jordan River, Timpanogos and Provo. The Salt Lake temple was a wonderful privilege to visit, built at such cost from the early saints and we loved being in and around it. Although we are very grateful to have gone to all these temples it is true that there is no place like home and that is what the New Zealand temple is for us.

Around 2007 I went to the temple and happened to be sitting in one of the front seats, so I was the first person to enter the Celestial room. I felt triumphant and wanted to say, "I'm first!" but there was nobody there to say it to. Nobody knew I was first - and nobody would have cared if I was last. The thought immediately came to my mind that it does not matter whether we are first or last, as long as we are there!

Cancy

Late in 1999 I had a dream about Cancy before she left in March 2000 to go on a mission in Melbourne, Australia. I saw her standing at the foot of a flight of stairs. Young people were going up and down the stairs, and several were talking to her. She was giving words of encouragement to them as they went on their way. She knew just the right thing to say to each one, because she had been on a mission herself. After this dream, I so much wanted Cancy to hold to her commitment to go on a mission. I was so concerned in case she gave in and didn't go. I prayed often for her and was proud of her for achieving so much with nobody else in her Buddhist family to understand her beliefs.

Book of Mormon 2000

It took me many years to begin to really understand the Book of Mormon. In fact, a lot of people at church did not realise that I never had a real testimony of the Book of Mormon for 22 years. Yes, I read the whole book 5 or 6 times, but never could say I knew it really was the word of God. That worried me, and I fasted and prayed many times over the years to know what to do about it. Then two things happened to change that. Just before Craig went on his mission in 1993, I listened to a Daniel Ludlow tape Craig had brought back from Church College dorm friends. It explained how to colour-in verses in the Book of Mormon to make it "your own Book of Mormon" using different colours to represent different types of subjects. I chose red for verses that were important to life in general, orange for verses important about my children, gold for verses about the Plates, purple about Jesus, blue about the Jews, green about travel, brown for battles and black about Satan.

Soon after I learned about using different colours, President Ezra Taft Benson died. He was the 12th President of the Church and for 9 years he implored people to read the Book of Mormon. He said, "If you will read the Book of Mormon for half-an-hour a day, every day, it will change your life in a way you never thought possible." He had asked this for all those years and I had not done it. Yes, I had read it almost every day, for 10 or 20 minutes, but not for half an hour and not every day. So I decided I would do it. It was very, very difficult to make sure I did my reading every single day and for half an hour. There were so many other things that suddenly needed to be done. One night after we had been out to a church social I got to bed very late, well after midnight, and then remembered that I had not read my scriptures all day. It was so hard to drag myself out of bed and sit and read for half an hour, but from there on I was committed to doing it, and I knew the Lord knew it too. As I continued I found myself constantly amazed at how much I was learning. I had already read the Book of Mormon 5 or 6 times, but now I was finding things I never knew were there.

That was 5 years ago and I have read it 7 more times since then and am still finding things I never realised before. It never ceases to amaze me. Not only that, but when I read the Book of Mormon I find inspiration comes to me about other things in life I am trying to work out. For instance, last year, when I was unwell for many months and did not know if I had cancer or not, I wrote a small book, "Love is the Reason" about how to understand the important people in your life, starting with yourself. It was written while I read the Book of Mormon. As I read, and prayed, inspiration came to me about what I was to write, and I immediately wrote it down, which is why I consider it to be an inspired book.

I look back over the many years I sat reading story books to our children and how they loved being read to. When I read the scriptures it's my time to sit next to my Heavenly Father and hear what He wants to tell me. I would be so hurt if I wrote to my children and they didn't bother to read what I

had written. When I look at how the world has been created with such order and precision, I know there is an incredible amount of intelligence and creativity that I can 'plug' into, just waiting to be used, and I would be foolish not to do so. I now know what I'm doing and the direction I am to take in my life. My greatest wish now is to help people come to know what I have learned. I want it to change their life as it has changed mine so they can reach the potential that lies within them.

Owen at temple baptisms in 2000

Although this section is about my own times of spiritual inspiration I include this letter from Owen written to Fraser on his mission September 2000 because it is about temple ordinances for some of my ancestors. From January to mid April, I had typed 1,500 names on to my family history file on the computer, from a microfiche someone in England had sent me. They were mostly related to my Grandpa Roos through the Calders and Cantlies.

Owen wrote: Recently I did temple baptisms with Mum and Dad. Mum had been asking me to do this for 6 months but I had not felt spiritually inclined to do so. I realised that my spirit was dwindling and I needed to rekindle the flame and make it grow. I made a commitment to start reading the scriptures again and praying properly. I had so many real experiences reading the scriptures they were like a different book. The interesting thing was that once I started studying the scriptures properly, I wanted to spend my time elsewhere doing other things that were constructive or helping me grow. I also found that when I started really listening to what the spirit was telling me here I would also get promptings elsewhere such as what to say to people about the gospel in a conversation.

But back to the temple baptisms. I made a conscious effort to

prepare myself beyond normal to be able to take the right spirit to the temple with me. I felt inspired the whole week leading up to it. Once inside I had an interesting experience. I went down to do the baptisms and had to do 42 - but it felt like 60. You hear of people who have experiences of feeling the presence of people standing there while the baptism was going on. Well I didn't feel that way during the baptisms. I did have one experience that is hard to explain. About half way through the baptisms, the prayer was said for one person and as usual I put hand to nose and went under the water. However I could only get down to the hair on my head. I couldn't go down any further. I had the capacity to but just couldn't. It was like someone was holding me up and physically stopping me from going under. It was an interesting sensation. In the end the baptiser had to physically push me under the water, and even he had trouble. I was under so long that Mum, who was looking on through the window, thought that I was drowning, because she couldn't see me. What a place to die! I don't know what it was but I have the feeling that that person was not ready to receive the gospel and had a long way to go. Anyway the whole experience was pretty good. It showed me yet again how to help myself progress and obtain the real blessings.

Recently I have come upon a discovery of self concerning our situations. All things are put here for our good. Including trials and adversity. I suddenly realised that it's our attitude to these trials and adversity that we can influence. It is our decision to say "The world has dealt me a bad hand" and then harbour feelings of depression, anger or hate. I have found that the desire and actual looking for a positive learning experience within our trials is a real idea. I even go as far to say that the sooner we identify what it is we are supposed to learn from a particular trial, or discover how to build up positive feelings whilst going through the trial, that the trial will no longer be necessary, and will pass us by. So many people look at the trial, and try to fix the trial itself, and do not discover the real meanings behind it, and the real

knowledge that is to be gained. It's like having a headache. Most people see the headache and try to numb the pain of the headache with aspirin, rather than identifying where the pain is coming from and correcting that. When we aspirin-fix the trial, it will come back until we have learned the real lesson. I suppose this is why people's lives go around in circles all the time. - The end of Owen's writing.

Heart shaped dish

For my birthday, I think it was 2001, Owen and Craig gave me a little blue Wedgewood dish. It was also from Fraser but he was on his mission. I knew immediately what it meant and was surprised that all these years later they still remembered an event when they were only 10 and 8 years old and Fraser was 2. At that time I had a small blue heart-shaped Wedgewood dish that had been given to me by the patients and nurses in the orthopaedic ward where I had been working at Charing Cross hospital, London, when I left to get married and travel to New Zealand. One day I showed this prized possession to Owen, Craig and Fraser and told them that as valuable as it was, it was not as valuable as they were, and that as special as it was to me, it would never mean as much to me as they did. I explained that I wanted us to be together forever and that if they ever went away from the gospel it would break my heart. With that I threw the heart-shaped dish on the hard floor expecting it to break but it did not. I tried again but it still did not break so I went to the shed and brought in a hammer. By this time the boys all got the idea of how my heart would break and they were all crying and did not want me to break the dish. I continued with the hammer until the dish was broken in pieces. When Owen and Craig gave me the little Wedgewood dish 15 years later I expressed surprise that they had remembered after all these years. They said, "How could we ever forget? It was such a dramatic lesson."

Apology

While trying to help two of the sisters in our Branch I offended them. They could not read very well and I had offered to help them with this but they took offence. One of them wrote to the Branch president and he called me in for an interview. He also asked David to be there, and the visiting High Councilman as well. The letter was read out to us all detailing how I had spoken to the sisters and how offended they were. The Branch president then asked me if I thought I should have done that, apparently expecting me to think it was all right and justify myself. When I immediately said, "No I should not have said that at all," the president was surprised and asked what I meant. I explained that I had been trying to help the two sisters but had obviously handled it all the wrong way, and had hurt their feelings and in that case I was very sorry and would go and apologise immediately. With that the High Councilman got up and walked out of the room looking annoyed that he had been called in to such a minor problem and the interview was over. However, that afternoon David went with me to each of the two sisters and I apologised profusely for hurting their feelings. They in turn apologised for writing the letter and getting me into trouble. The thing I remember most from all this is the look I saw on David's face full of love and admiration for me. It was always difficult for David to apologise and when he saw me do this sincerely he had great admiration for me.

Blood donor

After my life was saved by several blood transfusions after the birth of Scott, I always made sure I gave blood when the transfusion unit came to our town. For several years I did not

weigh enough to be a donor but one time when I was able to do this I got up off the couch after the blood was taken and walked unsteadily to the table to have a drink of cocoa. Thinking I would get some sugar to put in it I stood up and immediately felt very faint. Suddenly 2 nurses put me on a mattress on the floor and I felt very strange indeed. I could hear an unusual zinging noise and their voices sounded very far away even though I could see they were kneeling right next to me. It was as though I was aware of what was happening but powerless to stop it. I could feel myself drifting away and knew I had to remain awake and in control otherwise I thought I was going to die. I knew that if I did die the nurses might be blamed and it was not their fault in any way. Also, I did not want to leave my family so I fought to stay awake and forced myself to breathe slowly and deeply and not to panic. Gradually, I could feel myself getting better. After all the other donors had left the 2 nurses took me home in an ambulance and I was never allowed to give blood again. That day I learned that you can go into a perfectly normal situation where you are doing good and helping people and the next thing you know you are at death's door. You never know when it might happen and must live your life so you are ready for it, for whenever it is your time.

What I have learned 2002

I often think of a question Craig asked me a few months ago. It was quite simply, "Do you miss us, Mum?" I could hardly believe it could be a question that needed to be asked at all. Of course I miss them, every day, like the sun has gone behind a cloud. The day goes on the same, but not so bright. Then I realised that I have always tried to cover up that I miss them because I don't want them to be 'mummy's boys' and want them to move on in their lives and have families of their own. Their allegiance should always be to their own wife, not me, but maybe I have tried too hard to encourage

their independence, and it would not hurt to let them all know that I do miss them very much but am proud of them, and want them to travel, enjoy their work and have all the good experiences they can while they have the opportunity.

From each of our sons I learned things I never knew before. I learned of the pre-existence from Fraser. It is something I would never have thought of otherwise - or believed. I learned about the Atonement when I watched Owen carry such a heavy burden through the wrong choices he made in his teens and early twenties. Because I loved him so much I would have done anything I could to take that burden from him, and pay the penalty instead, but knew I could not. That is when I fully realised Jesus Christ has already done that for each one of us. From Craig's mission I learned, as the Seminary song says, He can make more of our life than we without Him ever could. From Scott I learned that what I really want is Eternity together with our whole family and I will do everything possible to help that to happen.

I know now things I never could have guessed at when I first joined the church. In the early days there were some things that were never fully explained, people assumed I knew them. I sometimes heard people say that they read the Book of Mormon and they knew it was true, or even that they just picked up the book and knew it was true. I had read it about 6 times from beginning to end, fasting and praying about it and still did not really know. I wished so often that I could have that experience. I heard people talk about the Holy Ghost confirming something to them by 'a burning feeling in the bosom.' I never had that either. Just as well, I suppose, or I would have thought I had indigestion! For over 22 years I felt like a second-class member of the church - not really genuine because I did not have what I thought I should have as a testimony. Yet I was always faithful to all the teachings of the church.

One of the biggest differences in my life was made when I followed the advice of President Ezra Taft Benson and read

the Book of Mormon for half an hour a day, every day, regardless of how busy or tired I was. I also marked verses that had special meaning for me in certain colours and wrote notes in the margins. I did not know about doing this until I heard an audiotape of Daniel Ludlow speaking about making the Book of Mormon your own Book of Mormon. Craig lent me the tape in 1992 from one of his friends when he was at university and boarding at Church College. It helped me so much to personalise what I was reading.

It was not until we moved to Te Awamutu in January 1994 that I decided to read the Book of Mormon for half an hour each day no matter how busy I was. As I did so and coloured in special verses, I came to know the people I was reading about, what they wore, what they ate, who their families were, how they survived, and how all that applied to me and my family. One night David and I came home from a late church function and I was just drifting off to sleep about 1am when I suddenly realised I had not read my half an hour of the Book of Mormon. How tempting it was to stay in bed and go to sleep but I got up and did my reading. I had made a commitment to the Lord and I did all I could to keep to it. Within a very short time after that, at last I gained my longed-for testimony, that I know the Book of Mormon is scripture - the word of God.

I learned from Daniel Ludlow's tape that although I had read the Book of Mormon about 6 times over the previous twenty years and had faithfully followed the steps in Moroni 10:4 I had not included the steps in verses 3 and 5 as well. Then I realised there were 5 R's - Read, Remember, Receive, Real intent, Revelation. I now know that a testimony is not a completed item that you have either got or have not, like an academic qualification. It is a growing thing like a tree. I know that I will go on questioning, studying and learning about the gospel. That is the person I am. Heavenly Father knows this and only he can measure my testimony - only he needs to.

Sacred grove

Just before Monique and Fraser got married in Toronto, Canada, in September 2002 David and I spent a week with her parents Stewart and Ruth. They drove us several hundred miles to places they knew we would like to visit like Kirtland and Palmyra temples and the homes that Joseph Smith lived in. I particularly wanted to visit the Sacred Grove and spent a long time walking around among the trees. I so much wanted to feel a spiritual feeling and kept praying that I would have that. I kept looking at the trees and hoping there might be a special shaft of sunlight coming through them, but nothing happened. I must have been there for an hour but felt no special feeling and came out of there very disappointed. That evening in my prayers I was expressing this disappointment when into my mind came the thought, "You don't need to go to a special place to have a special experience. That can happen wherever you are." I knew that was my answer.

House buying 2003

In February 2003 David had a fly spraying business which he had built up since we moved to Te Awamutu in 1994. He had originally been doing carpet cleaning and demonstrating Kirby vacuum cleaners but then started fly spraying houses and farms and found it brought in more money. It was usually busy only for the summer months so David decided we would be available to serve a mission for 6 months during the winter. After interviews with our branch president Jason Williams and our stake president, neither of them knew what kind of mission to have us called to because David had said he did not want to spend the whole time in the temple and did not want to go proselyting. As the time drifted on to April

David decided we would serve a 6 months mission but do it unofficially visiting less active members and helping other members wherever we could. So this is what we did. At this time Owen visited us in Te Awamutu from Auckland to tell us that he and Craig felt strongly that we should stop renting and buy our own house. They were able to pay back several thousand dollars we had lent them in 1997 from money my mother left to me after the sale of her house in England when she died in February 1996. We were greatly blessed when looking in the local newspaper in July to find a house for sale that was the cheapest house in Te Awamutu and had only just come on to the market that day. Within minutes we had made an appointment to view it. Then looked at another house in Kihikihi. Owen and Moana came from Auckland to look at the houses too and felt they would be very cold to live in. We fasted and prayed about which house to buy and felt that either one would be suitable. We decided on the house in Te Awamutu and signed the papers only 4 days after first seeing it. We moved in on the day Ethan was born in England 17 August 2003. I remember the phone call we had from Craig to tell us Ethan had been born. I had never heard Craig so excited and emotional before. Because the previous owner had been a heavy smoker we had to wash several times the walls, floors, windows and doors in the new house and were helped a lot by other church members with this. Then we painted all the walls and doors, threw away carpet as it was too dirty to clean and bought new. David and a friend from church took several trailer loads of weeds, old wood, a mattress and other rubbish from the garden and shed to the dump. We allowed ourselves 3 weeks away from our unofficial mission and worked hard to complete most of the work in that time. Before we moved any furniture into the house David and 2 other priesthood holders who were helping with the move, stood in the living room and David gave a blessing on the house. The renovations were exhausting but we were able to amaze Owen and Moana and our friends who had all said they hoped we would not buy that house as there was such a huge amount of work to do on

it. When they saw the finished house in September they could hardly believe it was the same place. We always knew the house was a blessing directly from the fact that we had served a mission even when nobody could find a mission for us.

Yes president

In March 2004 David was called as 1st Assistant to the High Priests' Group Leader who was Tom Vennik. There were about 17 High Priests which is a lot for a Branch, so David was looking forward to working with them, but did not want to give up being a teacher in Primary for the 9 year olds as he enjoyed doing that too. The previous week he had dug a hole in the chapel grounds to hide a gold-wrapped Book of Mormon so his class could 'dig up the gold plates' on Sunday. David had been waiting nearly a month to be able to do this, but it kept raining! Eventually, in mid-April Branch President Jason Williams discovered during an interview to call Olive as 2nd Counsellor in Relief Society, that David was still teaching in Primary and told him he needed to be released to concentrate on the High Priests, and let someone else teach in Primary. David was really determined to continue teaching his Primary children and did not want to be released. As much as the Branch President said he needed to be released, David came back with another reason why he could still go on teaching them. I could see that neither side was going to give in but then the Branch President looked kindly at David and told him that he needed to be released. David stopped and thought about it and reluctantly agreed with his Branch President. I was proud of David when he said, "Yes President."

David in hospital

David collapsed on 27 April 2005 and rushed to hospital. It was found to be bowel cancer which had ruptured causing septicaemia. I spent all day every day caring for him in Intensive Care for 6 weeks and then the ward for another 6 weeks before he could come home. He was in and out of hospital for the next 6 months and then died. Of course, during all this time of stress and care I became extremely tired. One day I was praying for David and feeling discouraged, when into my head came the words from Proverbs 3:5-6 Trust in the Lord with all thy heart and lean not unto thine own understanding. I realised I am all right to ask for what I want for David but must leave it in the Lord's hands and trust in that. A few minutes later I was again worrying about David as I walked through the house getting things ready to go to the hospital, and into my mind came another scripture from Psalm 46:10 Be still and know that I am God. I decided I was really being told very definitely not to worry any more, just to continue working hard and doing all I can, but not to worry, so I stopped! I told hospital chaplain Margaret Parsons about it in the afternoon when she visited David and had a prayer with us. I gave her a copy of my little book, Love is the Reason which she wanted to read. Later still, after David died, I went back to the hospital to say goodbye to Margaret and gave her a copy of the Book of Mormon, which she was very pleased to be given.

I had met Margaret Parsons when she came to visit David in Intensive Care at the end of April, just after he was admitted there. I was sitting praying silently, asking that I would be given the help I needed to be strong for David. When I looked up Margaret was standing next to the bed. I had not heard her walk in. We talked for a while and after that she was a frequent visitor, always giving me a fresh insight and positive way to look at things. One day I told Margaret that I felt I should not petition the Lord so much because my problems are not as terrible as mothers in Africa having to

watch their children dying of starvation in their arms, or people in war-torn countries with no homes. Margaret said that my worries are just as important to me as theirs are to them, and therefore just as important to God. She reminded me about the Bible story of the man at the pool of Bethsaida who was not able to get into the pool to be cured. When Jesus walked by He healed the man and told him to get up and walk. Margaret said the important thing for us to learn from that story was that the man looked up to Jesus, had faith and walked. She said we must always remember to look up to Jesus and have faith in Him and do what he asks of us.

Cemetery

After the funeral for David the burial was as difficult to accept as I had always known it would be. To make the mound of earth look less stark I had asked people to bring ferns and flowers from home or from the countryside to cover the earth and people did this so well that it was completely covered. As it was a hot sunny day we lingered around the area talking to each other and it was interesting to see people sitting on the grass in a group all chatting together. There was a lovely feeling there and nobody wanted to leave it. The only reason we left in the end was because we knew the Relief Society sisters had prepared an afternoon tea and were waiting for us to go back to the chapel. The next day I went back to the cemetery with Owen and the lovely feeling had gone, it was just an ordinary place again.

South Island visit 2006

After David died, Fraser and Monique moved back from England to New Zealand to live near me. Before Fraser started back to work he and Monique decided to have a holiday for 3 weeks touring the South Island and invited me

to go with them. At first I did not want to encroach on their holiday but they persuaded me. We were not sure which places we would reach each day so did not book motels beforehand. After leaving the inter-island ferry we drove for 3 hours to Nelson where we could not find anywhere to stay. After many phone calls, while sitting in a hot car, the three of us were tired, hot and hungry with no hope of finding a place to sleep that night. I expressed my irritation and frustration to Fraser that he had not booked ahead for at least our first night. Instead of becoming irritable with me, which is what I would have expected, he said, "Look Mum. We can either get angry with each other or we can look for other ways round it and make the best of it." I was stunned into silence. What he said was quite true and I had to change my attitude. Fraser phoned back to a place where he had earlier heard they had only one room left. We had discounted it because we needed 2 rooms for the 3 of us. We booked into that room, put in an extra bed, had a meal out, and had a place for all of us to sleep for the night. I learned that anger, frustration, irritation and contention are all clouds over our vision. When we get rid of them we are able to see other solutions more clearly.

Paid tithing on income needed 2006

When David died on 8 January 2006 I was put on to the widow's benefit because I was not old enough for superannuation for another 18 months. This gave me enough money to pay the mortgage, insurances, tithing, car upkeep and other expenses but there was no money left over for food. In February Owen went through my expenses very carefully and agreed there was no way to cut down as I was already being very careful. He suggested he and his brothers would give me money but I did not want this as they all had families to take care of, and not much money as it was. I thought about it for a long time. I could not go back nursing

because I was over 60 and did not know what else to do. I worked out how much money I needed each week and paid tithing on that amount, not on the amount I was actually getting from the widow's benefit. In March the idea came to me to work with people's feet. This idea actually came to me quite suddenly as I was walking across the living room and into my mind came the words, Use the footbath. Someone at church had given me a footbath when David was ill because she thought it would be relaxing for me when I came home from the hospital each night. I was not a podiatrist but as a nurse I knew elderly people needed foot care so I advertised in supermarkets and the local paper. Soon I had many people contact me who needed their toenails cut, but could not reach them. In July I was contacted by a lawyer who worked with someone I knew at church. I never even realised this person at church knew I needed work. The lawyer was Kerry Tustin who asked me to look after her baby as she wanted to return to work part-time. I was happy to do that, especially as she paid me well because she was glad to have someone she could trust completely. So I became a nanny to Holly and then Bella when she was born 18 months later. I became part of their extended family and only stopped going there after 3 years when Kerry's mother lost her job and worked for Kerry instead. This experience convinced me that you don't pay tithing with money but with faith. It was the same as when Craig was going to go on a mission and we paid the whole amount even though mathematically I never knew how we did it on my nurse's salary as well as running a home, because David did not have a job.

Relief society president 2006

On 11 November 2006 we went to the Hamilton temple to witness the sealing of Owen and Moana. This was a lovely occasion with Fraser, Monique and Isaac there with me, and all Moana's family there from Auckland. The next day in Te

Awamutu I was interviewed by Branch President Artanas (Arty) Dimitrov and called as Relief Society president. I had known back in April that the calling was coming but had not felt strong enough for it due to recovering from David's long illness and death. Having accepted the calling, two days later I went to the temple to pray about my new responsibilities and had a lovely feeling come towards me as I entered the celestial room. It was like someone putting something like a cloak round me, but from the front, not the back. I had a feeling of calmness and confidence about the new calling after that.

Auckland roundabout about 2009

After David died it was difficult for me to drive long distances such as to Auckland which was about two and a half hours of driving. David had always preferred to do the driving so I usually only drove around our town. When he was in hospital I became accustomed to driving the half hour journey to the hospital and back each day. When Kyla was born I did not think twice about jumping in the car and driving to Auckland only an hour or so after her birth to go and see her and stay for a few days, probably with Owen and Moana. On a different time of staying with them I needed to drive home in the busy rush hour traffic of the morning. Owen knew I was very concerned about this so he drew diagrams of the route from their house until I got to the motorway and knew my way from there. I prayed a lot about this journey because I was really concerned about it and not sure if I could manage the roads and roundabouts especially with huge trucks and fast cars around me. I knew there was one roundabout that was the worst to negotiate and was really worried about being on it so, of course, I prayed asking for help with that one. As I approached that roundabout I felt calm and able to get into the correct lane, and then to my amazement I saw that cars already on the roundabout

stopped or slowed right down and I was able to move on to the roundabout with no trouble at all. It was just as if someone was standing there holding them all back until I drove into the correct lane. I have never been able to explain this, but it seemed as if there was an angel standing in the middle of the road that went around the roundabout and all the traffic had to stop. I was amazed that my concerns about such a simple thing as driving were important enough for heavenly help. Much later on, about 10 years later, I learned that part of the function of the Aaronic priesthood is to enable the ministering of angels. Not only do Aaronic priesthood holders have this benefit but all people who have been baptised and keep the covenants they have made at baptism have the right to have the ministering of angels.

Testimony about 2012

Since it took me 22 years to know that the Book of Mormon is the word of God it would be nice to think that everything else fell into place after that, but that is not so. Life is not neat and tidy like that. I have always struggled with believing in the First Vision, not that I have ever disbelieved it, but did not have a witness that many people speak of. We know we should not compare ourselves with other people, but that does not stop us doing it. I knew that if Joseph Smith said he saw Heavenly Father and Jesus Christ then it must have happened but that was as far as I could go. For many years I never felt able to discuss it with anyone because I did not want them to know I did not know. So I struggled on alone. How often we carry loads that we do not need to carry if only we would talk to other people about our worries. We think they would be shocked or think less of us, but usually they don't think anything of the sort.

My friend Renee Brown is many years younger than I am but there has never been an age gap between us and we enjoy each other's company. One day I was at Renee's house and

we got talking about our beliefs. I kept having shivery feelings come over me and I knew it was a witness through the Spirit that the things I was saying were true. Afterwards I could not remember what I had said, only that it was true. One Testimony Sunday I spoke and said that I knew Joseph Smith could not have written the Book of Mormon. He did not have enough education to write even a page of it, and to say he could have written the whole book is simply laughable. Anyone who says he did, cannot have read the Book of Mormon thoroughly.

Familysearch support mission August 2012

In early 2012 I decided to serve a mission for a year. The plan was that it would finish just before I went to England in June 2013. I decided there were 3 main reasons why I wanted to serve a mission -

1. To Thank Jesus Christ for what He has done for me
2. To Help other people
3. To Demonstrate to my grandchildren how important it is to serve a mission.

It was a shock when I was called to serve with family history because I knew so little about it. I had spent 30 years searching for information so we could complete ordinances for our immediate ancestors, but had never achieved much more than that. It took many, many hours of study on my mission to learn enough to answer the questions of people who phoned for help, but as I worked I was given inspiration about how to answer them. I have learned that we can be given the inspiration we need through the Holy Ghost, but

first we have to Work and be Worthy and then we have to Ask and be specific. Often I have no idea at all how to help the patron but have a quick prayer for assistance and gradually we work together to find the answer. Over the years of doing this work I am often surprised at how I am able to help people, not just with the problems they phone about, but as we talk the conversation sometimes leads to another topic and I am able to give them a gospel insight that helps them. If we are willing then we can be the hands the Saviour can use to bless others. Often, at these times, when I have been helping a patron and the conversation has moved on to her worries and concerns, I have given her answers that I can feel have been given to me at that moment by inspiration. Then we finished the phone call and I burst into tears, and yet I am so happy. I pray and thank Heavenly Father for being able to help someone with what is important, and feel that gentle feeling of love. I know this is the influence of the Holy Ghost and wish I could describe it. It is such a gentle, fragile feeling, like standing in the sunshine, or looking at a rainbow and trying to touch it, which is impossible but you still want to because it is so beautiful.

Don't ask when you already know 2014

Early in 2014 we had a series of talks over one weekend in Te Awamutu chapel given by Herewini Jones who came from Opotiki. After one of the talks I spoke to him about my concerns that I did not have a testimony of Joseph Smith seeing Heavenly Father and Jesus Christ. I said I had fasted and prayed and studied for many years but never had what I could consider was an answer. Herewini said I could not have an answer because I was asking again and again about something I already knew. I disagreed and said I did not think I did know. I know that Joseph Smith said he saw them and in that case I believe him, but I do not know it for myself.

Herewini said I do, and asked me to take more notice of all the times I am given a spiritual prompting by the Holy Ghost, then I will become more aware of it. He looked directly into my eyes and said, "You are a special person. Don't give up."

General conference talk April 2014

In 2012 I bought an MP3 player so I could download talks from General Conferences and listen to them while I walked. I learned a lot from listening to so many talks. In 2013 Tristram Johnson in England suggested we pray specifically before a General Conference to hear answers to the questions that are concerning us. So before I went to the chapel to listen to Conference in April 2014 I prayed about my concerns that I did not know as strongly as I would like that Joseph Smith really did see Heavenly Father and Jesus Christ and that he was a prophet. I went to all the sessions except the priesthood one and by the last session had forgotten about my prayers. Suddenly I saw that one of the speakers was Lawrence Corbridge who I had listened to intently in October 2008 when he spoke about Jesus saying, I am the Way. I remembered him saying things like, 'Jesus said I am the way' and 'there is no other way' and 'any other way is madness'. I never forgot the intense way he spoke and how I had listened to him with such concentration. This time his topic was The Prophet Joseph Smith and I listened just as intently to him. I was sitting in the front of the chapel and he seemed to be looking straight ahead and speaking directly to me. As I listened I knew I had been given the answer and experience I had been seeking for so many years. I doubt if any other speaker would have had that effect on me. It was completely unexpected, and exactly what I needed. It really was an answer to my prayers and I was filled with gratitude.

Hot water tank leaking Sep 2014

I came home September 2014 from my 10 week visit to England very sad to have left my family and friends with whom I had had a lovely time. I was very tired from the long journey and arrived home to find my hot water tank was leaking and would need to be replaced. The floor under the tank was soaking wet and I discovered I had forgotten to renew my house insurance in all the rush of going to England. I quickly renewed the insurance and contacted a plumber but found they could not get there for 5 days. In the end it was a week before the tank was replaced and in that time water sank into the floorboards.

By Friday I had been waiting a whole week to get the water tank replaced and had lived all that time in fear that the tank would burst and flood the house. I had used hardly any hot water all week in case it set off the flood and had phoned the plumber every day asking when they would come to me. In the end I phoned another plumber who seemed much more competent. Then I did not know whether to cancel the first plumber and go with the second, but knew it would be several more days if I did that. I prayed asking for help to deal with the situation and only an hour later a man was knocking on my door. He said he was the owner of the first plumbing business and wanted to apologise for the way I had been treated. He said he would deal with the people who had not done their job properly but in the meantime would make sure my water tank was replaced immediately. He phoned one of his employees and together they emptied and disconnected the old tank. Just as they went to their van for more tools, water started pouring out from a pipe near the floor. I called them and they leapt back into the house very fast indeed! We got buckets and towels in place, which had been used the whole of the previous week, so were nearby. The new tank was installed and an electrician called to connect the wiring. The plumber showed me the old pipes and explained that they were so worn out it was a wonder

they had not flooded before. He said this sometimes happens when people go away and turn off their water, which is enough to dislodge the valve, and they end up with flooded carpets. I realised that I was very fortunate I had been here when the leakage started as it could have been so much worse. I felt grateful I had been protected from a disaster that could have happened while I was away.

Crisis of faith Sep 2014

The day after arriving home I felt so tired and all the doubts of my faith I had been experiencing in recent weeks took hold. This followed on from when Craig had spent over an hour talking to me while I stayed at Fraser and Monique's house, across the road from his in Euxton, north of England. He was absolutely intent on telling me what he had discovered about the Book of Abraham. Historians had said that Joseph Smith had changed the facsimile at the beginning of the Book of Abraham to make it look like someone being killed as a human sacrifice by an Egyptian, but this was not correct as the Egyptians did not make human sacrifices. As it turned out 4 years later it was discovered that one group of the Egyptians did make human sacrifices, but we did not know that at the time. Craig was insistent that if Joseph Smith was really a prophet of God he would never have made that mistake. Craig said there was a long article by church leaders about it in a Church newspaper but only a short few lines near the end stating that Joseph Smith's interpretation may have been a mistake. Craig insisted that the church leaders should have been honest and stated that a mistake had been made, openly in a news interview, not hidden obscurely at the end of an article. He said he could no longer trust the Church or its leaders. By the time I got to church after flying back to New Zealand I felt I did not know what I believed any more. I prayed for help to work it all out. Straight after church I was sitting talking to a

girl I had never seen before but who had been good friends with Cancy 14 years before. She was Susan Morris before she got married to Mark Waterson, so I got her phone and email address. Lots of people came to welcome me home but after they had all gone I sat talking to first Leigh Leslie, then Renee Brown and Wendy Thorley. I explained that my faith was seriously challenged and that I did not have the energy to cope with it. I realised that 3 of the people I would most trust with my innermost feelings were right there, and it was no coincidence. A little later Wendy came home with me and I felt better after we had talked further. Also, she decided to contact the plumber and hurry them up to come and fix my leaking hot water tank which had been a great worry to me.

Two days later as I was waking up I kept having part of a tune go through my mind. It kept repeating itself for a couple of hours but I did not know what it was. The following day the same thing happened in the early morning. The third day I remembered it might be a hymn we had sung on Sunday. I had never heard it before but liked the words. It was hymn 128.

I will not doubt, I will not fear;
God's love and strength are always near.
His promised gift helps me to find
An inner strength and peace of mind.
I give the Father willingly
My trust, my prayers, humility.
His Spirit guides; his love assures
That fear departs when faith endures

As soon as I had found the hymn I never heard the music in my head after that at all.

I continued to be plagued by doubts and worries but was comforted by a message given in General Conference - When a train goes through a tunnel and it gets dark, we don't throw away our tickets and jump out, but stay on the train and trust the driver. Another talk in Conference by Russel M. Ballard

spoke about 'stay in the boat and hang on' when life gets tough. It encouraged me to write a few lines -

When you're not sure
And doubts will gnaw
No place to turn
For truth you yearn
Should you stay
Or should you go?
If only you
Could really know
But if you stay
And start to pray
Then answers start
In mind and heart
Applied to you
For what to do
Stay in the boat
And keep afloat
Then hope to find
Some peace of mind
Seek to know
And how to grow
So you progress
Instead of guess
What life's about
Instead of doubt

Love in the temple Oct 2014

Every Tuesday I travel to the temple with 2 other sisters, and have done so for 3 years, as we are all ordinance workers for that evening. After we had finished on Tuesday 14 October 2014 I went into the celestial room for a few minutes. As I sat down to pray a feeling of love came over me and brought me to tears. It was only for a few moments but I am glad to have

felt it after all the spiritual stress of the last month or so.

Dream of a sister in the temple seeing a picture

In that state between being asleep and awake I thought of being in the temple. A sister was standing near the Training room wanting to go to the endowment room but seemed to be held back from going there. I told her I would take her there and we started up the stairs. At the first turn in the staircase there is a picture of Jesus standing with his arms outstretched, seeming to welcome us. We stopped in front of the picture because the sister was upset. She did not think she was good enough to go on into the endowment room because she had done some things wrong and thought she ought to pay for her wrong doing somehow. I told her that Jesus had already done that for her. I woke up knowing that what I had said was true.

Melanoma Oct 2015

On 15 Oct 2015 my GP Doctor Paul Kennedy diagnosed the brown moles on my feet as Melanoma, which can be a type of cancer, and the following week they were photographed by a special camera. The digital photos were to be examined by dermatologists at the hospital and treatment recommended. Two weeks later I was in the temple when someone in the group asked me how I was. I explained about the melanoma and one of them mentioned a friend who had melanoma and was not expected to live much longer. Up till then I had felt positive about my melanoma but suddenly I felt down-hearted. A few minutes later I told someone else how discouraged I felt and he asked if I had had a priesthood blessing, and to remember the words. Immediately I

remembered what I had been told in my blessing 3 days after the diagnosis, that through priesthood power and my faith and the skill of the doctors and the prayers of my family the Melanoma would be able to be removed and I would be able to continue with my daily life as if nothing had happened. I was so grateful for that priesthood blessing and for being reminded to remember it. After another few weeks the melanoma results proved that it was not a malignant kind and no further treatment was necessary except to watch for changes.

Learning about life after death

When we go most of us do not come back. A very few people are resuscitated and come back but the vast majority do not.

I saw David die and knew that he had gone.

As a nurse I have seen other people die and there is a different feeling in the room. They are not there anymore.

When we get to where we are going, we are the same type of person we were when we left here.

I have always been more like Martha, up and doing, than Mary, sitting listening.

I can understand the Prodigal son's brother, working all hours and not even getting a thank-you let alone the feast his lazy, dissolute brother got.

If I don't learn to 'listen' by the time I leave here, I shall have to learn it when I get 'there'.

When we leave this earth our communication is not with a voice, but thought to thought and is much faster than a voice speaking. Therefore we are able to learn much faster and more easily than when on earth. However, we may still be

bound by the same constraints of doubt, anger, criticism and negativity that held us back on earth. Only when we are willing to let go of these thoughts can we progress to become what is our potential.

There are many different areas there. We shall go to the kind of place we are used to. We shall decide that for ourselves simply by not being comfortable in, or able to understand, a 'higher' place.

While still in this life we are to learn to be at peace within ourselves, as said in Psalms, Be still and know that I am God.

We are to pass our knowledge on to those who are important to us, or indeed, anyone who will listen, particularly to our children and their children, That they might have life and have it more abundantly. One of the reasons for reading the scriptures often is so that we shall remember verses that particularly apply to a question we have about life, and as we think about it, that verse comes into our mind with its answer.

We must be ready to learn more ourselves. Knowledge comes from a universal source. It is knowledge without time constraints and has been there from before time began. Time is used on this earth to help us regulate our lives. Light and truth go together. When we are searching for truth and accepting of it, we have a light about us. Other people recognise this. When we are negative and critical we lose some of that light, and become darker.

At some point after death we will be near a great source of light and truth. Whether that is Jesus Christ or someone else we don't know but we shall remember all aspects of our own life on earth, good and bad, but that Being will not be judgmental about it. It is the same as in the Bible when a woman was brought to Jesus for him to condemn for her adultery, for which she was about to be killed. Her accusers could not answer Jesus and they left. He then said to the woman, Neither do I condemn thee. He does not condemn us

because He does not need to. We condemn ourselves and feel ashamed when we come in contact with the light of His love. We feel like shrinking away from that light because it shows up our imperfections, and we resolve to do better in the future. We must then remember what else Jesus said to that woman, Go and sin no more. He did not simply say the words and give forgiveness, but gave instruction for the way forward for her.

What we learn on earth is not so much learning something new as remembering what we once knew before we came here. When we leave this earth we continue on, taking with us what we have gained here. Knowledge and truth become the light that surrounds us and it is that light that we contribute to, in our own very small way, towards the greater light of God. It is added towards the glory of God. This is similar to the thoughts I expressed when I wrote a poem in 1999 called Candles

Candles are like people ...

They can be beautiful to look at
like the candles we do not like to spoil by lighting

They can bring happiness and laughter
like the candles on a birthday cake

They can be plain but useful
like the candles we light in a power failure

An older candle burns brighter and better
than a new one, and gives more light

Candles come in all shapes and sizes
and colours

No matter what a candle looks like though
it is of no use until we light it ... and it is burned

We too must use our life to its fullest
even if it causes us pain sometimes

When we blow out a candle
we still have the candle ...
but where does the flame go?

When we die
our body is left behind on the earth ...
but where does our spirit go?

Our spirit is the light
that glows within each one of us

It is who we really are

We must nurture our own spirit
and that of others

We must find out what it is
we are to do in this life,
and do it,
until at some appointed time
our 'candle' is blown out
and our 'flame' flies free
to join the greater light.

Whenever God or any other heavenly being is mentioned in the Bible it is always in connection with a great light. When angels appeared to shepherds near Bethlehem announcing the birth of Jesus, "the glory of the Lord shone round about them". One of the earliest verses in the Bible states, And God said Let there be light, and there was light. Jesus commanded those that follow Him to, Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven. He further explained, No man lighteth a candle, and setteth it under a bushel, but setteth it on a candlestick, that they which enter in may see the light. The first few words of the Gospel of John written about Jesus state: In him was life, and the life was the light of

men. We are further taught, For the word of the Lord is truth, and whatsoever is truth is light, and whatsoever is light is Spirit, even the Spirit of Jesus Christ.

English churches in the middle ages

In January 2016 I had a frightening fall down my back steps resulting in my being badly bruised and bleeding with a sprained right wrist. I was not able to continue with FamilySearch mission phone calls for nearly a month. During that time I devoted many hours to doing my own family history research. I discovered several ancestors had been members of the German church in London. I did not know a German church existed in England and found it was the German Lutheran church brought to London by King George 1 from Germany. I then researched other kings and queens of England, going back to Henry 8th who started the Church of England, and forwards in time to Queen Victoria. Through my research I realised there was no true religion of Jesus Christ during that time. The churches were political instruments in the hands of whichever monarch was in power at that time with only a few people brave enough to speak up about it. I began to realise, probably for the first time in my life, just how much the gospel of Jesus Christ really was needed to be restored to the earth.

The very next phone call June 2016

I started serving a Church Service mission with FamilySearch Support in August 2012 for a year. At the end of that time I was asked to extend which I did, then was asked to extend again. By June 2016 I had been serving for almost 4 years except for the 2 or 3 months each year I went to England to visit my family. By that time I had been asked on the mission not only to answer phone calls helping people

with their computer problems on the family history website but also to teach prospective missionaries to get them ready to serve a mission with FamilySearch Support. Some of them had never used FamilySearch and I had to start right from the beginning and found it very tiring. Also, the people on the phone calls quite often seemed to assume I was employed in Salt Lake to answer their questions. They were often frustrated with something they found incorrect or that they were not able to do.

One Tuesday morning in early June when I had spent 3 hours answering questions from irritable people, and talking to them patiently, I felt really tired, with a sore throat from explaining everything to them. I had a prayer and told Heavenly Father that people do not realise that I don't get paid for doing this work, and I was tired and wished somebody would just say thank you and appreciate the help I was giving them.

Soon the phone rang and I answered another call. Again it was from a lady who had found incorrect information on the Family Tree and wanted it put right. She said she had spent hours trying to correct it but the system would not let her do that and she wanted it fixed. She was not happy about the situation and I felt tired trying to sort it all out. I explained that I would need to send the case to another department to correct it. As the phone call went on she mellowed as she realised I was genuinely trying to help her. As we finished the call she said, "I am so grateful you have helped me with this. I really appreciate the work you do in helping so many people. Thank you so much for doing this." I was amazed as the words she said were almost exactly what I had asked for in my prayer - and in the very next phone call too! I was in tears as I prayed again, grateful for such a specific answer, not a general answer, but very specific using some of the exact words I had asked for. It was not random. It was not general. It was specific and just for me.

Preston temple family baptisms 27 Aug 2016

While visiting my families who live in England, I was able to go to the Preston temple for baptisms not only for our own family but to be done by our own family. Owen, Moana, Alma and Jacob had driven up from their home in Hemel Hempstead to spend the weekend with Fraser, Monique and their family. Moana went to an endowment session while Owen, Alma, Jacob and I went to the baptismal area. There was another small group there too. In the tiny chapel room we had a hymn and prayer and it was lovely to see Jacob play the organ there. Then I was baptised first for the women in our family while Alma and Jacob watched before they were baptised for the men. It was so special to have Owen as the baptiser. It is the first time I have stood in the font with someone from my own family doing the ordinances for our own family, and I did not want that beautiful experience to end.

Temple ordinances 25 Jan 2017

Yesterday I felt such happiness at having been helped to do so much in such a short space of time - less than 4 hours. Over the past few months I have researched records on the Popham line of my father's mother, going back to 1630 being greatly helped by my friend Karen in verifying them. Yesterday I finished my 4 hours of mission phone calls and drove to the temple. I did the 4 pm endowment for Emma Popham then asked at the office on my way out at 6.20 pm if they would put in 24 baptisms for the female Pophams for the next day. I had kept back the males for my grandsons to do. They suggested I take them to the baptismal font right

away as 3 girls were already there with only a few names to do. I hurried downstairs and watched as the Popham baptisms were completed. They asked if I would like to do the confirmations as they were my own family. I replied that I would love to but would not have time as I had a recommend renewal interview in 20 minutes. I started walking out but had the feeling to go back. They assured me they would have the confirmations completed in that time so I did them. Then I ran out of the temple and drove to the nearby stake centre for my interview. 15 minutes later I was back at the temple, and horrified to find that my new recommend had been activated immediately and my old one could not be used. I had left the new one in the car as I knew the old one still had a week left on it. Fortunately, the temple recorder recognised that I had been in the temple only a few minutes before and I was allowed in. I hurried to the initiatory area just as the sisters had finished their shift. I thought it was too late but the thought came to me, No harm in asking. When they heard that the baptisms for all my Pophams had just been done they agreed to stay on and do as many of the initiatories as possible, with some of the sisters offering to be proxies. Each initiatory takes at least 10 minutes to complete but we got 10 of them completed in the next half hour before closing time. I even discovered from the name tag of one sister that her brother-in-law had baptised my husband 42 years before. Everywhere I had gone people were so kind in helping me to get these ordinances done. I felt very grateful. I have not been well for the last 3 days with unusual dizziness and nausea, and had not felt like going to the temple, but I am so glad I did!

Jesus' atonement has already carried my hurt 26 Feb 2017

Celia Irving and I have gone Visiting teaching together for

several years and get on well together. One Sunday morning I went to ask her something just before Sacrament meeting started. She replied that she would speak to me later but was trying to be reverent before Sacrament. I went and sat down feeling hurt by what sounded like a reprimand in a self-righteous tone of voice. As Sacrament was passed 20 minutes later I thought about my feelings and realised that I was feeling hurt about something I did not need to be upset about because Jesus Christ has already carried that hurt for me. If I persisted in carrying it, I would be denying what He did for me in the Atonement. So I let it go thankfully. After the meeting Celia came straight to me to apologise for speaking sharply. I was able to smile at her and say it did not matter, and I really meant it. The hurt had gone completely and we went on over the ensuing years as good friends.

Ordinances for Louisa Popham 10 Mar 2017

This is an article Olive wrote and sent to be included in the New Zealand news insert of the Ensign church magazine, but it was not used. It is about one special day on Friday 10 March 2017

All the temple ordinances in one day

In a General Conference talk Sister Olive Redmond heard the suggestion that we go to the temple and complete all the ordinances in one day just for one specific person. For 40 years she had searched Popham family records because her grandmother was Elizabeth Ann Popham. Her friend Karen helped trace the Popham records back to the late 1600's in Devon and they found that Elizabeth's great-uncle was Joseph Popham married to Louisa. Sadly Olive discovered

that their first 3 children all died as babies. They went on to have another 4 children but she felt the great sorrow they must have endured and wanted to be sure all their ordinances were completed. She phoned the temple and arranged to attend for the baptism for Louisa.

Sister Redmond is serving a Church Service Mission with FamilySearch Support answering phone calls from people all over the world who have problems to sort out on their computer while using the Family Tree. The day before the temple visit she answered a call from a patron in the United States. He realised she did not have an American accent and asked which country she lived in. When told it was New Zealand he was overjoyed because he and his wife had recently served a mission in the Visitors' Centre attached to the Hamilton, New Zealand temple, and his wife's sister and her husband, Elder and Sister Peterson, were serving there at present. He mentioned several people they knew in New Zealand and Sister Redmond knew them too, some of whom lived in Temple View and others who had lived on Great Barrier Island with her friends.

Arriving at the temple at the appointed time Olive was able to be baptised and confirmed for Louisa Popham. Olive recognised the baptiser Brother Manuel having met at a stake conference a year before and remembered his wife was trying to trace ancestors from Finland which is a very difficult location. Then the initiatory ordinance was completed together with some others for the Popham family. One of the sisters assisting with initiatories was the sister-in-law, with the same surname, of the missionary who had baptised Olive's husband 42 years previously. There was over an hour to wait for the endowment session so Olive went to the nearby Visitors' Centre to meet Sister Peterson. Olive explained that she was spending the day at the temple to complete all the ordinances for her ancestor Louisa Popham. Also that she had heard of someone with the name of Wihongi-Popham who lived in Hamilton but as there were 100,000 people living in the city she had not been able to

find her. Sister Peterson said that her maiden name had been Wihongi and she was related to this person but did not know where she lived. Another missionary, passing by, heard the name mentioned and said she had been to their house, so knew what it looked like, but did not know the address. She knew it was near a shopping centre. She went to the computer and started a search. Within 5 minutes she had found the house and the street but not the number. Olive drove to the street and drove up and down until she found the house she had seen on the computer. At last she was able to meet the distant relative she had tried to contact for 5 years.

Back at the temple, the endowment was completed and later Olive was able to join a sealing session with members of another ward who were there with their bishop. Olive thought she recognised his name and asked where he had served his mission. She discovered it was in the town her family had lived in 20 years before and he had celebrated his 21st birthday at their house. Olive remembered the event because there were so many candles on his cake they set fire to the paper cake frill around it.

With all the ordinances completed in one day for Louisa Popham, Olive was able to leave the temple exactly 9 hours after she arrived, with many interesting experiences that were not coincidences to add to her temple memories.

Three compliments

There have been 2 things said about me in the last year which I am grateful to have had said about me and they reminded me of a third one. I had some dental work done and paid for it immediately but the receptionist had gone home so the relieving person did not know the correct way to put the payment through the automatic machine. I put my credit card in with the number and paid the correct amount

and thought no more about it. A few weeks later the receptionist phoned and asked if I had paid for the treatment because it did not show on their records. I assured her I had paid immediately after having the treatment. She said she would check again but phoned me soon after to ask if I was sure I had paid the amount as it still did not show on their records. I assured her I had. Then she said, Well, Olive, you are as honest as the day is long, so I believe you and will close this enquiry. It was such a nice thing to have heard.

A few months ago a group of friends from church were discussing our callings and I said I seemed to have been involved in Primary nearly all my life and that it must be because people knew I would not argue but get on and do it. Then a friend said, No, I'll tell you why you are in Primary. It is because you are the only person I know who can discipline the children without being mean to them. Another nice thing to have heard.

The comments reminded me of something I overheard a patient say to another patient in the ward where I was reporting on for night duty at Charing Cross hospital, London, long ago in 1963. As I walked past the beds I heard one man say to another, "We'll be all right now. We've got the kind one on tonight." Two of the qualities that matter most to me are kindness and honesty.

Hurt feelings Mar 2018

The last few days had been very difficult for me with problems that arose. I felt criticised and unsure of what I was doing. Being a mother and mother-in-law to adults, involves doing or saying, or even thinking about things, that are different from the other person's opinion, and therefore they think their way is right and I am wrong. Even more than that is the fact that I need to be told about this so I can see the

error of my ways and change them. Life is not easy!

Also serving a mission is always challenging especially as I answer phone calls from people who are irritable about something going wrong on their computer website while trying to do their family history.

There were problems with my calling in Primary, teaching 7 and 8 year olds. In the class of 8 children I had been having great difficulties with 3 of the boys because 2 had not been to church before, and another has emotional challenges and did not want to leave his mother and come to class. At the beginning of the year I had offered to teach that class because other teachers did not want to take on those problems. For the last 3 weeks at the end of each lesson I was exhausted because not only did I have the usual difficulties, but had another 4 children brought in from the next class because their teacher was away.

The Primary president did this on 3 consecutive Sundays because she said it was their presidency policy not to call in a relieving teacher but to put the children in with the next class. I did not know about this rule and have never heard of it anywhere else. I have been a Primary president 6 times during my life and would always call in someone else to help. However I was told that I did know about it and had therefore agreed with it.

In a teachers' meeting last Sunday I said I was exhausted each week. This was discussed in their presidency meeting, but not with me, and I was phoned a few days later and told I would be moved to a different class. That was not what I wanted at all because I felt I was making progress with the children's behaviour problems. I simply wanted not to have the extra class as well as my own. The matter was not discussed with me, I was simply informed that my class would be taken away from me and given to somebody else. I felt second-rate.

A few days later the Primary president came to my house and

talked about the situation and asked me why I did not communicate my opinion to her. I didn't answer as I have known her many years and talking to her always upsets me so I keep away from her. I just let her talk, hoping she would soon go away. At last after 45 minutes I said the answer was that I could either talk to her or stay well, but I could not do both. I said that looking back at the situation, I would have handled it differently. She said she would not have handled it at all differently, and I realised that that was where the problem lay. She thought she had done everything correctly, so there was no point in further discussion. I did not say out loud, but thought that I wish I had stood up for myself more but did not have the energy to do that.

I had been to my doctor a few days before because my heart has been jumping more noticeably lately. He said it was all right and I don't need to worry about it but it still makes me jump when it does it and makes me realise that my life may come to an end sooner than I thought. So I came out of church today tired and thinking it will be a good idea when I do leave this world and I won't be doing things wrong any more.

Just before I got into my car someone called me from across the street. It was Hyrum Sunnex. He jumped out of his car, leaving the engine running and ran across the street to me. He gave me a big hug and said, "I just wanted to tell you, thank you for being the person you are." He had some severe challenges 3 years ago and I had visited and helped him as much as I could. He wanted me to know that.

Then Georgie Rewha came and hugged me and told me she is very grateful for the person I am. I was amazed because suddenly I was being given answers I felt were from Heavenly Father in a very specific way that helped me know He knows about my life. It really is amazing and I felt very grateful.

Even more so was when I received an email from Hyrum 2

days later. He wrote -

I meant and mean every word that I said to you on Sunday. You are a wonderful woman who I appreciate with all my heart, not only myself but my family and children, keep being you, as that is amazing. You helped save me Olive and I will never forget that! Don't let others get you down even though it is easy to allow them to. Be Strong, Be Brave and continue to be Glorious.

Love you lots, Hyrum

Bishop's blessing 13 May 2018

I was called for an interview with Bishop Josh Brown. I was released from Primary and a new calling will be given when I return from England in September. It will probably involve interviewing ward members and writing a little piece about them in the ward newsletter, so we can all get to know each other better. I could see straight away that it would also enable me to talk to the person about them writing their own life story, and about doing their family history. Then Bishop Brown asked if he could give me a Bishop's Blessing. It was the most amazing feeling. People talk about 'feeling the Spirit' and that is just what it must have been because everything he said was exactly what I was concerned about, and was spoken clearly and with power. He said my home would be kept safe while I am away in England. I will enjoy my family and be a blessing to them and they to me. Blessed with health to travel with no undue discomfort. To travel well and safely. To find my home safe on my return.

Bishop's interview 30 Sep 2018

I requested an interview with Bishop Josh Brown regarding

the FamilySearch Support mission I have been serving for the past 6 years but now have the illness of Giant Cell Arteritis and its treatment with large doses of steroids to cope with which make me giddy, shaky and tired. I said that as I look back on the last 9 months I can see that I was under a great deal of pressure. I was serving a mission, also a temple ordinance worker, a Primary teacher, Visiting teacher, running a home and then hurt my back lifting heavy equipment.

The very first thing Bishop Brown said referred to the scripture that we should not run faster than we have strength. Immediately I said that I had asked for the interview because I wanted his opinion about my health and serving a mission, but that during the past 2 days I had come to the conclusion that I do not have the energy to continue with the mission. It makes me sad to think of stopping and I serve with lovely people, and have learned a lot, but now I am so tired all the time and my whole body is shaking.

Bishop Brown asked me to read 2 other scriptures. Moroni 7:6-10 which indicated that it depends on our attitude whether something is done grudgingly or willingly. Also Mosiah 4:24 which indicated that we would help if we could, but sometimes we are not able to. He said he would like to email our stake president to give me an honourable release from my mission on health grounds. I mentioned that I do not have a calling now, having been released as a Primary teacher before I went to England 4 months ago. He said he would like to see my health improve and discuss that in a few weeks.

Bishop Brown then gave a closing prayer and a blessing for me, in which he thanked me for all the service I have given. Just as we are glad of anyone who teaches and helps our children, so Heavenly Father is grateful for the help I have given to His children. He also said, thank you Heavenly Father for your beautiful Son. I will be blessed to have the energy that is needed. Blessed with sleep so that as I rest and

sleep my body will be renewed. My children and family will be blessed to learn the gospel of Jesus Christ. My home will be blessed to be safe and for me to have what I need.

Another compliment

Adding to the 3 compliments of 6 months ago, when I was released from my mission due to illness, another missionary made this comment that she was very sad that I had to be released as she had confided family troubles to me for several years and I had become one of her most trusted friends. I remembered a scripture, that it is better to be trusted than to be loved. Of course, to be loved is wonderful and we all need it, but to be trusted needs action on our part to be a person to prove we can be trusted.

Hospital clinic visit 9 Jul 2019

For the past 6 years I had gone to England, staying with Fraser and Monique for the 6 weeks July and August school holidays of their children Isaac, Nathan and Beth. Having been ill for the past year I did not think I would be well enough to go this year. Also, Monique and their family would be going to her parents in Canada for the whole of August. However, I decided 4 months ago to pray every fast Sunday for an answer as to whether or not I should go to England for part of September and October. I became very specific in my prayers with what I was asking about and the reason for it. My family doctor was pleased with my progress and said I was a model patient, but I felt tired a lot of the time and giddy and shaky. At my visit to the specialist at the hospital the doctor was very pleased with my progress and not worried about the shaking and giddiness, which she thought may be due to the medication. I asked if she thought I was well enough to go to England and she immediately said, Yes.

Go! It was said so emphatically that I could not have had a more definite answer to my prayers. After getting home from the hospital I discussed it with Fraser and Monique then went straight to the travel agent and started enquiries about flights.

The last item January 2020

This is the last item I shall write for this section before asking Fraser to get it ready for printing in a book about my life. Everything I have included has been written for the sake of my children and grandchildren, but I have gained a great deal too. I have re-lived events and seen them for what I learned from them. I have remembered small memories that I thought I had forgotten, like the time I was invited to dinner by Graham Garland and his new wife Caroline.

We were still living in Feilding in 1990. Graham and his first wife Glynn had been like grandparents to our family since we first met Glynn at church in 1971. It was a terrible shock to us all when she died of cancer in 1986. Graham had known Caroline since they were teenagers and may have married her at that time but she went to England for 2 years, then trained as a school teacher on her return to New Zealand, and Graham trained as a dentist and went into the army, serving in the 2nd World War. The two families continued to know each other ever since then and after Caroline's husband Charles died and then Glynn died they eventually married each other in 1990 both aged 77. Caroline had always loved Graham and was so happy to be married to him at last.

One evening I went to dinner with them and helped wash the dishes afterwards. As I put them in the cupboard I found some milk had been knocked over, dripping over on to the shelf below. I showed it to Caroline, realising it would mean moving everything off 2 shelves to wipe it up. She started to

do this and I asked her if she felt cross about it, because it had obviously been Graham who had knocked over the milk.

I will never forget what Caroline told me. She said that she had waited nearly 60 years to marry Graham, he treated her like a queen, and she was so happy that she was not going to let something like this upset her. She actually said the words, "I am simply not going to let this worry me." I have remembered that conversation many times and realised we often have the choice to worry or not worry, to criticise or be positive, to feel cheated or be happy. It is not always up to us how we handle life's challenges, but our attitude often makes a great difference.

While listening to a BYU talk I was reminded of two events in my life involving confidence but each with a very different outcome.

The first happened when I was about 14 at high school where we had a swimming lesson once a week in the school pool. I had hardly ever been swimming in my life before going to high school, so did not feel comfortable in water. One day we each had to swim a length doing backstroke. That put me at a disadvantage straight away because I could hardly do backstroke and was scared of being in deep water. I had to do it because the teacher was standing at the side of the pool, but to help me feel better she held a long pole over me as I swam so I could grab hold of it if needed. I swam about half a length, scared, wobbling all over the place and gulping down water, then felt I could not go on and grabbed the pole.

As I reached for the safety of the side of the pool I heard a sigh of disappointment from all the other girls in my class who were sitting at the end of the pool hoping I would be successful. I never knew they were there until I heard that sound of disappointment. I never forgot that and resolved to try harder and for longer in future. I have often wondered since then if that is what it will be like when we die and are met by our ancestors and I hope they are not disappointed

and wish I had tried harder. So many of them had such difficult lives. In the BYU talk it was mentioned about Henry B Eyring as a young student finding his studies so difficult that he wanted to give up. Then into his mind came the thought - When you realise who you really are you will be sorry that you didn't try harder.

The second event occurred nearly 10 years later after I failed my final hospital exam through getting flustered and giving a wrong answer, so I had to take the exam again 3 months later. The second time I was more confident and when challenged about an answer I had given, I gave an explanation with my reasons for it and it was accepted. In actual fact the answer I gave was wrong but because I spoke confidently it was accepted. Also I told the examiner that I would go and check on my answer later. I realised afterwards that what they really wanted was for me to be a nurse with confidence but who would go on learning, and having indicated that with my attitude they passed me.

It is now January 2020 and I started this section in 2011. At that time I thought I might be able to remember one or two times when I had been guided and inspired by the Holy Ghost. Then when I started writing my mind was flooded with so many memories that I could hardly keep up with them.

I have learned that we are not human beings having the occasional spiritual insight, but we are spiritual beings having a human experience on earth.

At the age now of 76 I have no idea when I shall leave this life, but it is nearer than for many other people who are younger. Even before I die I am now able to look back and see how much I have learned but after I die I shall be able to see who I was before I came to this earth, then add my earthly experience to it and continue on to what I am to do in the next part of my life. I can only agree with the quote that The longer I live and the more I learn, the more I realise how

little I know.

When there is a lovely experience such as a beautiful sunset or the birth of a longed-for baby, we share these times with our family and close friends, but who else do people share it with if they don't believe in God? Conversely, when there is tragedy who do people turn to if they don't believe in God?

I often think I really don't know much, but what I do know is that this earth is not here by coincidence. Whether people believe life here came about by creation or evolution, it had to be organised according to a plan. In fact, the word in the scriptures that is written as 'created' is wrongly translated and should be 'organised'.

People often don't get the answers they seek because they don't ask the right questions. We don't need to concern ourselves so much with 'how' the earth came to be, but 'why'. It is here for our sakes to give us a platform on which to grow and learn. The next important question is 'what' we learn and that, to a great extent, is up to us.

I am grateful for the many good people in my life who have helped me learn so much - so far - and look forward to learning so much more after I leave here.

Brief notes of Redmond family lives

Nov 1966 David and Olive married and emigrated to New Zealand arriving

Feb 1967 to live in Wellington.

Mar 1970 we moved to Feilding.

May 1971 Owen was born.

Nov 1971 we started going to The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints.

Jan 1973 Olive was baptised.

Nov 1973 Craig was born.

Dec 1974 David was baptised.

Apr 1975 we went to England for 6 weeks stopping in Utah USA for 1 week.

Sep 1975 we bought a caravan for holidays at Foxton beach.

Apr 1976 we went to the temple for the 1st time.

Nov 1976 David gave in his notice at Rank Xerox, left Dec 1976 and started selling life insurance in Jan 1977 but not successful.

1978 Scott died the day after he was born.

May 1979 Fraser was born and David started working as a photocopy engineer again for a year or so.

3 Mar 1981 David started a mobile shop in Feilding selling greengrocery from a blue van but unsuccessful because

women had gone out to work instead of being at home.

1985 Olive returned to work full time as the staff nurse in charge of the Children's Clinic at Palmerston North hospital.

1985 David resited our house to the back of our 1 acre section and then resited and rebuilt another 5 houses which we lived in, one after the other for almost 10 years, while completing them.

1991 Owen moved to Hawkes Bay.

Jan 1994 we moved to Te Awamutu while Craig was serving a 2 year mission in Taiwan from 1993 to 1995 after which he moved to Auckland and later to USA and England in 1999.

1994 David started his business fly spraying houses and farms for 6 months each year while Olive made phone calls to get appointments, continued until 2005.

1997 Fraser moved to Auckland for computer work with Craig.

David went to Waikato university as a mature student almost 65 for 1 year to study psychology and following year to Waikato tech for 1 year to study counselling.

Apr 1999 Fraser served a 2 year mission in Melbourne, Australia after which he moved to England.

Cancy served a mission from Feb 2000 to Sep 2001 then married Craig 17 Nov 2001 and they moved to England until March 2005.

Ethan was born in UK 2003 Joshua NZ 2005 Kyla NZ 2007 Amy UK 2010.

Sep 2002 Fraser and Monique married in Toronto, Canada and lived in England 4 years, NZ 4 years and England 10 years.

Isaac was born in NZ 2007, Nathan NZ 2009 and Beth UK 2015.

July 2003 David and Olive bought a house in Te Awamutu.

Sep 2004 Owen and Moana married and lived in Auckland NZ 7 years England 6 years, back to Hamilton NZ 2018 and Caleb born NZ mid 2018. Alma and Jacob had been born in NZ 1998.

Apr 2005 David collapsed and ill with bowel cancer.

Dec 2005 Craig, Cancy and family moved to the Philippines.

Jan 2006 David died.

2007 Olive visit to Manila, Philippines.

2011 Olive to UK 6 months to care for Craig & Cancy's children.

Aug 2012 Olive served a mission with FamilySearch Support for 6 years taking about 2 months off each year to visit families in England.

2018 Olive ill with Giant Cell Arteritis and on high doses of Prednisone.

Sep 2018 Alma and Jacob served a 2 year mission for Church, Alma in Buenos Aires, Argentina, speaking Spanish, and Jacob in Switzerland and France speaking French

2020 Craig and Cancy divorced

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