

A decorative black border with intricate floral and scrollwork patterns surrounds the text. The border consists of a central horizontal band with symmetrical scrollwork, and vertical bands on the left and right sides that also feature symmetrical scrollwork and leaf-like motifs.

**Autobiography
of
Harper John
Pettypiece**

(1921–2002)

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Note: The division of this book into chapters is somewhat arbitrary and it was not part of the original manuscript. Also there may be many spelling errors especially with place names the author was not familiar with.¹ The autobiography was written in 1998–99, about 3–4 years prior to his passing. His health continued to deteriorate and he was effectively bed-ridden for the last year of his life.

¹ This is an edited copy. Most names were checked and many were corrected, some were very difficult to check. Most place name locations were also checked. Where possible, facts were checked, amended, and some additional details added.—M.W.T., 2023.

1. Childhood years

I was born, so I have been told, early in the morning on November 15th, 1921 in a house on the corner of Broadway and Macnab Streets in Forest, in the County of Lambton, Ontario. My parents were Victor and Leila Pettypiece who were married in Corunna in June of the previous year. My father was born in 1898, a son of Henry and Madeline Pettypiece of Forest; he was one of seven children, only three of whom survived adolescence, my aunt Eleanor who was a spinster, and Uncle Lister a Catholic priest. My mother was the daughter of Samuel and Sarah Harper, also of Forest. She had a brother Fred, and a sister Agnes. Fred remained a bachelor but Agnes was married to Edgar Chafe of St. John's, Newfoundland and was the mother of two boys, Gerald and Gordon, my only first cousins.

Before I was a year old, my parents moved to Comfort Terrace, a quadraplex on Jefferson Street across from the tennis courts. I remember very little of that period, only vague images, but I can remember my sister Reinette, who was born there in 1924. I do not remember her as a baby, only as a toddler. While there, I am told I had the usual childhood diseases, chicken pox, measles and whooping cough.

In 1925 or 1926 we bought a house on Prince Street opposite the public school. It was in this house that I grew up and lived in until World War Two. It cost \$2,000 and I remember being told we had to borrow the down payment and it took fifteen years to pay off the mortgage. During the 1930s it was all we could do to pay the interest, never mind any of the principal. The house did not have any indoor plumbing, and I remember as a youngster I would take my little wagon down to the corner where there was a public pump and collect water. I also used to have to go to the creamery around the corner every couple of days for a block of ice for the icebox. I can remember Saturday

night was bath night and a tub of water was heated on the coal stove, which would do for both me and my sister.

We had a stove in the kitchen, which served for cooking and also one in the living room, whose pipe went up through a hole in the ceiling to the hall and then curved through my bedroom to the chimney. Dad would get up in the winter and stoke up the fire so that we could huddle around the stove pipe while we got dressed. These pipes had to be taken down every spring, cleaned and re-assembled every autumn.

I have unpleasant memories also of having to use the outside privy in the winter after Dad had shoveled a path through the snow. I can also remember, vaguely, of being circumcised on the kitchen table.

In September of 1927 my other sister Ruth was born, but for this birth my mother went to St. Joseph's Hospital in London, Ontario. In those days a confinement lasted about ten days, so we did not see our new sister until she arrived home. By the time I had started school, living across the street made it very handy.

I am now going to give a few general impressions of the rest of the 1920s. I can't recall any chronological order, keeping in mind that by the summer of 1930 I was still only eight years old.

One of the first improvements made to the house was the installation of water pipes, which made a big difference. A central heating system had to wait until the late thirties. The inside toilet and bath made a great difference to our comfort.

I can remember my mother (who taught school before she was married) reading poetry to me before I started school. There were the Longfellow poems of Hiawatha and Evangeline and others by Tennyson, Wordsworth, and Lowell; also some Shakespeare. She also taught me simple sums and reading at this time, and I started in Grade One (Junior Primer it was called in those days). I know I was able to skip some grades and this is why I was able to start high school in 1933 (I was 11 years old).

Other memories of the twenties include winter; the streets were filled with horse drawn sleighs since all automobiles had to be put up on blocks in the winter with tires removed and radiators drained; antifreeze had not been invented. There were half a dozen blacksmith shops in Forest at that time.

In the spring the streets were quite muddy.

The skating rink was on Prince Street across the road from our house and they used to hold skating carnivals every year at which I went dressed once as Henry VIII. There was always live music for skating on Saturday night.

Summers included swimming in Hickory Creek—it was not polluted then, although we had to pick off the bloodsuckers when we came out. It was where I learned to swim.

I can remember my parents taking us to London, Ontario, once a year to buy shoes. We went on the train leaving Forest at 6:30 in the morning. We would change trains at Lucan Crossing to catch the one coming down from Goderich.

My parents also took us to the Toronto Exhibition a couple of times. I cannot remember much about these trips except for the extravagant pageant at the grandstand followed by fireworks. One such pageant was about Montezuma and another about the British Empire. It was on one of these trips to Toronto I saw my first talking picture. I do not know the name of the film, I guess I was too impressed by the sound. I had seen a couple of silent movies at the local Kinetograph Theatre: “Noah’s Ark” and “Uncle Tom’s Cabin”.

Not many people had automobiles; we did not even have a radio or a phonograph, but at some point we did get a wind up Victrola, and an upright piano for me to take some lessons from Mabel Dunlop, a local teacher who had her ATCM.¹ I would be about 8 I believe.

I can remember downtown in Forest. My grandfather was the owner of the *Forest Free Press* and my father worked there and one other person, Morley Shepherd. I can remember a hotel with hitching posts and a horse water trough outside. I can remember the grocery stores where you went up a couple of steps and the grocer waited on you across the counter. I can remember a harness shop. I can remember an ice cream parlour with wire-backed chairs and a soda fountain. I can remember the Town Hall where the Chatauqua² travelling shows used to come every year.

There were several blacksmiths, a couple of whom did car repairs as well. A couple of gas stations where the proprietor would pump the gas for you—you could buy a gallon for a quarter.

¹ Associate of the Toronto Conservatory of Music.

² Chautauqua is an adult education and social movement in the United States that peaked in popularity in the late 19th and early 20th centuries.

It was during these years I formed my impressions of music. There was no distinction between such terms as so-called classical and popular. My folks used to sing those songs that were popular when they were growing up: "By the Light of the Silvery Moon", "Yip-I-Addy-I-Ay", "Come Josephine in My Flying Machine", "Trail of the Lonesome Pine" and others. I particularly remember "The Irish Jubilee". My father would also recite Robert Service poems.

When the Victrola phonograph arrived there was a varied selection of records, from "Oh By Jingo" and the "Little Red Schoolhouse", to "Rhapsody in Blue" and "Poet and Peanut". There was also a Mozart and part of a Tchaikovsky Symphony. I had most of them memorized. When I started piano lessons I learned more about Chopin and Bach, etc.

We used to occasionally visit friends of our parents. At Reg Roche's place on Broadway St. next to Angela Hannum's, I became acquainted with comics such as "Buster Brown" and "The Katzenjammer Kids". We went once to O'Donnell's out in the country and they had some new records such as "Piccolo Pete" and "The Two Black Crows".

It seems that in those times we knew everyone in our town of about 1,700 people. We did not know them all personally but we knew who they were and where they lived. We lived between two widows, Mrs Ida Brand on the north and Mrs Wichman on the south. Both seemed really ancient to me and I particularly remember the latter because she had a pet parrot, the only one in town. We had a dog, a collie called Pal. I think he died of old age at some point. I think everybody had a porch on their house.

Mother did some gardening in our back yard. We had a grape vine on one side with hollyhocks. On the other, the shady side, there were violets, lily of the valley, jack-in-the-pulpit and a pear tree. The Pettypiece house on Albert St. had trumpet vines shading the porch.

My public school teachers were Frances Hubbard, Jessie O'Brien, Ruth Neelands and Alex Salisbury. Beside the kids I knew from school, I knew some from the country. This was through our church. I was raised a Roman Catholic, and the kids attended mass every Sunday from the time we were old enough to understand and went through communion and then confirmation. Forest was not a parish but a mission, and the priest,

Fr. Houlkes came every Sunday from Corunna, Lambton County. Aunt Nora played the organ and at some point I started singing in the choir.

Through church I got to know the Hubbard and the Forbes families. Their kids went to country schools. The Hubbards had 2 boys (Bob and Tom) and 3 girls (Winifred, Geneveire, and Cuthaine). The Forbes had a boy and a girl. The boy, Wilfred, eventually became the father of Barbara who married our son Geoffrey.

On the Pettypiece side, my aunt Nora lived with my grandparents. She never married—apparently her boyfriend was killed when he was quite young. I also vaguely remember my Dad's Aunt Sara who lived there at that time. I must have been only 3 or 4 years old because she died in 1925. It was there I used to collect comic strips from *The London Free Press*, particularly one called "Minute Movies". I also met two of my grandfather's brothers. At one time there was a picture of Reinette and myself at a tea party there. She was 2 and I was 5.

At the Harpers' I can recall they had a cellar with an outside door. They kept their wood supply there. They also kept chickens and I can remember my grandfather killing one after chasing it around the yard. He was a janitor at the high school and he stayed there until the mid-thirties (in his 70's). My grandmother baked her own bread and we looked forward to that, which she gave us covered with butter and brown sugar. We also were given dishes of maple syrup, which they made themselves. One time we went next door to Charles Taylor's to listen to his radio. It was quite large with 2 wet cell batteries and we heard the Dempsey-Tunney fight. He only had one set of earphones and we had to take turns. The loudspeaker had not yet been invented.

It was at the Harpers' that I met some of my maternal relatives, mother's sister Agnes and her husband, the Snowdons and great, great uncle Cesar McLeod. They had a parlour where nobody went without permission. It had old fashioned plush furniture and was kept dark most of the time. This is where they kept Uncle Fred's photos; he travelled all over the world as a marine radio operator.

Aunt Nora played golf at that time and occasionally took me to the town's 9-hole golf course with her. Also, although she did not have a car, one of her friends did, and she invited me on a couple of car rides, one to Kettle Point, and the other to Grand Bend.¹ The latter trip took all day and I

¹ Both are on the shores of Lake Huron in Southwestern Ontario.

went along with these three women. We stopped half way for tea. The road through the Pinery Provincial Park at that time made quite an impression; it was not paved of course (few roads were) and the trees hugged the road on both sides—it was like driving through the woods.

2. The love of music

My earliest introduction to music was a piano at my grandfather's. Aunt Nora had a player piano at first with a few rolls. I could not have been more than four or five. I would try to pick out tunes with one finger, and the player piano was replaced early on with an ordinary upright. I started piano lessons with Mabel Dunlop when I was about 8 or 9 and continued until I passed my Grade 8 of the T.C.M.¹ I also took and passed two years of elementary theory.

I can remember my father singing songs of the early part of the century and from this probably grew my interest in popular music. Songs like "The Irish Jubilee", "Call Me Up Some Rainy Afternoon", and "The Little Red Schoolhouse" were among dozens that I got to know. From my grandmother, who belonged to the Gospel Hall, I learned all the Gospel hymns and some of the US Civil War songs, and sometimes on Sundays we would go to Mass in the morning and the Gospel Hall in the evening.

My parents were a mixed religion marriage and this is probably why we grew up in a religiously tolerant environment.

When I was about 9, a boys' junior band was started in town under the direction of Frank Freele who had a grocery cum barber shop on King St. I begged my father to let me join and he eventually relented and bought me a cornet and I began lessons. The boys' band used to play concerts at Grand Bend on Sundays in the summer and at many of the fall fairs in the area. One year we competed at the Toronto Exhibition and that summer the committee of which my father was a member rented a cottage at Hillsborough Beach for a week during which we rehearsed the test piece every day. I cannot remember whether we came first or last.

Meanwhile, I had joined the local library and among the books I borrowed was one of the stories from the operas. I did not know the music but I was fascinated with the stories.

¹ Toronto Conservatory of Music.

The boys' band disbanded when I was about 12 and the senior band, the Forest Excelsior Band, acquired a new bandmaster, Steve Vowden who had been trained at Kneller Hall in England. The second year he was here he persuaded me to learn the oboe. Within a year I was playing in the Excelsior Band, along with two or three other kids my age. We competed at the Toronto Exhibition 2 or 3 times, staying at the Gladstone Hotel near the Exhibition grounds. The last year (the year the war broke out during the Exhibition) the dance bands of Benny Goodman, Tommy Dorsey and Guy Lombardo were all there.

The Band used to raise money, before I joined the navy, by renting the steamer *Tachmoo*, which sailed from Sarnia to Belle Isle and Detroit on a Sunday. They would sell tickets for all the way from Ailsa Craig to Sarnia, and a train would take everyone to Sarnia and the band would play during the trip. However the steamer sank the year I joined the Band, and for the rest of the decade they produced Minstrel Shows each fall in which I participated.

Around 1930 my parents rented a cottage at Hillsborough Beach for two weeks up in the hill on the north side of Hickory Creek. The following 2 or 3 years they took a cottage there but next to the dance hall. It had a store that opened every day and sold pop and candy, etc., and twice-a-week dances were held with a live dance orchestra. I learned all the latest popular songs this way. We would stay a month in the cottage that had no electricity and no running water. My father would go into town (about 10 km) to work every day and return at night with Malcolm Gray who had a tent near the cottage and a Model T Ford that had to be left at the top of the hill at night because it could not make it up the hill.

Every day we would have to walk to Isaac's farm up on Lakeshore Road for milk and sometimes fresh eggs. Often we kids would walk from Hillsborough Beach all the way southwest to Blue Point (less than 6 km). There was nothing between except Gallie's Fisheries where we would stop and rest. We took our lunch and were quite unsupervised by adults. In fact as young kids we would wander all over by ourselves, never feeling threatened at all.

Through the band, and also through our phonograph's few records, I became acquainted with some classical and semi-classical pieces.

When I was about 14 or 15, two things occurred which increased my desire to learn more about music. We acquired a radio and I would listen to the New York Philharmonic concerts every Sunday afternoon, and the Ford Sunday Evening Hour, which played shorter classics such as overtures and tone poems. At the same time I got to know Eunice McDonald who was in a class ahead of me at high school and who, with two other girls from Thedford, Peggy Powell and Marion Carmichael, boarded in town during the week. Eunice was interested in opera and had an aunt who was a professional singer. About this time I started collecting miniature scores and operatic vocal scores.

I also got to know Anita Carson-Dowding of Arkona, whose daughter Betty Carson attended the Forest High School. She played the violin and knew the composer of the "Bells of St. Mary's" when she was a girl in England.

Just before the war I had my first stage experiences. I was in a high school play "The Marriage Proposal" by Chekov with Howard Brown and Inez Powell. Howard and I were piano pupils of Mabel Dunlop and played together at the Kiwanis Music Festival in Sarnia. The other was in the chorus of "HMS Pinafore", put on by Ruth Walters. When the production went over well and was taken out of town, one of the principal performers, Arnold Keast, broke his leg, I took over the part of Dick Deadege because I was the only one who knew the part.

During the thirties, the Forest Excelsior Band put on minstrel shows (now not politically correct) to raise money as mentioned earlier. Several things stand out in my memory. For example, Don Livingston was always the interlocutor; Charlie May was always an endman, and usually was too drunk to remember the words of his songs; George Harvey, a local Cornishman, would get his annual bath and shave and sing one of Gilbert and Sullivan's patter songs, all of which he knew by heart; Arnold Keast sang comic songs of the Al Jolson type; and I gave recitations.

The Excelsior Band played at the Toronto Exhibition several years, the last time being in 1939. At one of these, I played the glockenspiel as well as the oboe but I do not remember either the test pieces or whether we won any prizes. This was the fair that I first appeared in an interview on demonstration television, which had not yet become commercial in Canada. That did not happen until after the war.

One time, when I was 10 or 11, I played a cornet solo at a band festival in Waterloo. I did not get a place in a class of about 15 players. One thing I remember was Gordon Chafe falling out of a boat on the river when he had a cast on his leg. I also took part in piano competitions at the Sarnia Kiwanis Music Festival and come first on a few occasions there.

It was in 1936–37 that I began listening to the Metropolitan Opera on Saturday afternoons faithfully until I joined the navy, and intermittently up to present day.

In 1938–39 I attended the University of Toronto at St. Michael's College. I took courses at the Conservatory in harmony, counterpoint, history and ear training, and among my teachers were Dr Healy William, and Dr Leo Smith. On one occasion we were invited to Sir Ernest McMillan's home. As well, I played in the University of Toronto band, playing at football games in London, Kingston and Montreal, as well as at home. I also sang in the St. Mike's choir and learned to read Gregorian Chant.

I attended Toronto Symphony Orchestra rehearsals and got to know a few of the members, including Harold Gomberg, first oboist, who gave me free lessons for part of the winter. He went on to play with the New York Philharmonic Orchestra and went with Pierre Aquely to France to pursue his studies of baroque embellishment.

Also in Toronto, I saw my first operas, a travelling group of the San Carlo Company who did *Carmen*, *Faust* and the *Barber of Seville*. I also saw the Ballet Russe de Monte Carlo in *La gaîté parisienne* and *Coppélia*. In addition, a recital by Balduína "Bidú" de Oliveira Sayão and an all-Strauss concert by the Philadelphia Orchestra under Eugene Ormandy. I also saw a performance of Plangiatte's operetta "The Chimes of Normandy". George Emerson was a guest conductor.

The Toronto Symphony Orchestra was not the first time I had heard a live symphony orchestra. They had come to the Grand Theatre in London somewhat earlier and they played the Cesar Franck Symphony in D minor. It was quite thrilling experience.

I joined the Royal Canadian Navy in May 1940, and had very little to do with music while there. I applied to transfer to the Navy Band while at Esquimalt when they formed one but was turned down, but I got to know some of the players, including Gordon Poole with whom I kept in touch till the 1960s when he joined the Toronto Symphony Orchestra.

I occasionally heard dance bands that played for the forces, such as Cab Calloway and Hal McIntyre, as well as the Navy Show. What little music I heard was on the radio in the Sally Ann at Halifax where I had meals from time to time.

When I got leave the first time in Ireland, I went to London, England, where I saw “La Bohème”, also Arthur Bowden Askey (1900–1982) in “The Love Racket”, and Lupino Lane in “For Me and My Gal”.

In February 1945, the ship I was on, the *HMCS Orkney*, was in a collision with a freighter in the Irish Sea during the blackout. We had to put in to Liverpool for a Court of Inquiry. It was during this period I met Joan Taylor, whom I married in June. We met at a roller rink and on our first date we went to hear the Liverpool Philharmonic, where we could get seats for only a shilling as a member of the armed forces. We attended several of these concerts while in Liverpool (for 6 weeks) under either Sir Adrian Cedric Boult (1889–1983) or Sir John Barbirolli Sir John (Giovanni Battista) Barbirolli (1899–1970). We also saw “La Traviata”, by Giuseppe Verdi, at the Empire Theatre.

After we were married we lived in Greenwich, Scotland, until I returned to Canada early in 1946. We often went into Glasgow where we heard concerts by the Scottish Orchestra as well as several of the Gilbert and Sullivan operettas on the stage. We also saw Will Fyffe (1885–1947) in a pantomime, and two musicals, “Rose Marie” and “No No Nanette”.

I returned to Canada in May of 1946 and Joan followed on the *RMS Queen Mary* in August. While waiting to return to Canada, we stayed a few days in London, and I saw the “Barber of Seville”. We lived in Dartmouth, Nova Scotia, and I got hold of a record player and borrowed records through Keilor Bentley who worked in a music store in Halifax, Nova Scotia, and who came to visit us in Marion Heights, Pennsylvania, a few times.

Returning to Forest, Ontario, in 1947, I began playing baritone in the band since I did not have an oboe. When Steve Vowden left Forest to join the Royal Canadian Air Force band when the war broke out, various members held the band together until a permanent bandmaster could be found. I took it over myself for a year or so. Bob Shannon, a bassoonist from Sarnia, and a former member of the boys’ band, became bandmaster, but he died suddenly a couple of years later. He told a newly formed community orchestra in

Sarnia that I played oboe so I had to buy one through George Van Valkenburg who had connections with Boosey & Hawkes. I still have it.

Following Bob Shannon, Bert Bocock of Parkhill was hired. He also played in the London Symphonia, London, Ontario, and he asked me to come and play French Horn with them; they needed a 4th horn player but not oboe. I played for two years with them under Bruce Sharp, including concerts in Chatham. A highlight of this period was a performance of Handel's "Messiah" under Sir Ernest McMillan in the London area with a huge chorus.

A few years later, an International Symphony Orchestra, Sarnia, was formed from the Sarnia and Port Huron community orchestras, with which I stayed for about 13 years under a variety of 1st oboists and conductors. I got to play a large number of works, which was an incredible experience, including "Afterim L'Affaire" (?), selections from "Le Coq d'Or", "Songs of the Auvergne", "Appalachian Spring", and "Rodeo", some Brahms, Wagner, Bartok and many others.

Meanwhile in the late 1940s, I met Harry Keane of Keane's Ontario Furniture. We made a trip to Cleveland, there and back same day, to see the Metropolitan Opera perform "Don Giovanni" with Ezio Fortunato Pinza (1892-1957). The following year, we went for four days and saw five operas—"Rigoletto" with Johan Jonatan "Jussi" Björling (1911-1960), Alice Joséphine "Lily" Pons (1898-1976), and Leonard Warren (1911-1960); "L'elisir d'amore" with Patrice Munsel (1925-2016); "Madame Butterfly" with Dorothy Kirsten (1910-1992) and John Brownlee (1901-1969); "Othello" with Licia Albanese (1909-2014), Ramón Vinay (1911-1996).

Joan and I went to Detroit in the early 1950s to see some operas by the Carl Rosa Opera Company with Tito Gobbi (1913-1984) and Ferruccio Tagliavini (1913-1995). We saw "Rigoletto", "Tosca", "Andrea Chenier" and "Turandot", both the latter the first time we had heard them. We saw one more opera together about 1959 when we went with the Thiers to Maple Leaf Gardens, Toronto, to see "Aida" with Zinka Milanov (1906-1989), Robert Merrill (1917-2004), Mario del Monaco (1915-1982), Blanche Thebom (1915-2010), and Jerome Hines (1921-2003).

In 1952, I put on a show at the Town Hall called "Broadway Revue", using members of the Agenda Club, a group of girls who had done shows during the war to raise money for the troops, and the Excelsior Band. The show contained numbers from musicals from "The Mikado" to "The King and I". Artistically it was a success, financially not. While

doing this I went to Detroit with a group to see “Guys and Dolls” with Allan Jones (1907–1992) and Vivian Stapleton (“Vivian Blaine”, 1921–1995). The only other musical I had seen was on our way home from Halifax in 1947 when Joan and I saw “Oklahoma” on Broadway. In 1953 while visiting Aldie Robarts in St. Catharines, Ontario, he took us to see “Annie Get Your Gun” in Niagara Falls. We waited until 1970 to see another stage musical, when we went to see “Fiddler on the Roof” in Port Huron.

During the 1950s, we came into London, Ontario, several times to see shows at the Grand Theatre, among them “La Bohème”, the Canadian National Ballet in “Swan Lake”, “Nutcracker” and “Giselle” and “Pineapple Poll”, some of these with the Wiens from Thedford. He had been a German POW during the war having served with Rommel in North Africa and came to Canada after the war. His kids went to Forest High School. In 1952, we visited Aldie Robart’s parents in Forest Hill and they took us to the ballet that included “Fancy Free”, among others.

We also saw plays during this time, “Rain”, “Tobacco Road”, “Bell, Book and Candle” with Joan Geraldine Bennett (1910–1990) and Zachary Scott (1914–1965). Also Purple Patches did “Li’l Abner”. They performed at the Grand Theatre, London, in those days.

Later in the 1960s, myself and one of the violinists from the International Symphony Orchestra, Sarnia, were selected to attend a week-long community orchestra workshop in Stratford, Ontario, where we played every day under such conductors as Walter Susskind (1913–1980) and Victor Feldbrill (1924–2020). We played Johannes Brahms (1833–1897), Paul Hindemith (1895–1963), Dmitri Dmitriyevich Shostakovich (1906–1975) and Robert Schumann (1810–1856) in a concert at the end of the week. During the week, a conference of contemporary composers occurred and we were privileged to attend a concert with composers such as Ray Harris (1927–2003), Ernst Heinrich Krenek (1900–1991), and Edgard Varèse (1883–1965) took part. It was the first time I had heard Varèse’s “Déserts” performed live, as well as “Bachianas brasileiras No. 5: Aria” as a tribute to the South American Heitor Villa-Lobos (1887–1959), who had recently died.

We also went to Stratford once to see Lorne Hyman Greene (1915–1987) and Lloyd Wolfe Bochner (1924–2005) in the tent before the theatre was built.

In 1971 we attended the Bahá'í Oceanic Conference in Iceland and among the entertainers were Seals & Crofts, and Norman Bailey. We talked to James Eugene Seals and Darrell George Crofts ("Seals & Crofts") at the airport on the way home and we visited the Baileys in England when we went there.

In the spring of 1972, I had to return material to the National Spiritual Assembly office in Toronto since we planned to pioneer to Iceland. While in Toronto, I called Ruth Morawetz (1930–2016) whom we had met a few years earlier at Darst's place in Colborne Township. Ruth invited me to dinner and I had a chance to talk to her husband, Dr Oskar Morawetz (1917–2007), a famous Canadian composer. They arranged for me to attend a performance of "Die Walküre ("The Valkyrie"), with Norman Bailey (1933–2021) as Wotan and Maureen Forrester (1930–2010) as Fricka. After the performance, I went backstage and talked to the performers as I was a guest of Emmy Homburger, the wife of the manager (Walter Homburger) of the Toronto Symphony Orchestra.

In August 1972 we went to Iceland. During our time there I joined the Reykjavík City Band through Sverrir Sveinsson, a foreman at my place of work and a cornet player. The second year Garðar Thór Cortes formed the Reykjavík Symphony Orchestra as a community type orchestra as a compliment to the National Symphony. We played generally easier pieces but in our last year there we played "Trial by Jury" and Mendelssohn's "Elijah", the former in Icelandic, the latter in English. We took the overtures to various communities, e.g. Selfoss, and then in the spring went on a tour, playing in Varmahlíð, Dalvík and Mývatn. The Gilbert and Sullivan we recorded for a professor on Icelandic television.

Among highlights of our four years in Iceland were attending concerts at the Háskólabíó Movie Theatre, Reykjavík, of the National Symphony and getting to know many of the players; attending a concert and recital backstage with Vladimir Davidovich Ashkenazy (b. 1937) and Renata Tebaldi (1922–2004) who sang about 9 encores at the piano; talking to Léon Jean Goossens (1897–1988), outstanding British oboist; attending live performances of "Coppélia" at the Reykjavík National Theatre and "Jesus Christ Superstar" at the Austurbæjarbíó ("The Fall") Park, Reykjavík; and a Victor Borge (Børge Rosenbaum, 1909–2000), concert.

In 1976, we moved to England. I did not get much chance to play there until we moved to Somerset where they already had an orchestra. I sometimes played at their annual meetings and once I played for a performance of Franz Joseph Haydn's "Nelson" in Glastonbury; I also got a chance to play in a wind ensemble.

While in Somerset, South West England, we got to see a lot of stage musicals: “Fiddler on the Roof”, “South Pacific”, “My Fair Lady”, “Show Boat”, “Merry Widow”, “A Night in Venice”, “Orpheus in the Underworld”, “The Desert Song”, “Die Fledermaus”, “The Sorcerer”. I also saw “Macbeth” and “Fra Diavolo”¹ at the Strode Arms in Shepton Mallet. Over in London I went to see “The Grand Duchess” at Sadler’s Wells Theatre. I also took Tim once to see the Tremoloes in concert. Carl took part in “Joseph and the Amazing Technicolor Dreamcoat” in Wells Cathedral, Wells, Somerset, with Vicki and Ásgeir Einarsson when they were in England.

When we first went to England, we took the kids to see “Arsenic and Old Lace”. I had already seen “The Mousetrap” and “Happy as a Handbag”, a musical about World War II.

We returned to Canada in 1983 and rented a house on McClary Street, London, Ontario. A year later we bought a condominium (condo) on Southdale Road, London, and I started taking a course in Music History at the University of Western Ontario, London. I only took it for interest since I was not playing anymore and could not take a music degree without actively performing music. The second year I took Astronomy and an opera course, but had to drop out of the latter when I went into hospital for my emphysema for a week and missed my class presentation. The next year I took a course in Bibliography and Research Technique and got to be familiar with the library. From then on, I started taking opera courses and theory courses, and the university introduced an arts degree in music and I pursued that from then on. I also took courses in composition, history and orchestration. From time to time I would have some of the kids over to watch some of my operatic videos. In all there have been 9 or 10 come over.

One year I went with some of my university classmates to see “Wozzech” by Alban Maria Johannes Berg (1885–1935) at the O’Keefe Centre in Toronto with Alan Monk.

I began collecting operatic videos during this time and have accumulated over 100 operas on tape. Most have been recorded from television broadcasts, but I have copied some and bought some. I also have a good collection of miscellaneous music videos including ballet, concerts and profiles of musicians.

¹ Fra Diavolo, ou L’hôtellerie de Terracine (“Fra Diavolo, or The Inn of Terracina”).

I graduated in 1996, a year after our 50th wedding anniversary, and since I had only just got out of hospital at convocation time, the dean and associate dean came to the house for the presentation. Four of our kids and their families were present and it received good coverage in the newspaper. As a result, I received cards and letters from many people, some of whom I had not seen for 50 years.

While at the University of Western Ontario, I had the privilege of meeting some world famous musicians, including Philip Gossett (1941–2017), the musicologist; Stanley Sadie (1930–2005), the editor of *The New Grove Dictionary of Music and Musicians*; Theodore Burg and his wife of the Canadian Opera Company, Toronto; and the granddaughter of Giacomo Puccini (Nadia Manfredi?).

During this period in London, Ontario, we saw many musicals, most organised by the University of Western Ontario. Among them have been Gilbert and Sullivan's "Gondoliers", "Princess Ida", "Patience", and "Ruddigore; or, The Witch's Curse". Others were "The King and I", "Brigadoon", "Guys and Dolls", "Cabaret", "How to Succeed in Business Without Trying", "Fiddler on the Roof", "The Music Man", "Evita" and "The Pajama Game".

The University of Western Ontario also produced Vaughn Williams' "Rides to the Sea", Mozart's "Impressio", and Bernstein's "Candide", as well as excerpts from various operas. There were many other concerts as well, both by the University of Western Ontario Symphony, University of Western Ontario Chorus, and various faculty members' concerts.

One year we had season's tickets for Orchestra London, London. They were good but we did not care much for the Centennial Hall in London, although we also went to see "Forty-second Street" there in which one member of my class took part.

3. Growing up in Forest

As near as I can recall, the first time I was ever outside Forest community in Lambton Shores, Ontario, was when my Aunt Nora took me to Kettle Point on the shore of Lake Huron when I was about 4 years old. I also went with her to Grand Bend on the shore of Lake Huron. She did not have a car but one of her friends did and on the trip to Grand Bend (it seemed to me at the time it was all day), we stopped about half way through the Pinery Provincial Park at a tea room called Rimbedost. My recollection was of a dirt road through the woods but I do not remember Grand Bend at all. During the 1920s we used to go into London once a year on the train to buy shoes. The train left Forest at 6:30 am and we changed trains at Lucan Crossing. On one of these trips we went out to Springbank Park on a street car. At that time there were a merry-go-round, a miniature train and a roller coaster.

I also remember going to Windsor¹ but I do not remember how we got there. We also took a street car or trolley to Amherstburg² to visit some of my grandfather's family. We also went to the Toronto Exhibition by train a couple of times during the 1920s, as mentioned earlier, and on one of these trips, I saw my first talking picture. I had seen a couple of silent movies earlier at the Kineto Theatre in Forest: "Noah's Ark" and "Uncle Tom's Cabin".

It was around 1930 when we rented a cottage at Hillsborough Beach for a couple of weeks. It was on top of the hill on the east side of Hickory Creek, quite a walk down to the store or to go for a swim.

When I was 6 or 7, I went to the dentist to have one of my baby teeth taken out by Dr Walters. His office was above Laurie's Hardware Store on the corner of King and Main Streets. When I was 10, I broke my collar bone fooling around during recess at school. The bone was set by Dr Smith downtown, and I was unable to attend school for a month. I am told I hollered loud enough to be heard down the street because I would not take an anaesthetic.

Birthday parties were a rarity. I had one during my growing up years and only attended about three. One of the earliest was when I was in First Book. Frank Alpaugh's father drove the Sarnia Bus and at his party we went for a bus ride, I think to Ipperwash Provincial Park, Ontario.

¹ A city in southwestern Ontario, Canada, on the south bank of the Detroit River directly across from Detroit, Michigan, United States.

² A town near the mouth of the Detroit River in Essex County, Ontario, Canada.

There was, and still is, a fall fair held in Forest every year, and we felt it to be one of the highlights of the year. While in public school, each class would dress up to illustrate a theme and we would march from the school to the fair grounds. When I got older these marches, which drew from rural schools all over the area, were discontinued, but I still marched, first as a member of the Boys Band and later with the Excelsior Band. We would also play from time to time during the fair. As members of the band, we would often be invited to other fairs, such as Exeter, Parkhill, Seaforth and many others. The Boys Band also used to play concerts at Grand Bend on Sundays in the summer. The Senior Band also played Sunday evening concerts on the band stand. On one occasion during the fair, when I was 8 or 9, I talked my father into letting me go up in an airplane. In those days, barnstormers used to travel from fair to fair, put on shows, including parachute jumps and take people for rides. I went up in an open air biplane for about ten minutes at a cost of \$2.00.

I was taken to London a couple of times during the early 1930s, by Bob Horne, father of one of my schoolmates. I can remember seeing the movies "Trader Horn" and "Wonder Bar". In exchange, my father took me and young Bob to Detroit to see baseball games a couple of years in a row. We stayed with one of his friends and during our time there we saw all the teams in the American League and some of the legendary baseball stars including: Babe Ruth and Lou Gehrig. There were 8 teams in the league at the time, including the Washington Senators and the St. Louis Browns. We also saw movies, e.g. "San Francisco" and "Poppy" with W. C. Fields. In those days the big movie theatres had stage shows as well and we saw Fred Waring and the Shep Fields and His Rippling Rhythm Orchestra. I had only been to Detroit once before; it was on the steamer *PS Tashmoo* on the band excursion to Belle Isle.

The first time Dad took me to Detroit to a ball game we stayed at Jack Barke's place. He was from Forest but worked at one of the Detroit automotive plants. On Sunday morning he took me up to station WJR in the Fisher Building and we saw Uncle Walt read the funnies over the radio. Uncle Walt read the comics every Sunday. We also stayed and watched a dramatic program and enjoyed watching them do the sound effects while the actors read their lines. We also went to the Fox Theatre and saw Fred Waring's Pennsylvanians dance band.

In the 1930s, the road from Forest to the end of the 9 miles at Highway 22 was paved. It was during summer and cars were routed around Forest and we would sit at my grandmother Harper's place and keep track of all the different license plates we spotted. In those days an airplane was a novelty and we rushed outside to see whenever one went over. They did not fly very high then. A highlight was seeing the English dirigible R100 pass over on its way to Chicago.

While in high school I started going dating Eunice McDonald, and one summer she took me to visit her cousin in Toledo, Ohio. I can remember seeing a movie "Gold Diggers of 1935" but not much else of the trip.

Every year the five local schools held track and field meets. In the local meets I won medals for four years. High School teachers were Jessie Saunders, Irene Reton, Angela Hammer, Albert Williams, and J. Stevens, the principal.

During the summers vacations I would get a job. One year I worked for Bob Horne, who kept bees in various localities and collected the honey from the hives and extracted it in a building on one of the farms. One year I worked two weeks at the basket factory at 15 c an hour. I made enough spending money at the Toronto Fair where I went with the band. Another year I worked at the Canning Factory (Aylmer), which was very busy in the summer. I got 25 c an hour and some days we would work as much as 15 hours a day. The next day we would not be called in at all. I worked through the spinach and pea seasons.

Living so close to Lake Huron, we used to go often to the beach, other than our usual holidays at the cottage. My earliest recollection was riding to Hillsborough Beach on the handle bars of a bicycle with Gerry Chafe. Later we would sometimes walk there and back. Once I walked the 10 km to Cedar Point.

Later we would get rides to Ipperwash where they had a dance casino and we would listen to records on the juke box.

Pastimes among others were: gathering hickory nuts out in the country in the fall; once we went for walnuts at George Lougheed's farm. He was a cousin of my mother and was the local milkman. I also went with the mailmen on all the rural routes around Forest, and also on Gerry Chafe's bread route all over the local countryside.

While in high school for two or three years in the fall I would go out into the country to gather hickory nuts, once with a kid from school, John Marburg. Once I collected coalnuts [black walnuts?] but they were not very good.

When I was smaller you could get beechnuts near the Forest cemetery. You cannot do this anymore—the hickory, coalnut and beech trees are all gone.

At one point I sent for information on taxidermy, and also a flying school at Lincoln, Nebraska. I was interested in model planes and built several flying models; I got to know Bruce Lister who lived on a farm in Bosanquet Township (now part of Lampton Shores) and was bit of an expert on model airplanes. Once I had a chemistry set and made some chlorine gas and nearly choked myself.

The last year at high school I went to Toronto for 2 weeks in summer to look for a job and was unsuccessful. One place I went was the de Havilland aircraft factory, which was out in the country then. It was a long walk from the end of the street car line. That fall I went to the University of Toronto. One weekend there I hitch-hiked to Buffalo for the weekend, just to say I had been there, no other reason, but it was the first time I had seen Niagara Falls. It was also the first time I had ever been in a bar. In Ontario we had been in parlors but no bars. Forest did not have a beer parlor; Thedford had the closest and Sarnia was the closest liquor store.

On Sundays in Toronto there was nothing open there except a few restaurants and some museums. I often rode the different street car lines to familiarize myself with the city and I also visited the Royal Ontario Museum and Casa Loma.¹ One Sunday I walked from the University of Toronto to the waterfront and back. I lived in residence at St. Michael's College.

One evening I went to see "Romeo and Juliet" at the Hart House Theatre put on by students. I also went to a dance at the roof garden of the Royal York Hotel to which I had been invited by a girl I knew in a sorority. I had to rent a set of tails and a car (Eunice had taught me how to drive on the roads around Thedford), as well as a corsage.

In 1939 King George VI and Queen Elizabeth toured Canada. The closest they came was London and arrangements were made to take all the school kids by bus to see them. The Forest Band was invited to play at the Rectory St. Station, the site allotted to Forest. However the tour ran late and the train did not stop at

¹ A Gothic Revival castle-style mansion and garden in midtown Toronto.

Rectory St. The kids were disappointed so the buses took them all the way to Niagara Falls, their next stop. My sister got to see them but I did not as the band returned to Forest.

The war broke out while King George VI and Queen Elizabeth were here at the Toronto Fair, so they cut short their visit and returned to England. I applied to join the Royal Canadian Navy and stayed home and waited until I was called. I can remember listening on the radio to the progress of the Battle of the River Plate when the *Admiral Graf Spee* was sunk. During the 1930s we were able to hear speeches by both Hitler and Mussolini on radio.

Uncle Fred had heard Hitler speak in Hamburg during the early thirties when he sailed with the Hamburg-American Line. He travelled a great deal and prior to that had sailed to Alaska, the Middle East and to India. He stopped going to Germany in the middle thirties, and made two more trips before the war, one to Indonesia and Thailand, and one to Angola. He sent me stamps from both trips. I collected stamps and also baseball cards, which came in bubble gum. Cigarettes also included collector's cards—I can remember golf cards and poker hands. My dad collected the poker hands and was able to get several premiums including a card table and chairs, and a bridge lamp.

In the early thirties, the advertisers were much more imaginative and generous than today when they spend all their money on television. Among the earliest advertisers were the cigarette manufacturers who placed cards in their cigarette packages. One I remember used cards with poker hands, which my father collected. There were two in a pack of 25 for a quarter and one in a 10 cent pack of ten. If you collected the full set they could be redeemed for prizes and I know my dad got a card table, a floor lamp and an umbrella for a specified number of sets in their catalogue. Even earlier, one of the companies put golf cards in their packages; a full set was for 18 holes. Also Moirs' chocolate bars each contained a card with a letter on it and if you could spell, for example "Moirs' XXX Hard Centers", you would get a free 2 pound box of chocolates. Needless to say, the X's were the hardest to find.

Every box of cereal had a prize in it and every box of soap had a tea towel or a face cloth. Some contained dishes. All of the kids' radio programs had clubs you could join for free by sending in a wrapper from

their product. I joined the Little Orphan Annie secret society and received a code book and a ring, and every night on the program there would be a secret message that we had to decode.

Then bubble gum cards were produced. Each penny package of bubble gum contained a card of a sports star, movie star, pirates and plane cards, or other topics of interest that could be collected into sets, and traded with others. It was always fun to trade a Lou Gehrig for a Hank Greenburg, or a Greta Garbo for a Clara Bow. You could buy a lot for a quarter in those days.

One time I was persuaded to sell needles or garden seeds, and after selling a number we would get prizes. It was not hard to sell when you are 8 or 9 because everyone tends to humour you.

4. Service in the Royal Canadian Navy

In the spring of 1940 I received my call-up from the Royal Canadian Navy and was told to report to the Naval Barracks in London for a physical. My dad came with me, and that afternoon I was on a train for Vancouver with orders to report to HMCS Nadia in Esquimalt, British Columbia on 6 May. This was the first time I would be so far from home. The furthest I had been was between Montreal and Toledo. I had a berth on the train and woke up the next morning in Northern Ontario. In 1940 the trains ran on steam and we stopped every couple of hours for 10 minutes while they refilled the water tank.

We had stops for an hour or more in Winnipeg and Edmonton, and I sent home postcards. In Vancouver we took the ferry to Victoria, about an 8 hour trip, and on arrival in Victoria were met by a truck that took us to the naval base.

After being fitted out with all our gear and assigned a home in the Frobisher Block we went on basic training for 6 weeks. This consisted of a 2 or 3 mile run before breakfast after tying up our hammocks. Then we had marching drill, gunnery lessons, seamanship, naval history, and so on. We were allowed to go ashore (into town) on Wednesday afternoons and Saturday or Sunday and one weekend in three. We were in what they called red, white and blue watches.

On the completion of basic training we had to choose a branch and I chose to train in visual signalling. It was a nine month course and we had to learn signalling with flags, semaphore and lights, which involved both naval and international signalling codes with flags and also Morse code for lights.

At Christmas we had our first leave and I got home to Forest for the holiday. We had another leave on completion of the course and back home this time there was nothing to do since everyone I knew had joined the services. I took off and hitch hiked into the United States. I went first to Chicago, then to St. Louis, then went south through Arkansas and Memphis, and back home through Louisville and Cincinnati. It was surprisingly easy and cost me very little because I was in uniform.

Half way through the course, the navy was expanding so rapidly that some of us went on what they called 'lodging and compensation', and we had to find accommodation off the base and were allotted extra pay to cover it. I was lucky and found lodging along with two others in the class with an aunt of one of them. The house was in Victoria and not far from where our instructor, Leading Signalman Crevey, an old veteran of the Royal Navy who was called up as an instructor when the war broke out. Every third weekend, I with others, would go to Vancouver and it was there that I met Barb Roweman, whom I thought of as a girlfriend. I would stay with her family and she would show me around Vancouver and Stanley Park, once up to Capilano Canyon. She came over to Victoria once on a visit to picnic on Bowen Island.

One Sunday I took a train trip up the island to Courtney on a Catholic youth outing. Other days off we would go to Beacon Hill Park or Gorge Park, which was quite pleasant.

On my return from leave I, among others, were assigned to *HMCS Prince Robert* and joined it at Vancouver. Within a day or two we saw a large number of soldiers coming on board and we set sail not knowing where we were going. We were accompanied by a New Zealand troopship, the *HMT Awatea*,¹ and the first land we sighted was Hawaii. We docked in Honolulu but were not allowed ashore, although some hula girls came down to the dock to entertain us. We left the next morning, still not knowing our destination.

Two weeks later after crossing the International Date Line we entered the San Bernardino Straits and, after passing Corregidor Island, entered Manila Bay in the Philippines. We were still not allowed ashore and we still did not know our final destination, but there were plenty of rumours.

There was a Japanese merchant ship in the harbour. Three days later I celebrated my 20th birthday and we arrived in Hong Kong. Here we were finally allowed ashore. We had one day from 11 am in the morning until 8 am the next morning. We slept in the China Fleet Club and the rest of the time we wandered about, took a rickshaw ride, took the ferry over to Kowloon and took the mountain railway up to the top.

We stayed four days and disembarked the soldiers. The days we were not ashore we talked with the sampan people who thronged the

¹ His Majesty's Troopship.

harbour, and I bought a white dress uniform made to measure that cost me \$10.

On our way home we stopped again in Manila but again there was no shore leave. Two weeks later we arrived in Honolulu and were allowed ashore until midnight. We spent the time wandering around, shopping for souvenirs, and I went out to Waikiki Beach and the Royal Hawaiian Hotel. This was Friday, 5 December 1941. We sailed next morning for Vancouver and on Sunday morning we started getting signals about the Japanese bombing Pearl Harbour and that we were at war with Japan. We arrived back in Canada five days later. After a few days we were ordered to patrol in the area of the Aleutian Islands and we had the worst weather I have experienced in the Royal Canadian Navy. Ocean swells were rising thirty feet and it was impossible to do anything. We could not keep utensils on the table in spite of the fact that mess tables had built up edges. Anything not tied down rolled all over the deck and it rained most of the time. After about three weeks we came back to Esquimalt, Vancouver Island.

After a few weeks I was assigned to *HMCS Kelowna*, a newly commissioned minesweeper, at Prince Rupert, British Columbia. I was given my trained operators badge and was in charge of two signalmen on the ship. I travelled to Vancouver and then boarded a passenger steamer for the trip to Prince Rupert. The trip took three days and we sailed the inside passage. We stopped and were able to go ashore twice, once at Bella Bella and once at Ocean Falls. These communities only contact with the outside at that time was by sea, although they now have roads. I was particularly struck by the wooden streets.

On arrival in Prince Albert I went on board the *HMCS Kelowna* and spent the next six months sweeping for imaginary mines around the entrance to the harbour, two weeks out and five days in port. On one occasion in port I met with Bob Rawlings from Forest who was stationed at an Royal Canadian Air Force base at Terrace, about 25 miles inland. On another occasion the ship put into Port Simpson, an Indian village and we went ashore and sampled some homemade beer. It was a friendly ship and the captain threw a party on one of our stays at the harbour.

At the end of the summer I was taken off and drafted to St. Hyacinth, Québec, where the Navy had their signal school for a V-S3

course. On the way I was given 30 days leave and went back home for a while. I decided to go hitch hiking again through the States. This time it was even better as the USA was now in the war. I got a ride as far as Wapakoneta, Ohio at a large truck stop. I found it was easier getting rides with truckers at stops than on the road. I picked up a ride that took me through Cincinnati, Nashville to Huntsville, Alabama. I hitched from there to Birmingham, through to Montgomery and Mobile. There I headed west through Biloxi and Gulfport, Mississippi to New Orleans.

I spent a few days in New Orleans sightseeing, including Canal St., Bourbon St. in the French Quarter (Le Vieux Carré), the levees, and above ground cemeteries. I entered over the long causeway bridge over Lake Pontchartrain. From there I headed north and got a ride through Natchez to Port Gibraltar. I was stuck there and had to spend the night in a rooming house. The next day I headed north to Memphis and Beale Street in the city center. On this trip I had seen my first pecan trees and cotton fields.

I crossed the Mississippi there and went north to St. Louis. I had been having such good luck that I then headed west to Kansas City, then north by Leavenworth to Omaha. Then back to Chicago through Des Moines and Davenport. Luckily I got a ride there direct to Port Huron and then home. I took no luggage, only a razor and toothbrush, and about 25 dollars. I would stay at YMCA dormitories for a quarter and would wash out socks and underwear overnight. Many of the people I rode with insisted on buying my meals and I arrived home with money still in my pocket.

The course at the HMCS *St. Hyacinthe* base, Saint-Hyacinthe, Québec, lasted six weeks and it was intensive. The base was outside the town and when we took leave we walked in. One weekend some of us went into Montreal, about 25 miles away. One night I went into town and saw a movie in French with Ray Milland and John Wayne, no subtitles of course, but I got so I understood a lot of it. It was in Saint-Hyacinthe that I met Jaime Gervais; she worked at Woolworth's and we went out a few times.

We finished the course and received our V/S 3 rating and almost immediately we were drafted to HMCS *Stadacona* at Halifax. It was winter and the weather was wet and miserable. I was promoted to Acting Leading Signalmans and was drafted to HMCS *Annapolis*, an old four-

funnel, ex-American destroyer from World War I that was part of a ships-for-bases deal made with England, 50 destroyers for bases on British soil. Canada got a number of them, six of which were considered not safe to cross the Atlantic. We were on the Halifax to mid-Atlantic run and it was my first winter on the North Atlantic and it was miserable. The mess decks always had water on the floor, the open decks were covered with ice and it was foggy most of the time. We would put into St. John's, Newfoundland, on the way back.

St. John's was not part of Canada then and they had their own money, although they would take any currency—Canadian, American, British or French. The first time in we went ashore at night of course; it was dark and the city was blacked out, so it was difficult getting around and I did not see what the town looked like.

After a couple of trips on the *HMCS Annapolis*, the ship came in for a refit (the North Atlantic played havoc with the rivets) and I was drafted back ashore. I was shortly drafted to a corvette, the *HMCS Quesnel*, and we were put on the triangle run, escorting convoys from Boston, Halifax and St. John's to mid-ocean. I was ashore once in Boston but I did little except sight-seeing. I was in St. John's a couple of times and was able to look up one family of Chafes, relatives of my aunt Agnes, who had me up for dinner. I also met Charlie Ross, who later owned the Dresden paper, and we played cards together on one occasion.

After a few trips the ship went into Pictou, Nova Scotia for a refit. We were in there for 3 months and I stayed with the ship during that time. When I had 30 days leave, I went home. For the remainder of the time there was no need to stay on board in the evening, but one night in three I had to don belt and garters and armband and go on shore patrol. It was a pretty soft job because there was never any trouble—a third of the ship's company would be on long leave at all times. One weekend I spent in Truro, about an hour journey away by train.

At the end of the refit I was sent back to Halifax where I spent some time. It was here I met Kidor Bentley, a young fellow who worked in a music store and we spent some time together. Earlier in the year I had spent a weekend at Frank Burus' home in Kentville—he was the publisher of the *Kentville Advertiser* and my father had met him at a newspaper convention and he arranged the meeting.

Eventually, I received notice to go back to the HMCS *St. Hyacinthe* base for a V/S 2 course. The Canadian Navy was expanding very rapidly and there was a shortage of non-commissioned officers. At the conclusion of the course we were confirmed in our Leading Signalmans rating and given the acting rank of Yeoman of Signals. On this tour, I learned that the girl I had met before was engaged to Bob Wales, one of my friends with whom I had been with since joining the Royal Canadian Navy, and who had invited me to stop off at his home in Winnipeg on my way back to Esquimalt after one of my leaves.

On returning to Halifax we were all sent to newly built ships in various parts of the country. My assignment was HMCS *Orkney*, which was being built at Esquimalt shipyards. I was there in January and was one of the first compliments to arrive. My job at this point was to draw all the necessary supplies for the commemorative branch and update all the code books, ready for commissioning. It was strictly a day job as workmen were still working on the ship. On a couple of weekends I went to Vancouver. I had learned that Barb had got married and I visited her and her husband. By the time of commissioning the full complement was on board and I found I was in charge of all signalmen, coders and wireless telegraphers. I had a Leading Telegrapher and a Leading Coder under me. At the time of commissioning I had to climb to the top of the mast to fix the commissioning pennant that would be unfurled at the proper moment.

A few days after this we received our orders to report to Halifax. We set sail and headed south. One of our Leading Torpedomen contracted appendicitis on the trip and we had to put into Corinto, Nicaragua, so he could get attention at the American hospital. There was no dock there; we had to anchor and some of us were allowed to go ashore by boat. We only had about six hours but it proved quite interesting. Nothing was open but bars and the post office as they take a siesta in the afternoon. The streets were not paved but were of sand and we met hardly anyone, none of whom could speak English.

Our next port of call was the Panama Canal. It took all day to go through the canal and when we reached Cristobal we went in for a boiler cleaning, which meant a 5 day layover. One day a friend and I took a bus ride to Panama City, a distance of about 50 miles, just to say I was able to travel from coast to coast and back the same day and enjoy the scenery along the route. One thing I remember of Cristobal and its sister city Balboa was that

the bars never closed; they did not even have proper doors, just the swinging kind.

On leaving Panama we sailed up through the strait between Cuba and Haiti and put into the US Navy base at Norfolk, Virginia, where we were fitted with the latest radar system. We were there three days and although I went ashore I do not remember much except for the enormous size of the navy yard there.

On reaching Halifax we, the *HMCS Orkney*, were assigned as the Senior Officers' ship of Escort Group 16, at the head of a few new frigates, including *HMCS Thetford Mines*, *HMCS Ste. Therese*, *HMCS La Hulloise* and *HMCS Magog*. While working in the Gulf of St. Lawrence, the *HMCS Magog* was damaged by a torpedo and was effectively out of the war. The remaining ships went to New York where we received more radar gear at the Staten Island Navy Yard. I went ashore once into the city and went to the Stage One Canteen that was pretty empty. Nobody famous there. I also went to Jack Dempsey's Bar.

Then a few of us went to Coney Island where we rode the roller coaster and dodgem cars late into the night until it was time to go back to the ship.

From there we went to Bermuda where we spent six weeks on working up exercises, based mostly at the British Naval Base at Hamilton and also a couple of days at St. Georges. We were ashore quite often and the weather was beautiful as it was May.

Back in Canada, our escort group went on patrol in the Gulf of St. Lawrence. It was comparatively uneventful, but we went into Gaspe for five days for a boiler cleaning and one evening I went to a social club and played bridge. I had to quickly recall my French in order to play. Later we put into Sydney, and while on day leave one of the stewards whose home was in Glace Bay, took me by bus to the ruins of the fortress of Louisburg. There was nothing there then except a blockhouse, which was used as a museum. On returning to Sydney we found our ships had been recalled to Halifax and we had to catch up with it by motor launch. My most vivid memory of Sydney at night was the fires of the blast furnaces at the steel mills, which were going 24 hours a day.

On returning to Halifax, we were changed to Sea Operations Escort Group 25 based at Londonderry, Northern Ireland, escorting a convoy on the way.

By the time we reached the UK, it was September, D-Day had already occurred so we missed that event, but we immediately went on escort duty around the British Isles, and very rarely put into port before we returned to Londonderry. We circumnavigated the island several times in the lanes that were swept clear of mines. On one occasion we were sent out to the mid-Atlantic near the Canary Islands to deal with a submarine attack on a convoy. We arrived in time, but the sub was sunk by a torpedo aircraft. One night we put into Portsmouth and another time in January, we went into Scapa Flow in the Orkneys for a couple of days. I went ashore once to the petty officers mess at the naval base and it was miserably cold and damp. We had to huddle around a stove in the centre while we drank our beer.

One time some of us went to Buncrana, County Donegal, Ireland (later Eire).

We also carried out night anti-submarine exercises at a tactical centre in Limavady, County Londonderry, Northern Ireland, east of Londonderry. I walked around the old walls of Londonderry, and several times we went drinking in the Catholic area where they had connections in the Irish Free State and were able to get eggs and steak which were unavailable in Northern Island.

At Christmas we were given a week's leave and I went to London, UK. I took the train to Larne, County Antrim, Northern Ireland, where I took the ferry to Stranraer, Dumfries and Galloway, Scotland. The train to London was very crowded and I had to stand much of the time. I got a room in Earls Court and took the underground to the city centre every day where I visited the sights (Tower of London, Mme. Trussards, Kew Garden and the British Museum), and went to entertainment shows. One night the underground went on strike and I had to walk back to Earls Court.

On one occasion we were escorting a convoy through the Minch, a strait in north-west Scotland that separates the mainland from Lewis and Harris in the Outer Hebrides, when the captain thought we had a submarine contact. We were about to carry out a depth charge attack when the Navigator rushed up to the bridge to inform us we were over a minefield.

In February we were escorting a convoy from Loch Eyre, northwest Scotland, to Milford Haven, Wales, when we ran into one of the ships in the convoy off Anglesey. We were badly damaged but the freighter was worse. We signalled for tugs from Liverpool to assist the freighter but we were able to come in under our own steam. We tied up at the Gladstone docks on the River Mersey, and part of the Port of Liverpool, England, and there learned we would have to remain there to participate in a court of inquiry. Liverpool was the headquarters of the Commander-in-Chief Western Approaches. I had to attend but was never called to testify.

5. Meeting Joan Taylor and the end of the war

As a petty officer, I did not have to stand watch, so I was able to go ashore every night. We came into the city on an elevated train to the Pier Head, the centre of the Liverpool on the Mersey River.

Whether it was the first or second night ashore, a couple of friends and myself had a few drinks and decided to go roller skating, something I had never done before or since. It was there that I met a girl called Joan Taylor and she and a friend accompanied us back to the Pier Head to catch our train. I managed to get her phone number where she worked. This was February 14th, 1945.

The next day I called her and asked for a date. She agreed and when I suggested several things to do, she opted for a concert of the Royal Liverpool Philharmonic. For the next three weeks or so we saw each other nearly every night, attending concerts, movies and an occasional stage shows and trips. After she got to know me a little better, she invited me to her home where I met her parents, and on one occasion I missed the last street car downtown and had to walk miles back to the ship.

At the end of the accident inquiry I asked Joan to marry me and she agreed although no date was set. The result of the inquiry was that our commanding officer received a reprimand and lost his command. We got a new captain, who joined us after the refit, and were ordered to Dunstaffnage Marina, 5 km northeast of Oban, Scotland, for this. It took six weeks and there was not much to do in Oban. Every second weekend I took a train to Liverpool, which was an interesting trip. It took so long (I had to change at Glasgow) that I only had a few hours with Joan before I had to return.

On completion of the refit, we did working up exercises at Kyle of Lochalsh and anti-submarine exercises to the south at Campbeltown. Previously, we had done similar exercises at Tobermory on the Isle of Mull, but we never went ashore at any of them. We then returned to Londonderry for more exercises at the tactical room. While we were undergoing the refit some of our people joined one of the other ships of the group who took over as senior officer, and while there, there was an ... accident and several were killed, including my leading telegrapher, Jimmy Friend. While we were in

Londonderry I took a weekend in Belfast and visited their graves in the cemetery there. I also visited Gloria Hollowell, a Wren I met in Londonderry, was restationed. She was from Manchester and was an officers' cook and engaged to a Canadian airman. The only reason I mention this was because a few years after the war, she turned up in Forest as Gloria Anderson, with her husband as new owners of the Forest Golf Course.

We eventually set sail again and while refuelling at Moville on Lough Foyle, we were rammed by another Canadian frigate and had to return to Londonderry. While there, V-E Day was announced and I spent the afternoon on a long walk. A few days later we were told we were being transferred to Canada for service in the Pacific but had the choice of volunteering. I decided to request a transfer and called Joan in Liverpool and told her I would be going ashore for the purpose of getting married. I guess she was surprised but agreed.

Over the next few days, several German submarines began turning up in Londonderry, having surrendered on orders from Germany.

Eventually I was posted to *HMCS Niobe* base in Greenock, Scotland, catching a boat from Belfast. I was immediately sent to an Rest and Recreation camp where I stayed for several weeks. While there I learned how to make felt flowers and leather tooling. Our only duties were to keep the camp clean. We were provided from time to time with tours. Once we went to Ayr, Bobby Burns country, another time to Hamilton and David Livingston's home.¹ We also took a trip to the Trossachs and Loch Katrine, but it was so foggy we saw very little.

In June 1, 1945, got 30 days marriage leave and went to Liverpool where arrangements were made for the wedding. We made day trips to Southport and Blackpool. We also visited some of her relatives in the Liverpool area. We were married in Hayton Parish Church with a fellow I met in Greenock,

Robert Ferguson, standing up (supporting) for me, and Joan's sister, Florence, as bridesmaid. We went on our honeymoon to Lytham St. Annes, near Blackpool.

Shortly after returning to Liverpool, we went to Greenock and the first day or two we stayed in a rooming house downtown until I found a room closer to the *HMCS Niobe* base. We were only there for a couple of weeks when I found they were going to start closing down the base and I was slated to return to Canada on the *HMS Puncher*, a British aircraft carrier crewed by the Royal Canadian Navy. I avoided that

¹ David Livingstone (1813-1873) lived briefly at 17 Burnbank Road in Hamilton, South Lanarkshire, in 1862.

by believing Joan was pregnant, which proved to be false. I was moved to the signal office where I was in charge, and Joan and I moved into the Boag's place where we had a large living room with a hole in the wall for a bed, a fireplace and a piano.

When V-J day arrived in August, the entire ship's company was treated to a boat cruise on the Kyles of Bute. We also continued to be taken on bus trips to various places, including Stirling Castle and Bamodbeen,¹ Loch Lamond and Dumbarton Castle where we climbed the steps to the top. Joan and I spent one weekend in Edinburgh where we ran into Bob Fuller, from Ravenswood, in Edinburgh Castle. We also walked the Royal Mile to Holyrood Palace and St. Gile's Church where John Knox preached.

Every three months I would get a week's leave and on these occasions we went back to Liverpool. However, we did not stay there. On one occasion we went to York and walked the city walls. On another we went to Nottingham where we ran into a Canadian from Exeter, Ontario, in the Trip to Jerusalem Inn. We also went to Chester and walked the city walls there as well.

The personnel at the *HMCS Niobe* base were gradually depleted as they returned to Canada, eventually the signals office was closed and I was placed on duty on the telephone switchboard for the last six weeks or so that I was there. The *HMCS Niobe* base was eventually closed and Joan and I packed up and went to Liverpool where I awaited my sailing orders for Canada.

While we were still in Greenock, we often went into Glasgow for the evening as there was either a bus or a train about every half hour. On one of these trips, we stood up for the wedding of one of our navy friends at the Registrar's Office there.

¹ Bannockburn?

6. Return to Canada

We were staying at Joan's home for about three weeks when I got my orders to report to London for repatriation to Canada. We were on a brief holiday in Caernarfon, Wales, when it arrived so I had not much time or money either.

When I arrived in London, I found that we (the servicemen) had four or five days to kill. I got a bed at the Canadian Legion hostel that cost a shilling a night and spent a lot of the time wandering around London. I managed to see a performance of "The Barber of Seville" in the fourth balcony at Sadler's Wells Theatre for a shilling and also visited several famous pubs including Dirty Dicks, the Bull and Bash and one that used to be frequented by Charles Dickens (Ye Olde Cheshire Cheese).

Eventually we (the servicemen) were notified of our sailing orders. We got a train from Victoria station for Southampton where we boarded the *SS Île de France* for Halifax. There were 90 naval ratings being repatriated among several thousand soldiers, and it took about a week to cross the Atlantic. On arrival we reported to *HMCS Stadacona*, RCN Barracks in Halifax, and immediately went on a 30-day leave, my first in Canada for 2 years.

When I got back to Halifax, I was sent to the Naval Air Station in Dartmouth and several of us communication ratings (I was now a confirmed Leading Signalman) were stationed at a radar base for naval aircraft out in the bush. Our duties were to track and communicate with the planes when they were on exercises. Many days it was foggy or raining and there were no flights so it was a pretty easy job. We ate and slept out there preparing our own meals so there was not a lot of variety. I wrote to Joan nearly every day and she wrote as well.

While I was waiting for her, I arranged to meet Reinette who was stationed with the Wrens in Halifax, and that evening made a long distance phone call back to Forest to talk to Ruth who was home after spending a couple of summers during the war as a farmerette (woman farm worker).

It was not long before I received word that Joan had received her sailing orders, substituting for a war bride who had to cancel. She was to sail on the *RMS Queen Mary* to arrive in Halifax the first week in August. The

naval public relations office made arrangements for me to meet the ship and get her off before general debarkation. They supplied us with a hotel room for the night and train tickets for another 30-day leave to take her back to Forest, Ontario.

On our way we stopped in Toronto to attend the wedding of Frank and Gertrude Edwards who was stationed with me at the RCN Air Station in Dartmouth.

We went on to Forest where we spent the time getting acquainted. On my return to Halifax, Joan remained with my parents until I was able to find a place to live in Dartmouth, Nova Scotia.

I found a room on the main street about halfway between downtown Dartmouth and the naval air station. It had a bed in it and we managed to find some orange crates that we used for furniture. There was only one kitchen that we had to share with the lady of the house. After a few weeks Gert and Frank came and took a room upstairs. We shared our meals and they would sometimes come down and play cards while we all sat on the bed. One day I was exercising on the bed and I stepped and put my foot through the window. We were terrified to tell the landlady, but even worse it was cold outside and a broken window did not help.

As soon as we could we found another place. This one had two rooms, a bedroom and a kitchen. The bedroom was only slightly larger than the bed and this made it awkward when it rained as there was a small leak in the roof. The toilet was outside and one windy night the roof blew off and left it open to the weather. It was on Marion Heights, and it was half of a flimsily built shack on top of a hill, and it enabled us to hear everything that went on in the other half and I presume vice versa. We got our water from a well. The only advantages were we had our own kitchen and I could walk to work through a hole in the fence of the air base. By this time I was placed in charge of the signal office at the base. My duties were to compile and distribute all the messages each morning and take them personally to the commanding officer who would make replies or not as he saw fit. He generally went home before noon and therefore there was no need for me to remain. It was pretty easy. Even the signaling was done by teletype that sent and received encoded messages which were decoded by placing the appropriate insert in it each day.

In early spring we decided to buy a car, a used one of which they were starting to become available the first time since the war started. They were generally sold by ten o'clock after the morning newspaper came out.

Eventually we bought a 1932 Chrysler for about \$500, which I had in the bank in Forest, and which my parents sent to me. It was not much but at last we were mobile. We visited the Gunns, whom we had known in Scotland, and the Laytons; he was a yeoman of signals and I had gone to school with him back in Forest and he had joined the navy a few years before the war broke out.

We also took a trip one Sunday to Peggy's Cove on the south coast, which was well known from calendars, etc. At that time the roads were not paved and on our way home we got stuck in the mud along with several others. We were eventually rescued. Occasionally we took the ferry over to Halifax but would often drive around Bedford Basin. One time I visited the *HMCS Orkney* which was anchored in Bedford Basin waiting to be sold or scrapped.

The car was no great shakes; it could not even make it up the hill at Marion Heights. I had to leave it at the bottom, but it was nice to drive my own first car and the first time I had driven since the first year of the war, when one time I rented a car in Vancouver and I took Barb up to Capilano River Canyon, British Columbia. In those days it was not a tourist trap like it is now and we were the only ones on the swing bridge.

My time in the navy expired on May 6th after seven years, and we decided to drive back to Forest carrying all our worldly possessions on the back seat. It was a very interesting and eventful trip. The first hitch came at the American border at Calais, Maine. The customs man determined to make us remove everything in the back until he was satisfied, and then made us put it all back ourselves.

One night we spent in a cabin in the Maine woods with no inside facilities. They did not have motels in those days. In Boston we got lost and had to make a right turn where we did not want to since we were in the wrong lane. Out of Boston we joined the Merritt Parkway, one of the first controlled access highways built by Roosevelt during the depression. We eventually arrived in New York on the Hudson Parkway and found a bed and breakfast in the Bronx not far from Fordham University.

In New York we did all the tourist things. We went to the Automat; we had a dinner at the Waldorf Astoria. We went to the top of the Empire State Building and we saw a show at Radio City Music Hall. We also went to see a hit musical "Oklahoma" at the St. James Theatre on 42nd Street. It was in its fifth year and another new musical was playing across the street, "Annie Get Your Gun", which was sold out for the next four months. We did not drive in New York; we took the subway.

Driving was an education in itself since we had to add oil every time we stopped for gas, and one window was broken. When we left New York we headed for Niagara Falls where we stayed with the Snowdons who were cousins of my mother, and whom I had met before. We stayed a couple of days and one night there was a disturbance. Fred Snowdon got up and discovered someone had stolen our car. However it did not get far as it ran out of gas before it got far and the thieves were apprehended.

We eventually arrived home but the car was on its last legs. Later that month we went to Ingersoll for the baptism of Reinette and Pete's first child, Ruth Ann. Unfortunately, the car threw a piston rod and we had to dispose of it there for \$100, which was not bad since we only paid \$500 for it in the first place and it got us and our things home and gave us an interesting trip in the bargain.

7. Settling down in Forest

I went to work with *The London Free Press* for \$25 a week and we rented our first house, a bungalow on King Street belonging to a Mrs Kemp. We spent the first winter there. In the meantime we had started a family since Paul had been born in July. It was while we were living there that we had our first Hallowe'en in Canada. Ron and Laura Taylor came over and Ron and I dressed up and went out about ten or eleven o'clock while the girls looked after the two babies. Joan had met Laura in England before coming over and they both came on the *RMS Queen Mary*. They occasionally came over and we would play poker for pennies.

By spring we were finding the cottage too small for a grocery bag and we rented the downstairs apartment at Aunt Nora's on Albert Street. We stayed there nearly two years and for part of the time the upstairs was occupied by Ken Simpson and his wife; he had gone to school with Ruth and they also had a young baby. The Boones were there when we first moved in but they were not there long.

For the next ten or twelve years a lot of things happened, but I have no recollection of either sequence or duration. One of my first memories was Dad hiring Nifty Shepherd to drive us to Amherstburg, Essex County, Ontario, where Joan met Aunt Mina and her son, Charlie Smith. I cannot remember if we met anyone else that trip.

I met Harry Keene on one of my trips to London, Ontario, while we were living at Aunt Nora's place; I remember because he lent me some operatic recordings and I played them there. It must have been during this period that I went to Cleveland twice to visit the Metropolitan Opera. Shortly after this I started playing in the London Symphony Orchestra. I played fourth horn and had to buy one; I did this for two years and we practiced at Beale Collegiate.

We had a chance to buy a cottage on

McHenry Street and Dad loaned us the down payment, the house costing about \$3,000. The property had a small market garden that contained a couple of rows, full length of the lot, of raspberry canes and two or three rows of strawberries. We grew enough that we were able to supply Boyd's grocery store during the season. We also grew tomatoes, green beans and carrots, and there were three cherry trees. One year we successfully grew potatoes, but we could have bought them cheaper. Another time we grew corn and cantaloupe. Geoff was born while we were there and the cottage began to get too small. We considered building an addition but it never happened.

While on McHenry Street, Joan's girlfriend, Joan Robinson, visited us and we met her in Montreal. Bernie Hopper took a shine to her and after her visit; he drove her back to Montreal, accompanied by Joan. Bernie met her because he and I used to play golf nearly every Sunday. In fact one year we became members of Oakwood Park at Grand Bend, Ontario. We also played other courses in the area including Sarnia, Bright's Grove, Petrolia and Strathroy as well as Forest and Indian Hills when it opened.

Every couple of years we tried to take a holiday for a week or so and we would borrow Mom's car. The first trip was to Québec City and the eastern townships. We visited Windsor and Thetford Mines and also Mr and Mrs Bob Wales in St. Jean. She was the former Jeanne Gervais from St. Hyacinth. Another time we took the ferry from Tobermory to Manitoulin Island and by the time we got to Little Current, the generator was shot. We were stuck there for the weekend since the part could not be replaced until the garage obtained a new one from Sudbury. We also went one weekend to Montreal with Ruth when we went to St. Joseph's Abatory.

Another time we rented a cottage near Huntsville, which we later discovered was the same Colonial Bay Resort that we have visited twice since then. We got there because my parents had previously holidayed in that area. While there I played golf at a couple of courses, including

Windemere. The cottage had electricity but no inside facilities and one night I went out to the toilet and surprised a skunk. We both retreated in a hurry. The cottage also had a rowboat and we went rowing on the lake a couple of times.

We also had the opportunity to go on a couple of conventions with the Ontario Weekly Newspapers Association. One was to Wigwassen over on an island in Lake Rosseau. I played golf at Windune once on that trip while Joan went with the ladies to Port Carling.

Another one was on the Ontario Northern Railway. We boarded at Toronto and travelled north. The newspaper people had the whole train and we slept on it. We made several stops, including one at New Liskeard where we toured a match factory, at Temogami, where we had a boat ride, and Timmins, to visit a gold mine.

We also belonged to the South Western Ontario Association and we met every year. I can remember meetings at Wallaceburg, Ridgetown, Tillsonburg, and others and one year I was elected Chairman. It was not too hard a job as the secretary did all the work. We also attended a few exhibitions in the Automotive Building at the Toronto Exhibition Grounds and at one of them we purchased a Fairchild engraver and were able to run pictures in the newspaper for the first time (this must have been in the 1960s).

While at McHenry Street we had a flood at one time and had a couple of feet of water in the basement. The worst damage was losing our wedding pictures and many of our souvenirs from Britain.

Once Dad took the car and had me drive him and Joan to Detroit to see a ball game. It was the New York Yankees when Joe DiMaggio and Yogi Berra were playing. During this time I was official scorer for the Forest Baseball Team and I was secretary of the hockey team, which meant I attended most of their games. I was also Treasurer of the Forest branch of the Canadian Legion, while Joan belonged to the Women's Auxiliary.

8. Introduction to the Bahá'í Faith and community development

In 1951 we met Aldie (Aldham) Roberts (b. 1929) who worked in the local Bank of Commerce. He was single and interested in similar things to us, history, music and playing golf, and he used to spend a lot of time at our place. It was through him that we first heard of the Bahá'í Faith. We did not think a lot about it at the time, but both of us had been estranged from our respective churches for some time. In 1952 he left Forest and went back to Toronto.

That fall his parents, John and Audrey, invited us to spend Thanksgiving weekend with them in Toronto. They had arranged for us to attend the New York City Ballet company performance of "Fancy Free" by Leonard Bernstein (1918–1990).

The next day, while Aldie's brother took Joan on a tour of Casa Loma, Aldie's father, John Roberts (1901–1991), who I learned later was Chairman of the National Spiritual Assembly of the Bahá'ís of Canada and a top man with *London Life*, talked to me about the Bahá'í Faith, and loaned us some books to take home with us. That night Aldie took us to a jazz night club. While there we met two of the Toronto Bahá'í youth, Elizabeth Manser who became Mrs Mike Rochester and Douglas Martin (1927–2020).

Earlier that year we left the little house on MacHenry St. and bought a house on Macnab Street at auction. We paid \$4,500 for it and used the proceeds of the sale of the previous house for a down payment. It needed a lot of work and over the next couple of years we remodelled the interior, including a new kitchen and small bathroom under the stairs, and installed a new furnace.

Over the winter of 1952–1953, we went into London several times to hear a series of talks by Ruth Moffatt on her *New Keys to the Book of Revelation*, and it was there we met some of the London Bahá'ís, such as Bob Smith, and Ross Woodman, who at that time was Secretary of the National Spiritual Assembly of Canada. We also met the Hoyles at this time as they were studying the Faith as well.

In April 1953 we went down to London to attend the formation of the first Local Spiritual Assembly in London, with John Roberts presiding. We had all become Bahá'ís by this time, including Miller McPherson. Dorothy Boyers (she had not married Bob at this point) was a member of the Bahá'í Jubilee Committee arranging the 100th anniversary of the declaration of Bahá'u'lláh, and she told us of the dedication of the Wilmette Bahá'í Temple. We decided to attend in May and the three of us went along with Miller and Ross Woodman and stayed at the YMCA in downtown Chicago.

There were seven Hands of the Cause of God there, including Rúhíyyih Khánúm (1910–2000), who delivered the dedication address from her husband, Shoghi Effendi (1897–1957). Also there were Zikrullah Khadem (1904–1986), 'Alí-Akbar Furútan (1905–2003), and Horace Holley (1887–1960). We also spent an evening with Nellie Steverson French, (1868–1954), one of those present who had met 'Abdu'l-Bahá (1844–1921).

That summer, 1953, we were remodelling our kitchen when we had a visit from Ruth Moffett (1880–1978). She slept in the den while Wilfred Shawhenee, an Indian from Kettle Point was installing a pass-through in place of a door in that room. While Ruth was in the washroom in the morning, Wilfred dashed in and removed the door—surprise! Also that summer we went to London, Ontario, to hear a talk by 'Alí Furútan. One of the amazing things I remember is that he remembered who I was when I ran into him at the Guardian's (Shoghi Effendi) grave in New Southgate Cemetery, London, twenty-five years later.

By this time Aldie Roberts was working in St. Catharines and he had us down for a weekend where we met the Bahá'ís in St. Catharines and we went with him to Niagara Falls to see “Annie Get Your Gun” at the summer theatre, held at the Shaw Festival Theatre.

Joan decided she would like to visit her parents the next year, 1954; it had been eight years since she had last seen them. She would take Paul, who was seven, with her. Geoff would be four and Larry two and we would need someone to look after them.

As it happens, that spring our linotype operator was killed in a car accident. The job was offered to Jack Hoyle who was anxious to leave his London job. He did not know anything about it but learned quickly. He and Kathy moved into our house when Joan and Paul left for England, with me driving them to Montreal, where she sailed on the *RMS Empress of Scotland*.

Joan was pregnant at the time and found out when she got there that she would not be allowed to sail until the baby was born. Our daughter Victoria was born in a hospital in Southport on September 21, 1954, and they returned to Canada in November 1954. I drove to Montreal to meet the ship and bring them home. Joan came back as a Canadian but Vicki was admitted as a landed immigrant and thus has dual citizenship.

During the 1950s, Forest formed a Local Spiritual Assembly. In addition to ourselves, Miller, and the Hoyles, we enrolled Charlie and Norma Willey, Duyck and Tredi Lewis and Don Thiers. Then Tony and Rita Marsolais moved here from the Ottawa area. We had many visitors during this period

including Mr and Mrs Khadem (Hand of the Cause of God), John Robarts; Mrs Meherangiz Munsiff (1923–1999) and daughter Jyoti, who were from a Zoroastrian family in Bombay (now Mumbai), India, who had converted to the Bahá'í Faith; as well as Bahá'ís from around Ontario, like Charlie and Florence Grindley, Mike and Liz Rochester, Doug and Betty Martin, Fred Graham, etc.

I gave my first public talk at the Brock Hotel in Niagara Falls. There were about twenty people present, all Bahá'ís from Toronto and Hamilton. Prior to this I was asked to cover the Bahá'í summer school that was held at Geneva Park on Lake Couchiching for the *Canadian Bahá'í News*. There I met Marjorie McCormick (1889–1964) and Stanwood Cobb (1881–1982); and I was on a committee with Ola Pawlowski (1910–2004), who later pioneered to Zaire, that sent a cable to the Guardian (Shoghi Effendi). It was also my first contact with Jim Willoughby and Alan Raynor.

For a couple of winters I led discussion groups at our home. We discussed *The Meeting of East and West* by F. S. C. Northrop (1893–1992), *A Study of History* by Arnold J. Toynbee (1889–1975), and a history of Asia that I compiled. Among those attending were a couple of high school teachers.

We had always been fortunate in living so close to the resorts on Lake Huron. Shortly after Joan arrived in Forest, we won a week at one of Jamieson's cottages at Ipperwash Beach. It was September so there were not a lot of people around. In the 1950s my parents bought a cottage at Cedar Point and they allowed their kids to use it for short holidays during the summer. At the same time, Pat and Jack Boyd had a cottage at Ipperwash Beach, and they allowed us to use it from time to time right up to the 1970s. On a couple of occasions we camped at Camp Ipperwash, once in a tent and again in a trailer. I would drive in to work every day and came out at night.

One year around 1960, the Bahá'ís were unable to acquire a site for a Bahá'í summer school and decided to hold three mini schools that year. One was at Forest, and the Boyds allowed us the use of their cottage for the venue.

The Bahá'í teachers came from the Bahá'í Summer School Committee and included Nancy Campbell from Hamilton and Marion Hughes from Detroit. About 40 people turned up and while some stayed at the lake, others stayed in Forest. The Forest Bahá'ís supplied the catering and it was a busy time. Another time we held our own Bahá'í summer school; it was on a smaller scale and we had Charles Grindley as one of the teachers.

In those days I did some travel teaching around the area. I spoke in Kitchener several times and also London and Colbourne. Once we went to Royal Oak, Michigan, for a Bahá'í fireside. We also held firesides on a

regular basis in Sarnia. Joan gave the fireside at Jim Oliver's house and we also had public meetings in the Forest Public Library. We established the first International Picnic at Canatara Park, Sarnia, at first for ourselves and the Bahá'ís of Port Huron, but in succeeding years it grew until it was attended by over a hundred people.

While teaching in Sarnia, we gained a contact, actually through Charles Willey, in the person of Mary Allen. Much to our surprise a week or so later she landed on our doorstep and moved in with us. She became a Bahá'í and eventually got a place of her own. It was when she moved to Detroit that we spoke at Royal Oak, a suburb of Detroit. We would sometimes drive to the Bahá'í summer school at the Louhelen Bahá'í School, near Davison, Michigan. We got to know Lou and Helen Eggleston quite well; they had donated the Louhelen property to the Bahá'í Faith for a summer school and it has now become quite well-known.

Sometimes we attended concerts by the Detroit Symphony Orchestra at the State Fair Grounds in Detroit. I knew a couple of the players whom I had played with in the International Symphony Orchestra, Sarnia.

During the 1950s I took a course by correspondence in electronics from DeVry Institute. I did not do much with it, but I built a radio, and a voltmeter as well as a circuit tester. I also started collecting stamps while Jack Hoyle stayed with us—I collected Chinese, Greek, Turkish and Iranian stamps and corresponded with collectors in Iran, Turkey, Brazil, and Indonesia. A girl in Indonesia sent me a beautiful carved statuette of Kalki, the 10th avatar of Vishnu, in exchange for a couple of stamp albums, which we still have.

While living at Macnab Street we bought our first television set. It was at an auction sale and cost \$25. The antenna I think cost more than the set, but Norma Willey would come over when I was out and watch the movies with Joan. The Willeys eventually became Bahá'ís. It was through the Willeys that we met George and Erica Lazi who were Hungarian refugees from the 1956 revolution and who came to work for Charlie. Erica and Joan got along quite well and spent time at each other's place. George and Erica Lazi lived above one of the stores on King Street.

Also while we were at

Macnab Street, a friend of Joan's mother, Amy Reynolds, whom she met in England, arrived and stayed with us for a while. She was the first lady auctioneer in England and also taught elocution lessons for a while. While with us she confused the Anglican minister by attending both his church and the Catholic Church on the same day. Before returning to England she went to London and got a job as housekeeper for a Jewish shopkeeper.

9. Western Canadian and US vacations, early 1960s

In the early 1960s we decided to take one of the kids on a holiday with us. The first trip was in 1961 and we took Paul with us to Winnipeg. We went by way of Chicago and visited the Bahá'í House of Worship in Wilmette. We had been to the Bahá'í Temple on a couple of previous occasions, once with Pat Boyd, who drove and got a speeding ticket somewhere in Michigan and the other time we took Evelyn McPherson with us. These were weekend trips.

We often camped on these trips. Our first stop was in Wisconsin and then in Bemidji, Minnesota. There we went south to Akeley to visit the Paul Bunyan Historical Museum together the statues of Paul Bunyan and his blue ox Babe. We camped in a nearby park. In Winnipeg we stayed in a motel on the outskirts of the city. This was the first time I had been in Winnipeg since I stopped over a few days early in the war with Bob Wales and we rode the roller coaster in Assiniboine Park. Later I was to go there as a delegate to the Bahá'í National Convention.

While in Winnipeg we took Paul to see the railway yards that are the largest in Canada and which fascinated him. We also had a tour of the Manitoba Parliament Buildings with Hart Bowsfield, a Bahá'í we had met at an earlier Bahá'í National Convention in Toronto. We attended many Bahá'í Conventions when they were in Toronto; one time we took Don Thiers and another time we took George and Erica Lazi, who of course were not Bahá'ís but we spent some time with them.

On our way back from Winnipeg we returned on the Canadian side. Some of our memories were the night we spent in a hotel in Jackfish, about 4 miles off the Trans-Canada Highway down a one lane winding road. The hotel was an old style one where all the guests ate around the main table. In the evening we saw some moose swimming in the lake out to an island.

Jackfish is a point on the Canadian Pacific Railway where the train makes a big U-turn around the bay and if you were in the middle of the train you could see both ends of the train out the window.

Also we had to stop in Wawa (on the western shore of Wawa Lake) to visit a doctor when Joan received several bad black fly bites. Her face became quite swollen. The next night we camped in Fairbank Provincial Park (west of Sudbury), about 14 miles off the main highway.

We did not think we would ever get there. From there we went to Woodview, northwest of Lakefield, Ontario, where I was to give a course at the Bahá'í Summer School. We were there for a week and one of the highlights was a series of evening talks on the Bahá'u'lláh's Letters to the Kings by Firuz Khazemzadeh, Chairman of the National Spiritual Assembly of the USA.

Our next trip, 1962, we took a shorter trip, just the two of us. We crossed on the ferry to Manitoulin Island and then to Wawa. From there we went across northern Ontario through Chappleau and Foleyet to Timmins. I remember stopping at Ivanhoe Lake for lunch. From Timmins we went north to Cochrane and camped overnight in Greenwater Provincial Park.

On the way back we turned east and went to Kirkland Lake and Under Lake, Ontario, and into Québec through Rougn-Noranda, Québec, to Val d'Or. We came south through La Verendrye Provincial Park and through the Gatineau Park to Ottawa.

Another year, 1963, we went out west. We crossed the Mackinack Bridge and stopped in Escanaba. We travelled east and then turned north at Duluth and crossed into Canada at International Falls and travelled up through Lake of the Woods to Kenora. We bypassed Winnipeg and stopped in Brandon.

The next day we reached Regina where we spent a few days with Angus and Bobbie Cowan. Angus was a National Spiritual Assembly member and he took us out to the Poorman Reserve in Saskatchewan. It was a poor reserve and I met and spoke to a group of Indian Bahá'ís. They were very hospitable with what they had. When we left we stopped at a small prairie town near Swift Current and the following night at Fort McLeod, west of Lethbridge. We spent the next day at the Peigan Reserve at Brocket. These are Blackfoot Indians and we had met Chief Samson Knowlton earlier when he came to Kettle Point. About twenty of the Bahá'ís came to Samson's house where we had a fireside. He also took us out to see an isolated Bahá'í, but we were unable to cross the Oldman River after a lengthy walk.

The next day we set off for the American border through Pincher Creek. We passed Chief Mountain, our first glimpse of the Rockies. We stayed overnight in Babb, Montana and the next day drove through Glacier National Park over the Highway to the Sun. Although it was August there was still some snow along the road. We drove down the other side and through the Flathead Indian Reserve to Butte where we spent the night.

That night we attended a Bahá'í Feast with the local Bahá'í community.

The next day we drove south to Virginia City, and the Hebgen Lake earthquake area where a campground was destroyed, and into Yellowstone National Park. In the park, we visited the hot spring area and the Old Faithful Geyser, and saw some bears alongside the road. We stayed that night in Cody, Wyoming, after stopping at the Buffalo Bill Dam. From there we travelled through the switchback road in the Shell Canyon in the Bighorn Mountains to the site of General George Custer's defeat at the Little Bighorn River.

Our next stop was at Deadwood, South Dakota, where we went to the bar where Wild Bill Hickok was shot and the cemetery where he and Calamity Jane (Martha Jane Canary) are supposed to be buried in Boot Hill. Then we went up to Mount Rushmore to see the big figures carved in the rock. From there we went through the Badlands National Monument where the temperature was steaming, but the scenery spectacular.

We crossed the Missouri at Mitchell, South Dakota, the corn capital of the United States. They have a corn palace built of many different kinds of corn. We stopped at Sioux City, Iowa, for the night and called the local Bahá'ís but they did not seem to want to see us. We continued east through Illinois to Lafayette, Indiana. We visited the site of the Battle of Tippecanoe and visited the lone Bahá'í on the campus of Purdue University. From there we returned home.

10. Northeastern USA vacations, mid 1960s

The following year, 1964, was the year that Paul's Key Club held an international convention in New York so we drove him and a friend there. We stopped to visit Bahá'ís in Hamburg, New York State, but we did not stay. We went through the Grand Canyon of Pennsylvania on route and arrived in New York City over the George Washington Bridge. We dropped Paul and his friend off and we stayed with a young couple in Westbury, Long Island, whom we had met at the Durst's early that year. While there, Joan and I visited the United Nations Building and also the New York World's Fairs at Flushing Meadows where LaGuardia Airport is now located. After the Bahá'í convention we picked the boys up at Grand Central Station and returned home via the Holland Tunnel. Driving in Manhattan was a traffic nightmare and we were glad to leave.

The next year, 1965, we went on a trip with Geoff. We stopped off on the way and visited Larry in Cobourg (east of Toronto; we had visited Larry more than once while he was in the juvenile detention center and took him out on trips into town or out to Shelter Valley near Brighton). We camped overnight in Presqu'île Provincial Park and the next day we went through Ivy Lea and crossed the Thousand Islands Bridge, stopping at the visitor center in the middle of the St. Lawrence River. We crossed New York State through Lake Placid to Fort Ticonderoga, which we toured. We crossed Lake Champlain into Vermont and went south to the American Revolution battle site at Bennington. From there we crossed New Hampshire and up the coast to Kittery in Maine. We went to the Greenacre Bahá'í School, Maine; it was before the summer season began and we stayed there and in return Joan and I painted one of the bathrooms and Geoff painted the library. We visited the room where 'Abdu'l-Bahá stayed back in 1912 when he was in America.

Leaving there we went south into Massachusetts, but we did not go into Boston, but instead we headed west through Lexington and Concord. I remember driving down the road between the two towns, with Geoff's head out the window shouting "The British are coming!" In Concord we saw the bridge where the Colonists defeated the British army and the Minute Man statue.

Concord was also the home of Ralph Waldo Emerson (1803-1882), the American essayist.

We came into New York State through some beautiful country and visited the battlefield at Saratoga where Benedict Arnold lost his leg and the British army coming down from Montreal was defeated. Then we went to Fort George at the foot of Lake Champlain, which has been restored. Then we visited Cooperstown and toured the Baseball Hall of Fame and where James Fennimore Cooper (1789–1851), after whose father the town was named, lived and wrote his famous novels. On our way home we passed the Howe Caverns and decided to stop and make a tour of the caves. From there we drove north to Geneva on Seneca Lake. From there we crossed into Canada at Niagara Falls and returned home.

Next year we took Larry on a trip south. We first stopped at Perryville in Ohio, the most northerly point reached by the invading Confederate States Army. It was here that General Braxton Bragg was defeated by General Don Carlos Buell. We crossed the Ohio River at Cincinnati and spent a couple of days in Kentucky. We toured some of the horse farms around Lexington and saw the grave and the Man-O-War horse statue, who won the Kentucky Derby several times. We visited Frankfurt and saw the graves of Daniel Boone (1734–1820) and his wife, Rebecca Bryan Boone (1739–1813).

Then we visited Boonesborough, Kentucky, a restored pioneer village and then the Cumberland Gap mountain pass where Boone crossed the Adirondacks into Kentucky. We could see four states from the lookout at the top of the pass. We then entered Tennessee and stopped at the Norris Dam on the Clinch River, one of the first big projects of the Tennessee Valley Authority. From there to the site of the Manhattan Project in Oak Ridge, where the atomic bomb was first developed and Larry received a radioactive dime, and had his hair stand up on end.

We stopped just outside Chattanooga, southeastern Tennessee, and the next day we visited a model display of the Chattanooga battle sites, which was quite realistic.

We went up to the top of Lookout Mountain, site of the “Battle in the Clouds” and while up there toured the peak including Lovers Leap, which overlooks the city and the state of Georgia. We then made a quick tour of the battle site at Chickamauga, before finding a motel.

The next day we followed the railway down through Dalton and Rexica where the great railway chase took place. We went to the site of the Battle of Kennesaw Mountain (1864) just outside Atlanta, which we bypassed, and went to Stone Mountain, Georgia, where a statue of Jefferson Davis, Robert E. Lee and Stonewall Jackson were being carved. They had a miniature railway

which traveled around the mountain, a distance of about a mile, and it re-enacted the locomotive chase (1862) with Confederate soldiers attempting to board the train and set some railway cars on side lines on fire.

We headed from there back to the Smokey Mountains and followed the Blue Ridge Parkway until we got into Virginia. We first went to the Monticello plantation at Charlottesville, the home of Thomas Jefferson (1743–1826), whose image is on the American nickel. Then we went to Appomattox Court House where the final surrender signing on April 9, 1865, of the American Civil War occurred between Robert E. Lee and Ulysses S. Grant. Then on to Richmond.

We got a motel just south of Richmond where we stayed a couple of days. We toured the sites of the seven battles around Richmond from Mechanicsville to Frasers Farm. All of this area is set aside as a National Battlefield Site. The next day we toured the battlefields around Petersburg, a siege that lasted for months.

While in the Richmond area we visited the James Peninsula where we went to Yorktown where the American Revolution ended and Williamsburg, a restored colonial town, as well as Jamestown, a recreation of the original English settlement.

We then went north following the Virginia battles in reverse chronological order through Spotsylvania Court House and the Wilderness to Chancellorsville where Stonewall Jackson was killed. Then we went to Fredericksburg, a city largely dominated by civil war sites and where the Chamber of Commerce gave us a complimentary parking pass for the day.

From Fredericksburg we went north to Manassas where the two battles of Bull Run were fought. We stayed at Centreville for two nights and one day we went into Washington, DC, where we visited the Lincoln Memorial, the White House and the United States Capital. We also crossed the Potomac River to the Arlington Cemetery where we saw President John Kennedy's grave and the Iwo Jima Memorial.

From there we went to Harper's Ferry, West Virginia, where John Brown staged his famous raid on the arsenal there, one of the events leading up to the American Civil War. Then on to the site of the Battle of Antietam, 1862, the bloodiest battlefield of the civil war. Then up into Pennsylvania to Gettysburg where we followed the

course of the three-day battle, and where Abraham Lincoln delivered his famous address, on November 19, 1863.

On our way home we visited the grave of Major-General Edward Braddock (1695–1755), the English general who was ambushed by the French and Indians on his way to Fort Pitt. Then Fort Necessity, a British fort in the area of Fort Pitt, which was where George Washington (1732–1799) was stationed when he was still a lieutenant. Our last stop was at Sandusky, Ohio, where we were going to go to Put-in-Bay, after which the naval battle of Lake Erie was named after the 1812 Battle of Lake Erie, but we did not go when we learned what it would cost.

11. Canadian Centennial to the late 1960s

1967 was a busy year. In the early part of the year there was a reunion of naval communications people who had attended the communications school at the *HMCS St. Hyacinthe* base during the war. I went along with Joan and stayed at a bed and breakfast in the town. During the ceremony I carried one of the flags but I did not meet anybody I knew. They took us on a tour of where the old barracks was or what was left of it. It is now part of a new development in the town, whereas during the war it was outside the town and we had to walk in when we had leave.

The *HMCS St. Hyacinthe* base was only 25 miles from Montreal so we took advantage of the holiday to visit the 1967 International and Universal Exposition (Expo '67), which had not been open very long. We parked in a large car lot on the outskirts and took the new subway into the grounds.

In late August a Canadian Weekly Newspaper Convention was held in Ottawa so we packed up the wagon with Paul, Tim and Linda and went off to the nation's capital and stayed at the Chateau Laurier Hotel. While there we had a tour of the Canadian Parliament Buildings where the two youngest had their picture taken with a Mountie, a luncheon at the Ontario Experimental Farm on the edge of the city, a sound and light show based on the Parliament buildings and a tour of the Royal Canadian Mint.

One evening we were hosted at a dinner by the Government of Canada, attended by Prime Minister Lester B. Pearson (1963–1968). Tim had a chance to shake hands with him. One afternoon we had tea at the Japanese Embassy. Another evening we were all entertained in a different way. I had dinner at the United Arab Emirates Embassy in Ottawa where I learned a lot about the new Aswan Dam in Egypt. Paul went to the South African Embassy where he got into an argument, and Joan was entertained at Government House by Mme. Pauline Vanier, wife of the Governor General, and the two youngest were given a private performance of the musical ride of the Royal Canadian Mounted Police.

Following the Ottawa portion of the Convention, we all went to Montreal. We did not stay at the Queen Elizabeth Hotel, part of which had been set aside for the press, but went back to the *HMCS St. Hyacinthe* base to the same B & B

we were in earlier in the year. We visited the '67 Expo several times, including a champagne reception given by the City of Montreal and Mayor Jean Drapeau.

We had press passes so we did not have to line up at the various pavilions but were able to go directly to the head of the queue, so we were able to see a lot more of the fair than we would have otherwise.

When we returned home, Paul did not come with us. He decided to strike out on his own. He headed west and the first we heard from him was from Carman, Manitoba.

Around 1961 we had bought a home on Argyle Street in Forest that included a barn and about 3 acres of land. Most of the land was rented as pasturage, but the first couple of years we decided to grow cucumbers commercially. They were pretty easy to grow but involved a lot of work gathering them for the pickle factory, and after a couple of years we abandoned it.

Between 1967 and 1970 we hosted several weekend Bahá'í seminars in our large back yard. Elizabeth Rochester came and hosted one, and Fred Graham another one. When there were a large number of Bahá'í youth enrolled at Paris (47 miles ENE of London, Ontario), we hosted a youth weekend and large numbers came. We slept 18 of them in our house and others stayed at the Marsolais', who lived on the street behind us.

We also went to Paris for events and at one time we dropped the kids off and went to nearby African Lion Safari.

When traveling groups came through, we often went with them. One group called themselves "Five Young Bahá'ís" and we went with them once to Glencoe (30 miles SE of Forest). Some fifteen years later, we ran into one of them in Conway on the north coast of Wales, UK.

The next group to arrive was Jalal, a rock group that included Jack Lenz. They played several places in the area including Parkhill, Exeter and Forest. They would play a concert and dance and afterwards would hold an informal fireside for anyone who wished to stay.

We made a number of contacts through these concerts and a few declarations. Young people in Exeter, Bayfield and St. Marys, where we went every week through one summer, and we had ten declarations. I have no idea what happened to these kids but there is now a Local Spiritual Assembly in St. Marys.

Some of these young people came to Forest a few times and some attended a big Naw-Rúz party (Persian New Year) we held at the St. John Fisher Separate School one year.

12. Introduction to Iceland, pioneering decision and two weddings

In 1971 we received an unexpected gift of \$1,000 from Uncle Lister and we used it to book and attend the Bahá'í Oceanic Conference in Reykjavík, Iceland. In the meantime we went to the National Bahá'í Convention in Halifax in April. We drove to the Maritime Peninsular in Maine where we picked up Mary Allen who was living in Old Town, 11 miles NE of Bangor, Maine. At the Bahá'í Convention there was a small group of young people from Iceland who entertained and talked to us. The reason they were there was because it was the responsibility of Canada to form a Bahá'í National Spiritual Assembly in Iceland in April 1972. On our way home we stopped off in Fredericton at the Eldridges and left Mary there where she found her own way home. We had acquired a hitchhiker at the Convention who was with us to Oshawa, Ontario, where he lived. He was a strict vegetarian and would eat hardly anything on the way home. From Fredericton we traveled down the Miramichi River to Bathurst and to the St. Lawrence at Mont Joli, Quebec.

That summer we volunteered to spend two weeks as house parents for a group of Bahá'í youth teachers in Rimouski, Québec. Joan looked after the cottage while I drove the kids around to where they wanted to go, including the newspaper and the polytechnic where one night they put on a pageant performance in French on the unity of the Prophets. We made a lot of contacts but no immediate declarations. We took our three youngest with us, but Tim decided not to stay and hitchhiked home, which we did not know until we arrived there.

In August we set out for Iceland. Mary Allen came to Forest and also Peter and Janet Khan (b. 1940) and we all went to Toronto together. We had a long time there waiting for the charter plane which was very late.

Eventually we were all taken by bus to Niagara Falls, New York, and finally the plane took off and we were on our way. When we arrived at Reykjavík-Keflavík Airport, where some of the Icelandic Bahá'ís had been waiting for some hours. One of the first people we met was Jim Willoughby who had stayed with us for about a month back in the early 1960s.

We were assigned to various hotels in Reykjavík and we were billeted in the Eyja Guldsmeden Hotel, although many of the informal meetings were held at the Hótel Loftleiðir where we walked a couple of times. Most of the formal sessions were held in the Austurbæjarbíó entertainment center. In the days leading up to the beginning of the Bahá'í Convention proper we had a couple of tours. The first one was a three hour tour of the city. The second was an all day trip where we went by way of Hveragerði, and then to Hekla. We were treated to lunch at a community center at Selfoss. After lunch we went to Gullfoss and Geysir, and came home via Laugarvatn and Thingvellir.

We met some of the adult Bahá'ís, including Liesel Becker and Monika Benediktsdóttir and Esla Guðmundsdóttir. We had a talk with one of the members of the National Spiritual Assembly who had heard that we had liked what we had seen and suggested we consider pioneering to Iceland. We said we would think about it as we had to discuss it with our family. While we were there we presented each of the four Bahá'í Local Spiritual Assemblies with a copy of *'Abdu'l-Bahá in Canada*, which we had printed at the Free Press a few years earlier.

When we got home we talked about pioneering to Iceland. They all agreed but the three oldest decided not to go. I had earlier sold the newspaper and was only doing job printing so I had to set about selling the business and the house. I also talked to our Local Spiritual Assembly and made some arrangements for our employees, all of whom were on the Assembly.

A lot of work had to be done before we could leave. There was a lot of furniture to dispose of and some that we wished to keep. There were a couple of trunks to be packed and about 18 suitcases. I had to dispose of our issues of the *Canadian Bahá'í News* so I delivered them to the National Office in Toronto. Then I visited the Morowety's and went to see Norman Bailey in "Die Walküre" that night as related earlier.

We sold the house and the business, both of which took about six months. In the meantime we had two weddings to look after. In June I officiated, as chairman of our Local Spiritual Assembly, at the wedding of Geoff to Barb Forbes. The marriage occurred in our backyard on Argyle Street with several Bahá'ís and others present. A month later we flew to Winnipeg where we were met by Paul who drove

us to Minnedosa, Manitoba, where he was married to Debbie Bridge. The wedding occurred on the bandstand in the park at Minnedosa.

13. Pioneering to Iceland

We set out for Iceland in August 1971. Larry drove the six of us to London where we had to catch the 7:30 am plane to Toronto. The previous day we had to go looking for Tim who had disappeared again. At Toronto we had a couple of hours before our flight to New York. At the last minute the American Customs wanted us to open our luggage, all eighteen suitcases.

There was not time, so they agreed to send it direct to Icelandair. We arrived in New York's Kennedy Airport around 1 pm and we found we had to wait to 8 pm for our flight. It was a horrible seven hours. The airport was dirty and the food expensive; there were very few places to sit and we had four kids to look after, two of them quite young. At 8 pm we found the Icelandair flight was overbooked and they had to lay on another aircraft, and as a result we had a lot of room on the plane. On the flight we ran into a fellow who was going to Iceland to attend the Fischer-Spassky chess championship match (August 1972).

We arrived at Reykjavík-Keflavík Airport the next morning. There was no one to meet us there nor was there anyone at the Loftleidir Hotel (now the Icelandair Hotel Reykjavík Natura) after the bus ride from the airport. Fortunately, we did have a place to live as we had made arrangements before we left Canada to take over an apartment from a couple of Bahá'í pioneers who were returning to Canada. The house was in Kópavogur (south of Reykjavík) and we had to hire two taxis to take us and our luggage to the address at 123 Álfhólsvegur, one of the main roads in Kópavogur, about a mile or so from the town center. Kópavogur was more or less a bedroom community for Reykjavík and only about 20 minutes by bus from the capital. It stopped just outside our door.

Over the next few days, we walked down to the centre of town and contacted some of the Bahá'ís that we had met the year before, as well as two or three of the local Bahá'í community who were all young Icelanders, but who all spoke some English.

During those first six weeks or so many things happened. One night we were taken to a ski lodge outside Reykjavík where there was a Bahá'í youth summer school and where Dr Ugo Giachery (1896–1989), Hand of the Cause of God, and his wife Angeline were speaking. We met Dr Ugo Giachery a few days later at the

National Office in Óðinsgata, Reykjavík. During the first couple of weeks, Tim took off and we did not hear from him for some time, when one night we got a phone call from Húsavík where he had a job in construction.

We also found there was a weekend Bahá'í summer school in Ísafjörður in the northwest and I decided to go. When I arrived I discovered that I was going to give a course on Islám. It seemed to be well received, although there were only about twenty people in attendance. Who should turn up at this school but Tim who had hitchhiked from Húsavík.

Another event was the purchase of a car. We bought a ten year old Volvo at what was a quite reasonable price. I think I had a flat tire the first time I drove into Reykjavík. I also wrote to the National Spiritual Assembly of Iceland with some suggestions for the *Bahá'í News*. I got a letter back in about a week appointing me to the Bahá'í News Committee. It was called Tíðindi ("tidings, news"). I had good help from a girl in Kópavogur called Kristin who did all the translating and typing, while I arranged for the printing.

We contacted Monika who put me in touch with some of the city printers. I went to several printing shops looking for a job and eventually got a job with the government printing office called Gutenberg Prentsmiðja (Gutenberg Printing Press). My job was printing on the small Heidelberg press printing machine that I was familiar with, printing giros, business cards, envelopes, letterheads, and so on, in short everything smaller than letter size. After a time I was assigned in addition to the larger rotary press, where we often printed ten giros at a time, which involved twenty numbering machines. I also got a chance to do some colour printing, which was mainly the paper dust jackets for books that we printed quite a number of each year, and Icelandic translations of popular English books such as Agatha Christie. My rotary machine also did all the perforating and die cutting that was required.

While at Gutenberg Printing Press, they installed the first continuous form printing press in the country. That winter, in February 1972, during Thorrablot (Þorrablót), the festival in honour of the god Thor, the plant held a dance at the Hotel Reykjavík Saga, the smartest hotel in the city. We were the only foreigners at the dance, and only a few of the printers knew any English at all. Joan got her evening gown from the neighbours in the flat above ours, who made all her own clothes. These were the same neighbours who gave us a vacuum cleaner when we asked to borrow one.

One of the foremen at work, Sveinar, was instrumental in getting me into the Reykjavík City Band where I played for a year.

In the meantime Carl and Linda started school. Linda's class had courses in English and many of the kids wanted to practice their English with her and she did not pick up Icelandic quickly. On the other hand, Carl's classes were in Icelandic so he learned the language much more quickly. On her part, Vicki did not want to go to high school here so she found a job in a metal furniture factory not far from where we were living. She took a lot of kidding as she was the only non-Icelander in the plant.

Joan meanwhile was picking up the skills of shopping in places where no one spoke any English. She got some assistance from Monika who took her to the Hagkaup, a sort of general department store on the edge of Reykjavík. They sold furniture and clothing as well as groceries and some of their prices were better than the local store.

We got to know the pioneers not only in Reykjavík but also in Hafnarfjörður (Hafnarfjarðarkaupstaður), and Keflavík as well. One worked on the fishing boats and brought fresh fish to us when he was in port. He even worked during the Cod Wars with Britain. One couple, who lived in Hafnarfjörður, were Roger and Patty Lutley, Americans. Patty and Joan became good friends and it was Patty who taught Joan how to collect the children's allowance that had to be collected in person and it varied from month to month.

We also became quite friendly with many of the Bahá'í youth who came to our place quite often and brought their friends. One was Óli Haraldsson who was in his early twenties and was an active teacher as well as being bilingual. During the late summer, a group of young people had gone on a Bahá'í teaching trip to western Iceland and had quite a number of declarations of young people in the towns of Borgarnes, Stykkishólmur and Hvammstangi. They formed a folk music group called Geysir. On their return from the tour they set off on the steamer *MV Gullfoss*, chaperoned by Don Van Brunt, another American pioneer, to teach in Denmark and Germany. Most were Canadian youth and they did not return to Iceland. Only Don and Gisli came back.

Óli was anxious to do follow up on the new Bahá'ís and I had the car. So the two of us made a number of trips to meet with these kids, most of whom knew no English. We went to Akranes first which is just across

the bay from Reykjavík but takes about two hours by car. We went to Akranes several times. On one occasion we stayed in a hotel there in a room with no lights or lock on the door, but were okay. Another time we returned to Reykjavík on the ferry that carried about six cars as well as passengers. You did not drive onto the ferry but were hoisted on board by a crane—a little nerve-racking the first time.

Another trip was to Borgarnes. We went to meet the Bahá'í kids there a couple of times and on one occasion took Vicki and Erna Stefánsdóttir, a Bahá'í about Vicki's age who lived in Kópavogur. Another time in Borgarnes, Óli and I had to sleep on the cement floor in a school where there was a rock band playing up in the auditorium.

The other place we went was to Stykkishólmur on the Snaefellsnes Peninsula. We stayed in the hotel there and met with some of the new Bahá'ís. We were not able to follow up with this community.

After we got the car, we made a lot of trips in the area. One of the first was to Thingvellir (Þingvellir) where we had been with the Bahá'í Conference tour. We were able to spend a little more time and we could enjoy the trip more now that we knew where we were. We also drove to Reykjanes Peninsular (Reykjaneskagi) where there is a lighthouse. What impressed us was the black lava with steam coming out of the ground everywhere—it looked like a scene from Dante's *Inferno*. We returned to Reykjavík via Grindavík on the south coast, then on to Krýsuvík and the hot springs. Along the coast road we ran into several hundred yards of mud where the water had crossed the road but the Volvo handled it okay. Then past Kleifarvatn Lake, supposedly a very deep lake and back home through Hafnarfjörður. On some of these trips one or other of the kids would come with us depending on what their plans were.

The first Christmas (1972) we were there, Larry Clark, who worked at the NATO base, invited several of the pioneers to dinner at their home in Keflavík. When inquiring where he got the turkey, he just said "Don't ask". Turkeys were very scarce in Iceland. There was one in a shop in Hafnarfjörður which I do not think they ever sold a turkey—they were so expensive. In fact, this is one thing very noticeable in Iceland—most things are very expensive. One of the reasons we were able to save money there was because we hardly ever spent money on clothes, eating out, or most imported food. There was, for example, what they called a pioneer box, a box of clothing that went the rounds among the pioneers. We would take from it

what we could use and put some things in that we had no further use for and pass it on. We also bought the odd thing at the Salvation Army which the natives rarely patronized.

Early in January 1972, Ragnar, our upstairs neighbor, came down to tell us that there was a big volcanic eruption on Vestmannaeyar (“Western”), an island just off the south coast where Vicki now lives. He invited us upstairs to watch it on television, and we found they were evacuating the island. The two or three thousand inhabitants were airlifted to Reykjavík with the aid of the US Navy helicopters at the NATO base. With the influx of so many, the prices of everything shot up overnight.

Later that spring we drove down the south coast to Vík í Mýrdal and we could see the volcano still erupting across the water. When the lava eventually stopped flowing, a number of men went over to clear the ash from those houses that could be saved.

We found out early in the summer that we would have to move. We did not know what to do until one of the fellows at work steered us on to a relative of his who had half a house to rent in Ásbúðartröð, Hafnarfjörður. We rented the place and stayed there a little over a year. It was there that later in the year we experienced our first earthquake. Joan was in the kitchen and I had gone to bed. She noticed the dishes rattling in the cupboards and I looked up and saw the chandelier waving back and forth and heard a loud rumbling like the sound of a subway if you are right over it. We found out later that it was centered near Grindavík and registered about 6.5 on the Richter scale. There was no structural damage as the Icelanders are accustomed to frequent earthquakes and their buildings are built accordingly.

In April 1972 there was a Bahá’í National Convention. Both Joan and I were elected delegates from Kópavogur. There were nineteen delegates elected from the four Local Spiritual Assemblies, which assured just about every active adult became a delegate. At the election I was elected to the National Spiritual Assembly of Iceland and shortly afterwards was elected Vice Chairman. During the following summer, the Chairman, Svava Einarsdóttir, was appointed an Auxiliary Board member and I assumed the chairmanship for the remainder of the year, a post I retained until we left Iceland.

The first summer we took our first major trip. We had been invited to stay with Forbes Campbell who was pioneering in Akureyri so

we set out in the Volvo—Joan, Carl, Linda, Tim and myself. The trip took us to places we had not seen before. Vicki had decided to spend her holiday with Gully so she was not with us. We made our headquarters at Forbes' place and made several side trips. One was up the west side of Eyjafjörður Fjord, to the village of Dalvík, the town of Ólafsvík and Siglufjörður, a town that was entered via a tunnel. The road around the fjords was a dirt road with no barrier and in many places it ran along the edge of a cliff—pretty scary. On the way back we stopped at one of the shelters that were built for stranded people. Three cabins contained some canned food, blankets and wood for a fire. The kids had a snowball fight—in July!

Another side trip was to Lake Mývatn in the north and then over a desert to Dettifos, the largest waterfall in Europe. We returned home around the peninsula through Húsavík where Tim showed us where he stayed when he worked there. The Lake Mývatn area has many strange rock formations and is a volcanic area. Just outside this area is a large sulphur mining operation.

During our four years in Iceland we had several distinguished Bahá'í visitors. Among them, aside from Dr Ugo Giachery mentioned above, we had a visit from Hand of the Cause of God, Adelbert Mühlischlegel (1897–1980) and his wife (the second, Ursula Kohler) who came to our place for a dinner and whom I drove around the area. He loved touring and followed everywhere we went with a map. I also accompanied them to Akureyri for a visit. There was Hand of the Cause of God, Dr Raḥmatu'lláh Muhájir (1923–1979) who had pioneered in South-East Asia. William Sears, another Hand of the Cause of God, came by private plane, belonging to one of the Canadian Bahá'ís. I took him to the largest newspaper, *Morgunblaðið*, for an interview. He was the first to visit our Bahá'í temple site just outside Kópavogur that was acquired the year we arrived in Iceland.

Also visiting were Betty Reed, a Bahá'í Counsellor from Great Britain, who came regularly, and Bahá'í Counsellor Amelisse Bopp (1921–2012) from Germany, who was helpful in organizing our secretariat over a period of several days.

Among those from Canada who came was Evelyn Raynor, whose husband Allan was on the National Spiritual Assembly of Canada.

14. Conferences and travel

As Chairman of the National Spiritual Assembly of Iceland, I had to visit the Faroe Islands a couple of times to try to arrange the establishment of a Hegira. There was one Local Spiritual Assembly there consisting entirely of pioneers from Great Britain, Iceland, Norway and Eskil Englebert Joachim Ljungberg (1886–1985) from Sweden who was a Knight of Bahá'u'lláh in the Faroe Islands (1953–1985). One trip was in the winter, and the trip from the airport to Thorshavn (Tórshavn), which was on a different island, was pretty scary over the mountains with slippery roads and no side barriers. Another trip I went with a couple of young Bahá'ís and we went to Vestmannaeyjabær, a town on the way to the airport, where I gave a talk to a hall full of people and which was translated by Svanur Thorklsson. The Bahá'í youth arranged entertainment for the children of the community during the afternoon and I gained the impression they were very appreciative.

The third time was to a Bahá'í North Atlantic Conference, which was arranged by us and was attended by Bahá'ís from Iceland, Britain, Norway and Denmark. We all slept in the school building where the conference was held. Other times I visited I stayed with one of the British pioneer couples. At this conference Joan came with me as well as Ásgeir. This was before he and Vicki were married. It was from this conference that I went on my month long teaching trip.

Each time we went to the Faroes Islands we had to stay a week because there was only a weekly flight to Iceland. On the winter trip the flight was held up one day because of weather and they put us up in a Faroese farmhouse overnight. I was the only person who spoke English and I did not understand either Icelandic or Faroese, but it was interesting.

While living at Ásbúðartröð, Hafnarfjörður, our house was just below that of Max and Mona Bossi, Bahá'ís who had returned from Akureyri. Max worked at Straumsvík, an aluminium plant just west of Hafnarfjörður. During the winter he would have to take the car battery into the house to keep it warm, but it did not seem to make any difference. Each morning we would see him pushing the car to the edge of a small hill on the road and jump into it as it got moving.

Vicki continued to work at the furniture factory while the two youngest started in new schools. Linda attended the big black high school on top of the hill while Carl continued in a new elementary school.

The first Naw-Rúz we were there, the celebration was held in a hall in Hafnarfjörður. Among the entertainers were Tim and Gisli who had teamed up after Gisli returned from Denmark. Gisli lived in Gardarkreppur, now Garðabær, the township between Hafnarfjörður and Kópavogur and where the Icelandic President's home was. We drove out there one time after the road was paved on the occasion of President Richard Nixon's visit.

Geoff and Barbara came over from Canada at this time and stayed with us. We tried to take them out to Thingvellir (Þingvellir) but could not make it as the road was blocked with snow. The interior of Iceland has spring later than the coastal areas; in fact they do not have a spring, summer starts April 21st and winter October 21st. These are the dates that you have to change your tires on the car from winter to summer and vice versa.

One Mother's Day, second Sunday in May 1973, we decided to drive up to Gullfoss. We went to Thingvellir (Þingvellir) and tried to take the road via Laugarvatn but it was snow-blocked. We had to backtrack and take the other route via Geysir. There was still much snow around but the roads were passable. When we arrived at Gullfoss we were the only ones there.

That autumn of 1973 there was a National Spiritual Assembly Conference to be held in Langenhain, Germany and we were asked to send two representatives. Erla Guðmundsdóttir and myself were chosen. Meanwhile, Mona Bossi wrote to her sister in Hamburg and made arrangements for me to stay with her family for a few days. I flew to Hamburg via London and was met at the Lufthansa office. They were a Persian family and one was an Afán, a descendent of one of the Bab's uncles.

During the days there, I was on my own and I explored the city. It was quite easy as they have a very good subway system. I visited all the sites including the waterfront of the River Elbe (one of the busiest ports in Europe), the Alster River, the Inner and Outer Alster Lakes in the city center, the Hamburg City Hall (Hamburger Rathaus, one of the few historic buildings that was spared during World War 2).

On leaving Hamburg, I flew to Stuttgart where I was met by the Slikers, American Bahá'í pioneers who had visited Iceland during the summer.

They lived in Esslingen, an historic town not far from Stuttgart. They were caretakers at the Bahá'í House there, one of the places 'Abdu'l-Bahá visited in Germany. We took one trip to Ulm, a city in the state of Baden-Württemberg and on the border of Bavaria. Ulm Minster has the tallest church spire in the world (161 m). We met one of the Bahá'í Auxiliary Board Members Ulm who agreed to drive me the 300 km to Langenhain the following day. On our way we stopped in Heidelberg where we toured Heidelberg Castle and drove by the printing press factory.

I was billeted in a bed and breakfast in one of the neighboring villages along with Charles McDonald and John Long from England, and we were bussed to Langenhain each day and back again. The meetings were held in the Bahá'í National Office of Germany which is adjacent to the German Bahá'í House of Worship. There were representatives of all the Bahá'í National Assemblies in Europe, together with the Bahá'í Counsellors and many of the Auxiliary Board Members. Erla flew into Frankfurt from Iceland via Luxemburg so we did not travel together.

While there we ran into Kristin and her husband Gisbret who lived in Baden but came to the center for one of the public meetings. We also had a Bahá'í worship service in the Bahá'í Temple. I remember meeting one Board member, Maija Pihlainen, from Finland who later moved to England with her husband for a few years, although I never had a chance to see her again.

The meetings were divided into three groups, one each in English, German and French. The French group was led by Counsellor Annelisse Bopp (1921–2012) who was the only multi-linguist. Our group was led by Betty Reed.

Following the Bahá'í conference I took the train into Frankfurt and from there I a plane to Copenhagen where I would transfer to Icelandair.

Unfortunately my plane was held up by bad weather (this was first week of November) and I missed my connection. As a result they had to put me up until the next day, including hotel room and meals and a phone call back to Joan in Iceland. During the day I did some sight-seeing around Copenhagen, including the Tivoli Gardens which, however, was closed owing to the lateness of the season. In the evening I travelled north to visit the Bahá'í House in Hallerup, the caretakers of which I had previously met in Iceland. The next day I returned to Iceland.

The Bahá'í teaching trip that I undertook following the Faroes Bahá'í Conference was a wonderful experience. I had to pay for my own traveling

expenses but my accommodation was provided by the Bahá'ís wherever I went. My first stop was Bergen, Norway, where I stayed with the Auxiliary Board Member for three days. I gave talks every evening but my days were free. While in Bergen I had a trip in the cable car up to the top of the mountain where one can see for miles with a good view of the city. I also was taken on a trip south to Trolldaugen, the home of Edvard Hagerup Grieg (1843–1907). We were in his house and saw the piano he worked on and also a workshop down a hill where he liked to meditate and there were the tombs of him and his wife in the side of the hill. Bergen has a really old section dating from the time of the Hanseatic League.

I traveled from Bergen to Oslo over the mountains by train, an eight hour journey and was met at the station. I also spent three days there and visited the Maritime Museum that had Thor Heyardahl's *Kon-Tiki* raft as well as an authentic Viking ship. I also saw the City Hall with its murals of the Nazi occupation and a tribute to Sonja Henie (1912–1969). In the Rådhusplassen, the main square, was the National Theatre where the plays of Henrik Johan Ibsen (1828-1906) were first performed. I also visited the town of As, 17 miles south of Oslo, where a Bahá'í couple lived.

From Oslo I flew to Stockholm where I was immediately placed on a train for Karlstad where I stayed with friends. The next day I went to Gothenburg where the main Volvo heavy-duty truck manufacturing plant is located. I returned to Stockholm where my hostess took me to one of the newspapers where I had an interview.

Stockholm has a huge underground shopping mall under the main squares. The city is built on islands and I had a chance to visit the old city where the Royal Palace is situated. One evening I gave a talk at Uppsala University where one of the Persian Bahá'ís teaches. I stayed in the Stockholm municipality of Solna, which is noted for their printing presses.

I took a plane from Stockholm to Helsinki. I was supposed to take a bus from there but the plane was late and the man that met me drove at great speed to catch up with the bus which had already left the capital. We eventually reached it at Lahti and away I went. We had a lunch break at Mikkeli which is largely a Gypsy town. I met no one who spoke English, and I am totally unfamiliar with Finnish. I eventually arrived at Savonlinna. At my first destination, a town quite close to the Russian border, I was met by my host, Helmut Grossman (1933–2017; later he was a Bahá'í Counsellor at Haifa, Israel). During the day we had an interview at the local newspaper and visited the castle there. Savonlinna is well known for its music festival in the summer.

From there I got a car ride to Kuopio. The topography here is a lot like Northern Ontario with lumber and paper mills the main industry. The friends there booked a berth on the night train to Helsinki where I arrived early the next morning. The berths in the bedrooms on the train are three-tiered and I was on the top. The other two occupants did not speak English so I slept most of the night.

When I got back to Helsinki I found I was billeted with a Gypsy Bahá'í who treated me to a real Finnish sauna while I was there. It was a fairly large family and I was well taken care of.

I flew from Helsinki to London on Finnair. When I arrived at Heathrow it was the first time I had to show my passport since leaving Iceland as the Scandinavian countries had a common market with free access between countries. I spoke at four Bahá'í centers in the United Kingdom. The first stop was at Henley where I stayed with the Hardys. At that time Mary Hardy was on the National Spiritual Assembly of the UK. My next stop was Kidderminster, a carpet manufacturing city in the Midlands. From there I went to Carlisle on the Scottish border where I stayed with a family outside the city on the Solway Firth. On the way I stopped off in Manchester where I spoke at the Bahá'í Centre and was introduced by Will C. van den Hoonaard whom I had previously met in Iceland. I stayed overnight with Joan's mom in Stockport. My last stop was Glasgow which was the only disappointing place on the itinerary. They had mixed up the dates and there was no meeting. The next day I flew back to Iceland from Glasgow airport.

Some other trips we took while we lived in Iceland included two that Joan took to visit her parents in England. Each time she took one of the girls with her.

One trip we took was up to the head of Hvalfjörður ("Whale Fjord") and then over the hills to Borgarfjörður. We went up the road as far as Reykholt, a village with a residential school which, like other residential schools, is used as a hotel in the summer. It was at Reykholt where Snorri Sturluson (1179–1241) lived while writing (or recording) the Norse sagas and the *Prose Edda*, which are Iceland's oldest literature. We returned via Borgarnes and Akranes.

Another time we went up to Stykkishólmur, the area where Eric the Red (Erik Thorvaldsson, c. 950–c. 1003) lived and we could see where his homestead was before he was banished and where Lief Ericsson (Leif the Lucky, c. 970s–c. 1018 to 1025) was born. We toured the whole of the Snaefellsnes peninsula, including driving around Snæfellsjökull, the extinct

volcano, which can be seen from Reykjavík on a clear day and which Jules Verne (1828–1905) chose to begin his *Journey to the Center of the Earth*. Some of the more spectacular sights were the large bauxite columns and the weird rock formations caused when hot lava hits the ocean.

One time when the Bahá'í Richard Hainsworth was visiting from England, we took a drive up Borgarfjörður and the Kaldidalur (“Cold Valley”) Mountain Road between the Þórisjökull and Ok (or Okjökull) glaciers. This road is not open all the time so we were lucky to be able to drive it. The north end of the road is marked as a fordable river bed; it turned out to have had a small bridge built over it since the map was made. We came out at Húsafell, a place where Icelanders sometimes come for camping and where there are quite a number of trees, albeit small ones.

Toward the end of our time in Iceland, we decided to take a trip to Skaftafell. This trip was impossible for cars until 1974 when a series of bridges were built over the glacial runoff rivers covering a distance of about 25 miles. We reached Vík (or Vík í Mýrdal) without incident and as we approached Mýrdalssandur we saw great clouds ahead of us. A car approaching us told us it was a sandstorm that could remove the paint off a car if we decided to proceed. We turned around and got a hotel room in Vík for the night. The next day we set out again and after crossing the sands reached Kirkjubæjarklaustur. Then we crossed the bridges. They were single lane with passing places every kilometer or so and were built of wood. We reached Skaftafell, but nothing was open there so after a time we turned around and returned to Hafnarfjörður.

One spring we took Blain and Doreen McCutcheon and Carl up to Borgarfjörður and up the valley until we came to a sign saying road closed. We did not know what to do since we had purchased half a salmon when we crossed Borgarfjörður on the way. We were sitting there when we saw a farmer coming down his lane whom we stopped and asked why the road through was closed. He said he did not know but a small Volkswagen had gone through earlier and had not come back so we decided to chance it. A little way on we found out why. Runoff streams had cut the road in several places. What we did was to stop, gather rocks and made a possible bridge over the breaks and drove very slowly and eventually got through. When we reached the Kaldadalsvegur turn we headed south and finally arrived at Thingvellir (Þingvellir). It was really beautiful in behind the hills.

One winter there was a Bahá'í school held at one of the union holiday cottages in Borgarfjörður during the Christmas break. I was to give a course so both Joan and I went, and Joan worked in the kitchen with Monika. These camps are separate cottages that are fully furnished—even to having books and magazines, and can sleep four to six per unit. They are centrally heated and quite comfortable. Classes and most meals were held in a large central building and we had to draw our linen from a central place. This was at the time of year when there is no daylight and there was snow on the ground and it was quite windy.

After the Bahá'í school ended, I had to leave early to get back to work, so one of the Bahá'ís who was returning by car gave me a ride. Instead of driving all the way around Hvalfjörður we took the ferry from Akranes.

It was pretty scary in the winter, with the snow blowing in a high wind and in the dark. The main bus took the long way around and when they stopped at Botnsskáli the people could hardly get back on the bus, the wind was so strong and the road so slippery.

During our last summer in Iceland, 1975, some of us decided to climb Mount Esja, across the bay from Reykjavík. We set out about 3 pm in the afternoon and arrived at the foot around 4 pm. We took the long way up from the back of the mountain and finally reached the summit about 9 pm. We took the short way down, which only took a couple of hours, while John Spencer went on ahead to go around to the other side for the car. We arrived home about 1 am in the morning. Beside John and myself, there was Blain and Doreen, Doreen's mother and Renata.

15. Adventures exploring Iceland

After working for a year at Gutenberg Printing Press, I was offered a better paying job at Leturprent Prentsmiðja (Letterpress Printing workshop), down the road. It was a smaller shop and was both letterpress and offset. The typesetting was sent out. We did most of the Post Office printing, other than stamps, and a lot of chocolate bar wrappers in full colour. We could work Saturdays if we wished if there was work to be done, but it was not mandatory. It was while working there that the printers had one of their periodic strikes and we were out for three weeks.

While there, Joan and I and the two youngest were invited on a weekend camping outing by the management of Gutenberg Printing Press, where I no longer worked. We took a safari bus to Thórsmörk mountain ridge behind Mýrdalsjökull Glacier and one of the lushest places in Iceland. Ordinary cars cannot get there because several glacial rivers had not been bridged, in fact cannot be because they are constantly changing course, so it was a real treat.

We pitched our tents and settled down. We then went for a walk over the hills to another campsite, and it was on this walk we thought we lost Carl. He went on ahead and thought he would take a short cut that did not work. It was also on this trip that he got his finger caught in the bus door when it shut, and after some first aid, had to wait till we got back to Reykjavík to have it seen to properly. On our way back we stopped to examine some lava caves that were quite a long walk from where the bus had to park. We did a lot of walking that weekend.

On another occasion we drove down to Vik and explored all around that area going into some back roads and also down to Dyrhólaey promontory to see some strange rock formations. Also went once in behind Hafnarfjörður and took a track off the main road to Djúpavatn (Deep Lake) where there were a couple of cottages.

A couple of times we went into the interior behind Hafnarfjörður five or six km to Helgafell, a rocky volcanic hill about 500 metres high. We tried to climb it but could not find the way. The last time we made

it while Carl, Vicki and Ásgeir went up a different way and beat us to the top.

It was while we were living at Hjallabraut that several Americans from the NATO base became Bahá'ís and they often came to our place where occasionally we held a party. They were all members of a helicopter crew. There were a couple of Americans living downstairs and we once invited them for dinner. Also the daughter of the Commanding Officer became a Bahá'í and she eventually married Svanur Thorkelsson, although they are now divorced. We also had our second earthquake there while Joan was shopping with the lady downstairs and the lights went out in the market and startled her friend.

On one occasion, in late September 1973, while driving along the south coast, we saw a sign pointing to Sólheimajökull (a glacier), 5 km away down a track to the north. We thought it a good opportunity to see a glacier close up so down we went. The road was terrible and in some places the road was under water and Carl, who wore his Wellingtons, walked ahead of the car testing its depth. We finally reached the end of the road where there was a muddy turnaround. The glacier was covered with volcanic dust from Vestmannaeyjar (Western Islands) and was not beautiful. We could not help thinking that if we were stuck or the car broke down, then we could be there till spring—we were the only ones on the road. However, all's well that ends well, and we got home safely.

We went to Vik several times as we were fascinated with the black sand and the rugged coastline.

After we left Iceland, we returned for a month in 1980. We stayed most of the time in Hveragerði with Vicki and Ásgeir. One day they took us for a drive up the Hvítá River valley past Gullfoss Falls to a new moving glacier from Langjökull (the "Long Glacier"). While there we went into Reykjavík and visited with Geoff.

Geoff had arranged a Bahá'í travel teaching trip to three places. The first was to Ísafjörður where I stayed with Inga Daw and met with the Local Spiritual Assembly there, which included Erna and Dagny, whom I had known before. From there I went to Akureyri. This was an interesting trip, since the plane was a ten seater, five on each side of the center aisle and the pilot collected the tickets like on a bus. The plane followed the road pretty well and the pilot had a road map. The plane window by my seat was broken.

At Akureyri I stayed at the hospital where a couple of the Bahá'ís were nurses. I met with some of the members of the Local Spiritual Assembly because many were unable to attend. The next day they put me on a local plane to Egilsstaðir and we flew over the new eruption at Katla, which I could plainly see and which I had visited by road four years earlier with the Reykjavík Symphony.

At Egilsstaðir we had to take a bus the rest of the trip to Neskaupstaður, which took over two hours traveling around the fjords and over the mountains. The bus took us through Seyðisfjörður and Eskifjörður.

I stayed two days at Neskaupstaður. One night there was a disco dance with Geoff who was the disc jockey. He had gone there directly from Reykjavík. Neskaupstaður was the place on the east coast that had recently had an avalanche which wiped out several buildings including the fish processing plant.

While in Reykjavík one night we had dinner with Roger and Patty Lutley who lived in Hafnarfjörður and who had been there when we lived there.

16. New beginnings and adventures

Towards the end of 1975 I lost my job at Leturprent Prentsmiðja—there was a recession and the foreigners were first to leave. For the next few months we were supported by the Bahá'í Pioneer Committee, and Vicki, who was still working, helped out. In the spring I learned about an opening at the British Publishing Trust as assistant manager. Therefore in May I was invited to the UK to an interview with the National Spiritual Assembly of the UK and a chance to look over the operation of the Publishing Trust. This went well. I had a medical and was able to stay at the National Bahá'í Centre in Rutland Gate and I traveled to Oakham in Leicestershire to see the office as well as the old warehouse in Ryhall and the new one in Kelton.

While in Oakham, John Long, manager of the Bahá'í Publishing Trust, took me on a tour of the area, including the area around Empingham and Edith Weston, which when we finally moved was under water as the Empingham Reservoir.

Unfortunately, when it was time to return to Iceland, I learned Icelandair was on strike and there were no flights available. For the next two weeks I was allowed to stay at the centre but then the National Spiritual Assembly had to meet and they needed the space, they arranged for me to stay with Bahá'í friends in Berkhamsted, just northwest of London.

During this time I was very short of money so I went to all the places I could see for free. I was within walking distance of the Victoria and Albert Museum, the Natural History Museum and the Geological Museum. I also went to the National Art Gallery, the National Portrait Gallery and the Wallace Collection and I visited the British Museum.

Finally I was able to return to Iceland and we began to make preparations to move to England. We arranged to send our books and other valuables via air freight through Loftleiðir¹ Icelandic. This did not cost anything as John Spencer worked there and was able to send it through on his allowance. The furniture that we wanted we sent by sea to Oakham via Felixstowe. In the meantime I undertook the tour of the Reykjavík Symphony to the north of Iceland.

¹ Loftleiðir is Icelandic for “air+way”.

We went to Britain in early summer to arrive in one of the hottest summers they had had for years. Linda and Carl came with us; Vicki decided to stay in Iceland as she was contemplating marriage and Tim also decided to remain and would follow us later.

In the meantime Geoff and Barb had moved to Iceland with their infant son and lived with us for a while. Barb did not like the winter and decided to return to Canada, leaving Geoff behind, who shortly found a new girlfriend. Barb and Geoff were divorced shortly after. So Geoff was also left in Iceland.

When we arrived in London we decided to spend a few days there and show the kids the city. We took a room in Earls Court and did some sightseeing including a tour on one of the double decker buses. We also took them to a play "Arsenic and Old Lace" at the Westminster Theatre.

On the last day I went to the National Bahá'í Office and arranged to move to Oakham. We went on the train and were met by John Long who had arranged accommodation for us on Mount Pleasant, next door to the office of the Bahá'í Publishing Trust, which had two employees and where I was to work. We made arrangements to rent a television and we had to buy a car. I made arrangements to get an Escort station wagon.

Prior to leaving Iceland we had made arrangements through the National Spiritual Assembly of the UK to attend the Bahá'í International Conference in Paris in August. Therefore Vicki and Ásgeir came from Iceland to Oakham and we all drove together to London. I had made arrangements to park the car with Moqbels in Harrow and took the underground down to the Bahá'í National Office where we were to travel in a group to Paris by bus.

We went first to Dover where we boarded the ferry to Calais. We arrived in Paris in early evening and were taken to the Hotel Spot which was our home for a week. The conference was held in the Le Méridien Etoile on the other side of Paris, which we had to travel to by Metro. We were met in Paris by Blain and Doreen McCutcheon who had driven from Iran. He had taken a job there the previous year with the United Nations. Their motor trip from Teheran was quite an experience.

We arrived in Paris on Sunday and the Bahá'í Conference did not begin till Wednesday so we had two days to ourselves. We went to the Eiffel

Tower, naturally, and went partway up, and the Jardins du Trocadéro across the river. We went to the Place de la Concorde where the Bastille once stood and spent several hours in the Louvre Museum where we saw the Mona Lisa painting, the Venus de Milo and the Winged Victory of Samothrace sculptures, among other items. Then we walked the full length of the Tuileries Garden to the Arc de Triomphe de l'Étoile (Arc de Triomphe).

During the Bahá'í Conference they laid on a boat trip on the Seine at night. We went up the river from the docks near the Eiffel Tower, around the Île de la Cité with the Cathedral of Notre Dame. It took about an hour and a half.

The last day of the Bahá'í Conference Joan had her purse stolen while sitting in the lobby of the Le Méridien Etoile. We lost nearly everything including travelers cheques, cash (quite a bit because Joan did not want to leave it at the house in Oakham) and the passports except for my own that I had carried in my jacket pocket. I had to go to the nearest police station that was open late at night, which was in Montmartre, to report the theft and I took a couple of the Bahá'í youth who could speak French. They had to issue us a temporary paper that allowed us to re-enter Britain.

We left Paris in the morning for the return journey home, which went without incident as Philip Hainsworth (1919–2001), the National Spiritual Assembly secretary, loaned us \$10 to tide us over. While at the Bahá'í Conference I was able to renew several acquaintances I had met in Scandinavia as well as those I had met at Langenhain earlier.

17. Oakham UK and side trips

We stayed in Oakham for two years. After a year my job was terminated, which resulted in my writing a letter of complaint to the Universal House of Justice in Haifa, Israel. The result was that the National Spiritual Assembly of the UK was required to move us wherever we wanted to go. Before my job ended we had moved from Mt. Pleasant to a house on Noel Ave, mainly because of Linda's health which had suffered because of the dampness in the old house.

After returning from Paris, John Long went on a three week Bahá'í teaching trip to Sweden and Finland and I was left in charge. On one weekend we received an order from Lowestoft in Suffolk and we decided to deliver the books and see a bit of East Anglia, and then went by way of Ely and Thetford Forest.

We did a lot of traveling around that first year. We went to Skegness, a summer resort in Lincolnshire, by way of Spalding, Boston where the famous "Boston Stump" is St Botolph's Church, and Tattershall. Tattershall Castle is a magnificent 15th-century red brick castle with octagonal turrets at the corners of the square structure.. We went to Grantham, where Margaret Thatcher (1925–2013) was born and where Isaac Newton (1643–1727) went to school, and to Woolsthorpe Manor in nearby Woolsthorpe-by-Colsterworth where Isaac Newton lived and watched the apple drop from the tree.

Among other trips was to Sherwood Forest, north of Nottingham, where the Charter Oak was where Robin Hood was supposed to have hidden and the church at Edwinstowe where he was supposedly married.

We went to Lord Byron's home at Newstead Abbey near Mansfield. While in Nottingham, we went to the castle and the old inn below that we had visited thirty years earlier when we were first married.

On some of these trips we took visitors from Iceland who turned up including Vicki and Ásgeir with Gully, Baldur Bragason and his wife, and Barbara and Svana dropped in once.

Occasionally we went into Leicester to Bailey's Nightclub where we saw such music artists as Acker Bilk (1929–2014); Dana Rosemary Scallon (b. 1951), known professionally as Dana; and the Brotherhood of Man. Other places in the area were Melton Mowbray, famous for Porkpies, Stanford, one of the oldest towns in England dating from the Danish days, and Peterborough. South of Peterborough was Stilton of cheese fame, and Fotheringhay Castle

where Mary Queen of Scots was imprisoned, tried and executed. We also visited battlefields at Naseby and Bosworth where the War of the Roses (1455–1487) resulted in the death of King Richard III (r. 1483–1485), and ended with the death of John de la Pole, the 1st Earl of Lincoln.

One of the conditions of my employment was that I would be secretary of the National Bahá'í Teaching Committee. As it turned out, Ann Moqbel was secretary so the duties became divided and I became recording secretary and Ann remained as corresponding secretary. This meant traveling to London once a month for meetings. The first few times I drove and parked the car in Hyde Park, but then I found it was easier for me to drive to Kettering and take the train to King's Cross where I could get an underground direct to Knightsbridge Station and then a short walk to the National Bahá'í Office in Rutland Gate.

One of the first jobs I had to do was to go to Bishop Stortford where George Ronald had his warehouse pick up a wagon load of new books and take them to the hall in Bromfield Road where there was to be a weekend Bahá'í conference. This was the first time I had driven in London with right hand drive, but I got along okay. Another time I went to Bungay in Suffolk to pick up galley proofs for a book the Bahá'í Publishing Trust was having printed there.

Another time I had to take a carload of books to a National Bahá'í Teaching Conference in Sheffield. I was beginning to get good at driving around strange cities. The first spring there I was elected a delegate to the National Bahá'í Convention, so the whole family went to Liverpool for this. We had a hotel room just around the corner from the Empire Theatre. We stayed on a day or two after the Convention and went out to Huyton where we were married and down Greydene Lane (?) where Joan lived. We also visited all three of Joan's nieces and nephews who all lived in the area between St. Helens and Risley.

On one day we went to Burghley House near Stamford, Lincolnshire, and since 1801, the home of the Marquesses of Exeter. David George Brownlow Cecil (1905–1981), 6th Marquess of Exeter, conducted the tour of the house; he was a former gold medal Olympian 400 m hurdler and was for some years on the British Olympic Committee. Burghley House is famous for its horse trials, and Princess Anne often competed there.

Another trip we took to Kirby Muxloe Castle, is a ruined, fortified manor house, west of Leicester and then to Ashby de la Zouch Castle, a ruined fortification in the town of Ashby-de-la-Zouch, where Carl had fun in the tunnel that ran across under the courtyard. The climax in *Ivanhoe* (by Sir Walter Scott) occurs at Lincoln Cathedral and includes a scene known as “the [archery] tournament at Ashby-de-la-Zouch”. We went on from there to Benton-on-Trent, noted for its brewery.

Another day we took both Carl and Linda to Alton Towers in Derbyshire where there is an amusement park as well as extensive botanical gardens. We had to leave fairly early as Linda took ill, the beginnings of her lupus, which seemed to have started while living at Mount Pleasant.

While in Oakham we visited Joan’s mother and sister in Stockport several times as it was only a couple of hours drive. On one occasion we had her mother down to Oakham for a visit. On one trip to Stockport, when Vicki and Ásgier were with us during Christmas break, we had an accident that totaled the car and obliged us to get another one, also a Ford Escort. No one was hurt but we had to cancel the trip and we spent several hours waiting for the police.

A couple of times we went to Belvoir Castle near Nottingham. It is a picturesque castle that was used in the movie “Little Lord Fauntleroy”. One of the artefacts kept in the castle is the bugle that was used in the Charge of the Light Brigade during the Crimean War (1853–1856). One time there we attended a medieval tournament of tilting and jousting. It was quite real and the St. John Ambulance stood by to treat injuries. The participants not only used lances but also fought on foot with broadswords and maces—exciting. Another time they had a re-enactment of a revolutionary war battle between the English and the Americans. They used to put on exhibitions regularly at Belvoir (pronounced “Beaver”).

There were other trips. We took Mandy, a friend of Linda, with us to Stratford-on-Avon where we visited Ann Hathaway’s Cottage. We also went to Kenilworth Castle in Warwickshire, made famous in Sir Walter Scott’s novel *Kenilworth*. In the same area was Warwick Castle, the ancestral home of the Earls of Warwick, which we went to several times, one time with Vicki and Ásgier.

There were many trips in connection with the Bahá’í Teaching Committee, most of which I attended on my own. One of the first was a weekend trip to visit the Bahá’ís in Kent, going to Canterbury, Ashford and Maidstone. I had also prepared a teaching seminar on the Bahá’í Covenant that I

gave in many places, beginning with Northampton. I presented it also at Lancaster University, Reading University and Cardiff College.

Other visits were made to the Bahá'í communities in Bristol and Bath. On this trip I took a side trip to visit the striking chalk-cut figure of the White Horse on the hill near Uffington, and also Evesham where Simon de Montfort, 6th Earl of Leicester (c.1208–1265) was defeated by the forces of King Henry III. I visited the Bahá'í community in Wandsworth (northeast of Wimbledon) in London and Crawley near Gatwick Airport. On the way home from Crawley I went to Henley to pick up Linda who was attending a Bahá'í youth weekend, passing by Shepperton Studios, Runnymede, and Eton School north of Windsor.

The Bahá'í committee took me elsewhere as well. One meeting was held in Glasgow and I went by bus from Oakham. It was a night trip so I did not see a lot. When I returned I had to come by Stanford and wait there for a bus to Oakham.

Several times we went to visit one of the members of the Bahá'í committee who lived in Moulton in Suffolk, 3 miles east of Newmarket. She was American and her husband was in the US Air Force stationed at Mildenhall, which we visited on one occasion. We took her and a friend to a Bahá'í teaching conference that we were holding at Conwy in north Wales. We had visited the castle there once before when we were first married and we wanted to stay an extra day or two to look around. Our passengers, who had to get to work, had to find their own way home. We went to Wales by way of Leicester, Cannock, Shrewsbury, Llangollen, and Betws-y-Coed.

After the conference we drove around Llandudno, which is on a little peninsula in northern Wales, and returned home by way of Denbigh. Denbigh is where Aldie Robarts was living but we did not call in. We learnt he lived there when we were in Liverpool at the Bahá'í Convention and we went around to the office of the shopper's paper he published.

On my first visit to Brecon in mid Wales to visit the Bahá'í community, one of the community members took me on a little drive around the area. We went first to Talgarth where one community member lived and then to Builth Wells.

18. A change of direction and a wealth of history

After ceasing to work for the Bahá'í Publishing Trust, I had to go to the unemployment office each week to collect my dole money and see if there were any suitable vacancies anywhere in the UK. They would pay my transport for interviews and during the year I investigated several positions. One of the first was to Barrow-in-Furness, which is a beautiful area near the Lake District, but we did not like the city or the printing plant. In any case I did not get the job. We drove through West Yorkshire (including Ilkley), and nearby Skipton (North Yorkshire), etc.

Another prospect took us to Brecon where I interviewed the paper there. I was glad I did not take that job as it went bankrupt within a couple of years. While there we stayed at a pub in Sennybridge, Powys, Wales, and watched some sheep dog trials.

One of the nicest trips was to Cupar in Fife, Scotland. It is north of Edinburgh and near St. Andrews. Instead of driving, we took the train, which was more comfortable. We had good views of Durban Cathedral and Edinburgh Castle. Thurston was nice but the offered living conditions were not suitable for four people.

The next interview was in Milton Keynes, Buckinghamshire, England. It is a new "toon" comprising several communities, including Bletchley, Wolverton and Stony Stratford. Less than an hour from London with a frequent train service, it would have been okay but I did not get the job.

There were a couple of other shorter trips we took while in Oakham. We went to Market Harborough, Leicestershire, to buy a sewing machine and we also went to Doncaster where we visited an Icelandic woman who was married to an Englishman and had become an inactive Bahá'í. We learned later that they had moved to Iceland, settled in the Vesturbær district of Reykjavík, and become active Bahá'ís again. On this trip, and also going through Newmarket, we were able to see the famous race tracks and stables.

Finally, in August of 1978, I received a letter from the Bahá'ís in Wells, Somerset, that contained a help wanted advertisement from the *Wells Journal*. I made arrangements to drive down for an interview and stay

overnight with Gordon and Giser McKenzie. I had the interview and was offered a job as proof reader beginning immediately. I said I had to return to Oakham but I was prepared to start work the first of the following week. The McKenzie's offered to put me up at their house until I was ready to move the family down. I also learnt that the District of Mendip would be able to form their first Bahá'í Local Spiritual Assembly as soon as Joan arrived.

I moved into a small room at the McKenzie's place the following weekend and started work on Monday. There were two of us readers, a John William and myself and we each had a copy holder. The *Wells Journal* also published two other weekly papers, the *Shepton Mallet Journal* and the *Mid-Somerset Journal* for Glastonbury, Street and the Cheddar Valley. We also did a lot of job printing, including law and medical journals and the printing for Butlin's holiday camps at Minehead and Barry.

When I interviewed for the job I had given the manager all of my qualifications, so after about a month I was transferred to the job of a linotype operator. The plant had seven linotype and three monotype machines to set all the type, as the paper ran an average of twenty-four pages a week. I started out setting straight copy, but soon I was setting classifieds and eventually tabulated material such as bowling scores. All of this stuff was in 5-1/2 point with the first word in bold face in the classifieds. The machines had features that we had not had in Forest, such as automatic lead feeders, quadders and we often had to change magazines. The mould disc had six moulds and it had adjustable ejector blades.

I would drive home back to Oakham every other weekend, leaving Friday night and returning Sunday night. It was about a three hour drive and I went via Bath, Swindon, Oxford, Silverstone (where the Formula One races are held), Northampton, Kettering, Corby and Oakham.

One weekend at the beginning of November I brought the family down to Wells for the Guy Fawkes parade. This is one of the biggest carnivals in Europe and there were an average of a hundred floats decorated very professionally. There were both tableaux and active floats. The carnival was taken to several communities in Mid-Somerset including Glastonbury, Shepton Mallet and Bridgewater. Some of the floats also went to London for the Lord Mayor's parade.

I got to know Christine and Jeremy Herbert who lived in Glastonbury. During the autumn we made a couple of trips since I had a car

and they did not. The first was to London. For this Jeremy rented a car and we drove in to the Alexandra Palace (which subsequently burnt down) to a meeting with Hands of the Cause of God, Rúḥíyyih Khánum and 'Alí Furútan. It was at this meeting we ran into Jim Willoughby, whom I had met several times—the first time at a Bahá'í summer school that first year at Geneva Park, Ontario, in 1953, then in the sixties he came for a weekend to our home in Forest, Ontario, and stayed two months; the third time was when we went to Iceland to the Bahá'í Oceanic Conference. Needless to say I did not tell him where I was living.

Following the Bahá'í Conference, we all went to the North London Cemetery to visit the Guardian's (Shoghi Effendi's) grave, which I had visited once before. While there we ran into both Hands of the Cause of God, separately. I was quite surprised when 'Alí Furútan said he remembered me from his visit to London, Ontario, after the Dedication of the Bahá'í Temple in Wilmette, Illinois, back in 1953.

The next trip I drove and went to the Bahá'í National Teaching Conference in Blackpool that was held at the Winter Gardens, Blackpool. It is quite okay to go to these places in the off season. We all stayed at a bed and breakfast with which we were not impressed, to put it mildly.

At the end of the year Jeremy and Christine decided to go pioneering again, this time to Brecon in Wales. They had come to the Mendip district from Gloucester. This time they settled in a little hamlet called Llangynidr near Crickhowell in Brecon district where they stayed for several years, and which we were able to visit from time to time as it was not too far from where we were living.

19. Glastonbury and lots of history

We were able to take over the lease of the Herbert's house in Glastonbury, so during the 1978 Christmas holiday period we moved in. We needed a new bed, even though the house was rented furnished, so we bought a new one in Shepton Mallet on New Year's Day 1979, the one we are still using. We lived in this house for about eighteen months and I drove into Wells to work every morning and took my lunch—it was only about five miles but I had to go through a couple of villages and you never knew when you were going to be held up by sheep or cattle on the road. It was no trouble and I always arrived home for supper on time except on one occasion when the Somerset Levels, a coastal plain and wetland area of Somerset, were flooded and I had to take a lengthy detour.

While living in Glastonbury we took advantage of the lore of the town, which is indicated by the sign at the entrance, calling itself the Isle of Avalon, the spot where King Arthur is supposed to have returned to die. In fact there are graves in Glastonbury Abbey reported to be of King Arthur and Queen Guinevere, discovered in the 18th century by King Henry II. Glastonbury Abbey is an old ruin that we visited many times. It was destroyed by King Henry VIII on the dissolution of the monasteries, but it was very old and said to be on the site of a church erected by Joseph of Arimathea after the Crucifixion of Christ. He was supposed to have stuck his staff in the ground at Wearyall Hill, a long narrow ridge to the south west of Glastonbury, and it blossomed into a hawthorn tree. A cutting from the original tree was planted within the Abbey, and it blooms every Christmas, the only one that blooms at that time of year. Some flowers are sent to Buckingham Palace every year.

Another prominent piece of Glastonbury is the Glastonbury Tor, a hill with the ruins of an ancient church on its summit. We climbed it several times.

There is said to be a tunnel running from the Abbey to Glastonbury Tor but no one has ever found it. Near Glastonbury Tor is the Chalice Well (or Red Spring) where the Holy Grail is said to be buried. There is a stream that runs from the Chalice Well down the hill that is reported to have healing qualities. In the house adjacent to the well, the second floor is set aside as the upper room representing the Last Supper.

On the main street of Glastonbury is the George and Pilgrim Inn, a hostelry dating back to the 12th century. There are also numerous shops dealing with the lore of the area, as well as books and articles dealing with the occult. Just below Glastonbury Tor, on the main road, is a public house called the Rifleman's Arms where Joan worked for nearly a year and Linda babysat the owner's two children.

The whole area of the Somerset Levels is loaded with history and legend. At one time the Somerset Levels were swampland and much of it under water, which is why the hills were called islands. Just northwest of Glastonbury, at Meare, were discovered the ruins of a lake village (Lake Meare Village mounds) that existed a couple of thousand years ago.

Between Street and Taunton is the "Isle of" Athelney, not really an island, but there is a statue of Alfred the Great (King Alfred's Monument). This is where Alfred hid out from the Danes in the swamps and where he is reputedly said to have burned the cakes. It was from here that he spied the enemy on the Polden Hills to the north, and where he eventually defeated them and established the Kingdom of Wessex, and the Danes were confined to the northeast of England.

Just south of Glastonbury is South Cadbury, and many consider Cadbury Hillfort (north east of Yeovil), Somerset, to be the site of the ancient Camelot. The "castle" is the ruins of an ancient Celtic hill fort on top of the hill that could probably house a thousand inhabitants.

Also west of Glastonbury is Westonzogland (south east of Bridgwater), and just outside is the field of Sedgemoor, the site of the last battle on English soil. It occurred when James Scott (1649-1685), the First Duke of Monmouth, invaded to try to overthrow King James II (1633-1701). The Duke advanced as far as Bath, but was turned back and finally defeated at the Battle of Sedgemoor. He was convicted of treason and beheaded. His followers were subsequently tried in Tauton and many were hanged. The Bloody Assizes were a series of trials, presided over by five judges, which started in Winchester.

Not far from Glastonbury is the Royal Naval Air Station Yeovilton, a large multi-role air station, and the site of the Fleet Air Arm Museum. We attended two air shows there and Carl went to more. It was here we saw the prototype for the Concorde and the first Harrier Jump Jets that were capable of vertical take-off and landing flights. At one show Her Majesty's Royal Marines Band Plymouth, was there and I was

able to talk to some of the players and requested a number that they played for me.

About 25 miles from Wells are both Bristol and Bath, both teeming with history. It was from Bath that I would take the train to London for my Bahá'í meetings. It was a non-stop trip and the train covered the 125 miles in a little over an hour.

Bath was known in Roman times as *Aquae Sulis* and was famous for its healing thermal baths located on or near three hot water springs. The old Roman baths have been excavated and they are open to the public. Just above was the famous Grand Pump Room where people at one time would drink the water that is pumped into the room from the baths; now it serves tea. Bath was very popular during the Georgian period and the architecture reflects that era, especially the Royal Crescent and the Royal Circus. They also have a well-known Museum of Costumes in the Assembly Rooms. There is also the Burrows Toy Museum.

We went to Bath often as it was more interesting and easier to move around than Bristol. One time we went to Claverton Manor where we saw a re-enactment of an American Civil War Battle put on by people from the American University there.

Just behind the thermal Baths is Bath Abbey and between the two is an open square where entertainments are performed. One time we saw a student performance of "Hamlet" done in 15 minutes, and when it was over they did an abridged version in about three minutes.

There were numerous trips we could take from our home in Wells in any direction that did not require overnight accommodation. Just outside Wells to the west is the village of Wookey Hole, where a series of limestone caverns in the Mendip Hills area can be explored. The Mendip Hills is a limestone range south of Bristol and Bath, in Somerset, which means caves are readily formed. One of our favourites are the caves at Priddy, on top of which there is an entrance into many unexplored caves. Nearby are the Priddy circles and Stone Age monuments.

Carl worked at a Wookey Hole restaurant one summer and it was close enough for him to walk to work. We did take the tour through the caves once, an interesting experience—not only for the caves themselves, but also for the auxiliary places of interest there. There was the fairground museum with its collection of historic fair attractions such as roundabouts (merry-go-arounds).

There was also Madame Tussauds warehouse, where were kept all of the wax heads that have been on display in the past in London. Then there was the paper making plant where paper was being made while we watched.

Further along the valley, which we have driven both above and below the hills, was Cheddar Gorge and the nearby Cheddar Caves named for the village nearby that also gave its name to its famous cheese. Then there was Burrington Combe, another small gorge that contains the famous Rock of Ages, which gave its name to the well-known hymn. Other places were Rodney Stoke, the birthplace of a famous British admiral (the first Baron Rodney was George Brydges Rodney (1718/19–92), a British naval admiral), Westbury-sub-Mendip, Draycott and Axbridge. The valley is also famous for its strawberries that are plentiful and produce two crops a year.

Further along it was not far to the seaside resort of Weston-super-Mare (or Weston) with its beach and pier and the nearby nature reserve of Brean Down promontory. Compton Bishop is the home of comedian Frankie Howard (1917–1992) who was often seen in one of the pubs in Wells. Another resort nearby was Burnham-on-Sea, a much quieter and more sedate place than Weston, which was always bustling. Between Wells and the M5 motorway there is a hamlet called Mark with its Mark Causeway to its west, another indication that the area was at one time under water.

The first large town encountered along the M5 motorway was Bridgewater, which had a public library with recordings to rent, and I went there often.

Bridgewater is also the gateway to Exmoor. About five miles from Bridgewater is Cannington; if you turned right to the north here you came to Hinckley Point Nuclear Power Station where Gord McKenzie worked. The next place is Nether Stowey where Samuel Taylor Coleridge lived (1797–1798) and wrote, and where there is a small museum (Coleridge Cottage). Further along is Holford where his friend William Wordsworth lived for a time. Next comes the harbour of Watchet, said to be where Coleridge composed “The Rime of the Ancient Mariner”.

Turning left off the main road on a back road one comes to the village of Roadwater where I gave a Bahá'í fireside once and farther up the hills there was a cottage in the middle of nowhere where I gave another Bahá'í fireside. It was owned by a thatcher and there was no electricity or running water.

Just west of Watchet is Blue Anchor where friends of ours, sort of contacts, lived and whom we visited several times. The next main town west is Minehead, a seaside

resort with a Butlin's holiday camp where we held a couple of Bahá'í proclamations as West Somerset was one of our goal areas.

Going east from Wells we come to the village of Croscombe where we were at one point offered a house but it was too small. Then there is Shepton Mallet. Shepton Mallet is on the Fosse Way, one of the old Roman roads that can still be seen in places. It is also the home of Babycham, a kind of champagne made from pears, and also where Jill and Farhad Shahbahram, two of our Bahá'ís, have a home and market garden. Still going east was Irlanmore with the East Somerset Railway and Nunney where there is an old castle, and then Frome, still in our Bahá'í district of Mendip.

On the Mendip Hills above here is Stoke St. Michael where Jill and Farhad lived for a time, and Oakhill Manor, Oakhill, with its railway museum.

Also Mells (west of Frome), a small village, and Mells Manor to its north was the home of the Horner family, about whom the nursery rhyme "Little Jack Horner" was written. The next town is Westbury, Wiltshire, which has a famous white horse on the hillside.

Going north from Westbury is Bradford-on-Avon where we held a Bahá'í proclamation and a fair exhibit at nearby Holt. Beyond that is Chippenham where there was a Bahá'í who was originally a Canadian. On the way is Lacock, a National Trust village that has been used in many films which need 17th and 18th century locales.

South of Westbury is Warminster where we also did some Bahá'í teaching. It is the UFO capital of England and more recently the site of many mysterious crop circles midway between Frome and Warminster at Longleat House.

Longleat House is the stately home of the Marquis of Bath and we went there several times. It has the oldest safari park in the world and also the largest hedge maze. It covers a large acreage and on the hill above there is a picnic site called Heaven's Gate that we used a couple of times.

The road from Warminster to Salisbury goes through Wilton, the original county seat of Wiltshire and the home of Wilton rugs. Salisbury Cathedral has one of the tallest spires in Britain and dominates the countryside. We toured the area but did not go inside because they charged admission. Just north of Salisbury on Salisbury Plain is Stonehenge, the very

famous pre-historic site, and to the east is Parton Down, the very top secret wartime bacteriological research centre.

Southwest of Salisbury there are a number of hill figures in the chalk, not really old, and Wardour Castle that we visited once.

On one occasion Wendi Momen came down and stayed with us for a few days. We took her for a drive through Dorset. We first went to Yeovil and then to Sherborne and from there south to Dorchester, the home for many years of Thomas Hardy, whose novel *The Mayor of Casterbridge* uses a fictionalised version of Dorchester as its setting. On the way we stopped to see the Cerne Abbas Giant, carved in the chalk hill as an old fertility symbol. In the Dorchester area we visited Thomas Hardy's cottage just outside the town. Further along the highway we passed through Puddletown, on the Piddle River, whose name (and many others along the river) was supposedly changed by Queen Victoria. There was Tolpuddle, the site of the Tolpuddle Martyrs,¹ during the fight for farmers' unions.

We then went north through Blandford Forum (the headquarters of the Royal Signal Corps is nearby at Blandford Camp) then on to Shaftesbury where we stopped for strawberries and cream, and took a picture at Gold Hill, often used in films and especially a famous commercial for Hovis Bread.

On another trip in that direction we visited Golsi Azizi in Lyndhurst in the New Forest; it was the year she and I were delegates to the Bahá'í National Convention in Harrogate. While in the New Forest we saw the wild ponies for which it is famous, and the place where King William II (1057-1100; known as William Rufus) was killed while hunting. We also saw the grave of Sir Arthur Conan Doyle (1859-1930) in the village of Minstead, 2 miles north of Lyndhurst.

We visited Winchester (where our Bahá'í Auxiliary Board Members lived) and toured Winchester Cathedral. The cathedral is beautiful inside and we saw the tombs of both King William II, and Jane Austin who lived there most of her life. Behind the cathedral is the famous Winchester School.

Another trip took us more or less in the same direction where we visited Corfe Castle on the Isle of Purbeck. This is where King John kept his mother, Eleanor of Aquitaine, as a prisoner. We also visited Chisel Beach, just west of Weymouth, where the Moonfleet Manor Hotel is situated, and the Abbotsbury Swannery a short distance north west along the coast. Further northwest is Lyme Regis, which we visited several times.

While we were in Wells, the film "The French Lieutenant's Woman" was produced there and the company repainted and changed the entire waterfront of the town to make it look like the 19th century.

¹ Six agricultural workers who were convicted and transported to Australia. Later returned to England after mass protests by sympathisers.

Northwest of Lyme Regis is Axminster, another famous rug manufacturing town, and between Axminster and Wells is Somerton, the ancient capital of Somerset.

As a member of the Bahá'í teaching committee I had several times visited other places to the south, including Exeter and Newton Abbott where one of the committee members lived. I also visited isolated Bahá'ís in Taunton and Milverton.

Along the coast of the Bristol Channel, west of where we lived, are a series of hills called the Quantocks, the Brendon Hills and Exmoor. They are really a continuation of each other and we have at times driven all around these areas. Along the road between Taunton and Watchet is the West Somerset Railway, which at one time carried iron ore down to the coast where it was taken across to Wales. This part of the country is apple cider country and every January there is an Apple Wassail¹ ceremony among the apple trees.

We also visited several places north of Wells besides Bath and Bristol. One time we went to Badminton, Gloucestershire, where they hold well-known Badminton Horse Trials and where the cross-country horse trials first began in 1949. To the northwest is Badminton House where Princess Anne and Prince Charles sometimes stay. This area is known as the Cotswolds, and when I had to go to meetings of the Bahá'í teaching committee with the chairman and secretary, we met at Leamington Spa where one member lived (Patty Vicker) and the other at nearby Kenilworth. I would drive via Cirencester and such quaintly named villages such as Stow-in-the-Wold, Moreton-in-the-Marsh, and Burton-on-the-Water.

I drove back one time through Broadway where I saw the horsemen and dogs getting ready for a fox hunt and through Evesham and Tewkesbury, both places where battles were fought by Simon de Montfort during the Wars of the Roses.

We also visited Berkeley, Gloucestershire, and Berkeley castle (on the south side of the town) where King Edward II was murdered. The home of Dr Edward Jenner (1749–1823) is just north of the castle; he is the doctor who pioneered the concept of vaccines and created the smallpox vaccine, the world's first vaccine. Berkeley Castle is the oldest castle inhabited by the same family (since the 11th and 12th centuries). At one time the Berkley family owned land over which they could ride all the way to London. The last piece sold was Berkeley Square in Mayfair, London. They also produced a famous philosopher, Bishop George Berkeley (1685–1753), after whom the city of Berkeley, on the eastern shore of San Francisco Bay, was named.

¹ Wassail is a beverage made from hot mulled cider, ale, or wine and spices.

Another time we drove across the Severn Bridge by Chepstow Castle and up the Wye Valley as far as the ruins of Tintern Abbey made famous by the poet William Wordsworth.

To the northeast we sometimes visited Aveberry on the A4 motorway east of Chippenham. It is known for an ancient circle of stones about a mile in diameter. The village is in the centre of the circle and was made famous by the film "Children of the Stone". Many stones are now missing, but enough remain to tell where they were and also an avenue of parallel stones leading from the circle to Silbury Hill, the tallest prehistoric, human-made mound in Europe and one of the largest in the world, the purpose of which remains unknown. West Kennet Long Barrow, an ancient burial site, is 0.5 miles southwest of Silbury Hill.

Southeast of Marlborough (1.3 miles) is Savernake Forest. Five miles southeast was Totnam Lodge (the present building is Tottenham House), home of the Seymour family (including Jane Seymour, the third wife of King Henry VIII). All along this part of the Wiltshire Downs are various figures carved in the chalk hills by removing the thin layer of soil and grass from the chalk underneath.

Several times we visited the Herberts, the couple who occupied the house in Glastonbury before we moved into it. Christine was also a member of the Bahá'í National Teaching Committee, and they had moved to the Brecon District as Bahá'í pioneers. They settled in a cottage in the village of Llangynidr on the River Usk about halfway between Brecon and Abergavenny. They were usually weekend trips and about a two hour drive from Wells. We would drive through Bristol, onto the M4 motorway, the Severn Bridge, via Chepstow Castle and Raglan Castle.

One time there, Jeremy, who was a Bahá'í Auxiliary Board Member Assistant, and I went over the hill above Llangynidr to Tredegar and down the valley to Blackwood and Newbridge where he contacted some of the new Bahá'ís who lived there. We came back via Ebbw Vale. One drive from there was into Brecon and around the Brecon Beacons to Merthyr Tydfil, then along the top of the valleys.

On one occasion they took me north past Builth Wells, Wales, to the Elan Valley Reservoirs. There are three of them and they supply most of the water for the West Midlands. The scenery throughout Wales is pretty spectacular. It was there I saw a rook for the first time, a very large type of hawk.

One time Christine took me through some back roads through the Black Mountains. We visited the Church of St Martin at Cwmyoy (rural parish in Monmouthshire, Wales), parts of it have settled so it appears quite crooked on the inside. We also stopped at

the ruins of Llanthony Priory. Beyond Hay Bluff (Welsh Penybegwn) where a lot of sportsmen do hang gliding, is Hay-on-Wye, which has the greatest number of book stores, new and used, in the UK.

20. Holidays around Britain

While in Somerset we took a holiday each year. In 1980 we went to Iceland for a return visit, and in 1982 we went to Canada for three weeks—more of this later.

In 1979, the first year we were in Glastonbury, Joan and I took a one week vacation in a holiday camp in Ilfracombe on the North Devon coast. While there we took side trips every day. One day we toured Exmoor and we visited Malmsmead and the Church of the Blessed Virgin Mary at Oare, Lynton, both associated with *Lorna Doone* by Richard Doddridge Blackmore (1825–1900). We climbed Dunkery Beacon, the highest point on Exmoor, and we visited the Tarr Steps, an ancient stone clapper bridge across the River Barle in the Exmoor National Park, northwest of Dulverton.

On the way to Ilfracombe we went through Porloch, east of Minehead, with its famous hill that is too steep for cars with trailers, who have to take an old toll road around the hill. We took the alternate route on another occasion when Vicki and Ásgeir were visiting. There were more steep hills at Lynton and Lynmouth. These steep hills have escape routes, consisting of several dozen metres of sand that will stop vehicles whose brakes fail on the downgrades. As well as the main road we also took the coast road.

Another day we headed south through Barnstaple and Bideford where we left the main road and took the secondary road through the Taw estuary to the towns of Appledore and Westward Ho!, Devon. From there we went to Clovelly, a village on the coast with a very steep street impassable for cars. We walked part way down. This place is associated with the writer Charles Kingsley who lived here for a time while his father was vicar. He is most famous for *The Water-babies*.

From there we followed the coast down to Tintagel whose castle is associated with Merlin and King Arthur and his father Pendragon, and supposedly Arthur's birthplace. We did not walk all the way down to the castle, which is on a cliff overlooking the sea. It was just too much of a climb and it was cold and windy.

Another time we drove down to Dartmoor and had a flat tire in Princeton, the site of the maximum security prison, and were there for a couple of hours. Then we went to the village of Widecombe in the Moor, famous for

the folk song about Widecombe Fair; and Hound Tor (a heavily weathered granite outcrop), made notable by Arthur Conan Doyle in *The Hound of the Baskervilles*. On the upper elevations it was quite foggy, which made for quite an eerie atmosphere.

In 1981 we took a large trailer at a holiday camp in Perranporth, Cornwall, for a week. This place had laundry facilities and a couple of night clubs where there was entertainment every night. The camp was on top of a hill and sometimes Joan and the kids, Linda and Carl, walked down to the beach, which was quite wide and sandy.

On the way down there we went across the top of Dartmoor through Launceston, the ancient capital of Cornwall. Then across Bodmin Moor where we stopped at Jamaica Inn, Bolventor, made famous by Daphne du Maurier (1907-1989) in her adventure novel *Jamaica Inn*. Nearby to the south is Dozmary Pool, the legendary small lake where the "Lady of the Lake" rose out of the lake with the second Excalibar sword for King Arthur. It was supposed to be bottomless but actually it is not very deep.

Each day we took side trips. Perranporth was fairly central so we could cover the entire county. One day we drove along the north shore to St. Ives, which has become quite an artistic colony. From there we went to Land's End, the westernmost point on mainland England. It was quite a cold and windy day so we did not stay long outside. On the way home we stopped in Penzance and saw St. Michael's Mount, a historic castle, garden and island community off the coast of Marazion in Cornwall. We came home through Helston, the home of the well-known Cornish Floral Dance. We passed many abandoned tin mines, especially around Camborne and Redruth.

Another time we went to the Lizard Peninsular where there is a large lighthouse. It is the most southerly point in England. On the way we passed a large radio telescope facility. We traveled by back roads to Helford and visited Frenchman's Creek, also made famous by Daphne du Maurier who lived in Cornwall and was well acquainted with the county.

We stopped in Falmouth and walked down to the beach there and saw Pendennis Castle. Finally we stopped in Truro, the county seat with its modern cathedral.

Another day we went to Newquay, not too far up the coast from Perranporth, and a much larger place with a big amusement area which pleased the kids. We came home to Wells via Liskeard and Tavistock and across Dartmoor.

The third holiday we had in Britain was in 1983, the same year we returned to Canada. By this time we had sold our car and had a real cheap one for the rest of our stay in England. This time Linda came with us as Carl was unable to come. We booked a trailer in Portmadog in North Wales. It was touch and go every morning to see if the car would start.

This time we went via Brecon and Builth Wells to Rhayader and across Wales to Aberystwyth via the Devil's Bridge. We then went north via Machynlleth, past Cadair Idris, the second highest peak in Britain, to Dolgellau. Then via Barmouth and Harlech to Portmadog.

One day we took Linda to Portmeirion, a fantastic folly tourist village with many styles of architecture that was used extensively in the TV series "The Prisoner". Joan and I had been there once before and never grew tired of visiting the place.

Another time we took her to Caernarfon and its famous castle. Then we drove to Bangor and crossed the Menai Straits to the Anglesey Island where we visited Beaumaris Castle, another of the castles built by King Edward I when he conquered Wales. We also visited the town of Llanfair Pwllgwyngyll, the place with the longest name anywhere. The railway station still exists and you can buy tickets although the trains do not run anymore.

Back to Caernarfon where we drove to Llanberis where we took the train up to the summit of Mount Snowdon, the highest point in the British Isles, 1,085 metres. It was up grade all the way and the train had to stop half way up to take on more water. At the top there is a restaurant and there were a lot of people up there. There are many paths to walk to the top but it would be quite a walk and could be dangerous if the weather changed.

From Llanberis we went up the pass to Capel Curig and Betws-y-Coed and back to Portmadog. On the way we stopped at Blaenau Ffestiniog where there are slate mines and no trees. This is the terminus of a mountain railway that runs to and from Portmadog, a distance of over 12 miles.

Another time we went to Betws-y-Coed via the other side of Snowden through Beddgelert, a pretty town in very mountainous country. We also drove the coast road from Caernarfon through Pwllhel and Criccieth to Portmadog.

21. Homeless and holidays abroad

In 1980 we received a letter from Geoff in Iceland enclosing air fares for Joan and myself to visit Iceland. We were uncertain about it because we had received a letter from the owner of the house in Glastonbury, wanting the home back. We consulted the Somerset Council and they said there would be no problem so off we went.

When we returned we found ourselves homeless as we had been evicted. We hastily contacted the Somerset Council and also our local Member of Parliament and we were moved into a temporary shelter in Shepton Mallet. It consisted of a kitchen, large living room and a small pantry that Carl used as a bedroom. Linda slept in the living room and we slept in the kitchen. We had one storeroom for furniture downstairs and the bathroom was down the hall.

While there we were visited quite surprisingly by Tony Marsolais who had been on holiday in Spain and was now in the George and Pilgrim Inn in Glastonbury. How he found us, he would not tell us but he stayed with us for several days. We were quite crowded.

It was also while here I developed a rash all over my torso that the local doctor could not identify. It did not cause any particular discomfort and I did not miss any work. I had to go and visit a dermatologist at the Royal Victoria Hospital in Bath. I visited him several times; he found out what it was and was told it would disappear by itself. It did after a couple of weeks.

From Shepton Mallet we were moved into a Somerset Council house on Hervey Road in Wells. We had looked at a house in Croscombe (between Shepton and Wells) but it only had two bedrooms. The house in Wells needed considerable work, including carpets throughout and we had to put in some portable heaters to keep warm. We walked home from downtown through the cathedral grounds and past the Cathedral School, famous for its music program.

We had been there barely a year when the Somerset Council told us they were going to remodel all the houses on

Hervey Road. They were fairly old and in need of upgrading. They offered to move us to a new council estate in Davies Court further from downtown Wells, but much better and larger. We decided to stay in the new place even though the rent was higher. We were there for two years.

When we visited Iceland, we took the train from Bath to Reading where we traveled by bus from there to Heathrow. We thought we would miss the plane as our luggage came on a later bus and it was touch and go.

We landed in Keflavík and were met by Vicki and Ásgeir Einarsson who took us to their home in Hveragerði. We stayed there most of the two weeks. One day they took us up the Hvítá River past Gullfoss and behind Langjökull, the "Long Glacier", where they heard there was a new glacier flowing. The two of them walked up the hill that was some distance away while Joan and I stayed down by the river.

We stayed with Geoff in Reykjavík a couple of nights. Geoff had arranged for me to take a Bahá'í travel teaching trip. I went from Reykjavík airport to the first stop, Ísafjörður. I was met and stayed overnight with Inga Dan who had pioneered there. We had a meeting in the evening and renewed acquaintance with Erna and Dagny, both of whom were married with young children by that time.

The next day I took a plane from Ísafjörður to Akureyri where I stayed overnight at the hospital where a couple of nurses were Bahá'ís. It was a fairly small meeting due to other commitments. The flight was a new experience. The pilot collected the tickets on the plane that only seated ten people, five on each side. The window by my seat was broken so it was a breezy trip. We pretty much followed the road as we were not very high.

The next day I got another plane which took me to Egilsstaðir. We flew over Kaffa, the newest volcano that was spilling out lava as we passed. At Egilsstaðir we took a bus that took over two hours to get to my destination, Neskaupstaður, going by way of Eskifjörður (or Eskifjörður) and Seyðisfjörður. I was in Neskaupstaður two nights, staying with one of the Bahá'í friends there who took me on a drive up the valley one day. I held a Bahá'í deepening one night and the other night was a dance at which Geoff, who had gone on ahead, was the disc jockey. Then back to Reykjavík.

The morning we were to leave Iceland, John Spencer offered to take us to the airport but we must have got our wires crossed because even when we went to the Hótel Loftludor the last bus was leaving and no John Spencer. Eventually we started to panic and got in touch with his home and finally got a ride to Keflavík with one of the Bahá'ís. We barely made it as they were holding the plane for us.

Getting back to Bath was no easier. We could not find our train ticket stub and they were not going to let us out even though we were vouched for by Jill and Farhad who had come to Bath to meet us and bring us back to Wells.

The holiday in 1982 was to Canada. Carl and Linda had very little memory of their home as they were so young when we left for Iceland. We had three weeks, so we booked our flights and left London from Gatwick. We got a bus from Bristol that took us all the way to the airport, which is near Crawley in Surrey.

We landed at Toronto Pearson International Airport and were met by Larry who had arranged to meet us ahead of time. He took us to Sarnia via the 401 and the new 402 that had been built after left Canada ten years earlier.

Larry lived in an apartment block on Devine Street where we met his two kids Tina and Bruce, the latter of whom was a real pest at that time. Larry and Gladys took us to the new mall downtown (it was the first indoor mall we had ever been in). While there I contacted the secretary of the International Symphony Orchestra, Sarnia, and I was able to get a ride to a rehearsal in Port Huron. There were only a few of the old players still with the orchestra.

We had decided to go to Alberta and visit Paul who lived in Red Deer at that time. We traveled out west by bus in order to give the kids a chance to see something of Canada. It took three days to get to Calgary and on the way Carl met Cathy who was also going to Calgary. We were met at the airport by Paul who took us to Red Deer. While we were there we attended a Bahá'í fireside and visited the high school where one of the Bahá'ís was a teacher.

Paul also took us along with Michael to Drumheller, Alberta, where the big dinosaur fossils were discovered. We drove around and saw some of the

Hoodooos (a group of stone columns with cap rocks) in the area. Another time he took us into the mountains past Sylvan Lake to the Rocky Mountain House where a Bahá'í resided. We returned to Red Deer by a different route.

When it was time to return, we flew to Toronto where we were met by Tony Marsolais who had arranged rooms for us at the YMCA on College Street. One evening we had dinner at the home of his new girlfriend. During the day I took Carl to the Ontario Science Centre while Joan took Linda to Casa Loma, a Gothic Revival castle-style mansion and garden in midtown Toronto. Carl also went to the top of the CN Tower¹ on his own.

We returned home via Gatwick and Bristol, where we discovered we had come back a day earlier than we were expected so we had to call Farhad, get him out of bed on a Sunday morning and come to Bristol to pick us up.

¹ Concrete communications and observation tower in Toronto.

22. More travels around Britain

There were many trips I had to make as a member of the Bahá'í teaching committee. These were usually in the south west, but I also at times had responsibility for Wales and the Welsh Marches. On one trip both Joan and I took a weekend and went to visit the Bahá'ís in Stoke-on-Trent. This is the area known as the Potteries (including Wedgwood, Spode, Royal Doulton, and Royal Stafford). We visited and toured the Wedgewood. A lot of the decorating is still done by hand.

One time when we visited Joan's mother and sister in Stockport, we returned via Wales traveling via Welshpool, Newtown and Llandrindod Wells.

One weekend, we had a Bahá'í teaching conference at Llandrindod Wells, which at one time was a famous spa town. It was attended by Bahá'í friends from south Wales, Hereford and Worcester.

One weekend I visited the Bahá'ís in Truro. This was in the winter and we took a drive over to the seaside resort of Perranporth, Cornwall, which at that time of year was quite deserted. In the evening we picked up some Bahá'í friends in St. Ives and drove to Penzance where the meeting was held. I drove down this time by way of Plymouth where I picked up a lady and took her to her sister's place in St. Austell.

I had another meeting with the Bahá'ís in Swansea which was also attended by those from Llanelli, not far away. During the day I took a drive around the Mumbles, headland on the western edge of Swansea Bay, on the southern coast of Wales.

I attended most of the Bahá'í National Conventions to which I was a delegate on two occasions. It was held in Harrogate twice and Joan came once; that was the last spring we were in England. At the Bahá'í Convention in Watford, I was named to compose a cable to the Universal House of Justice, along with Marian Hoffman (of George Ronald Publishers) and another Bahá'í. At the one that was held in Great Malvern (an area southwest of Worcester) I was appointed chief teller for the election of the National Spiritual Assembly of the UK. It was at Malvern that we woke up on Sunday morning to about a foot of snow on the ground. I had great difficulty getting to the conference hall, our car having to be pushed a couple of times. Very few Bahá'ís showed up that morning and right after lunch I set out for home.

By the time I got down off the hills there was no snow. This was quite surprising because it was the end of April and it was the first snow we had had that winter.

Most of the Bahá'í National Teaching Committee meetings were held at the Bahá'í National Office at Rutland Gate, London, but when the National Spiritual Assembly of the UK was meeting the same weekend we had to go elsewhere, except when they wanted to meet with us, which happened about once a year. On one of these occasions we met at a bed and breakfast in Ealing, West London, where the food was pretty grim.

Other times we met at the Bahá'í Centre in Liverpool, and once at the University of Newcastle. I traveled by train to these places, because it turned out to be more convenient. The trains left from Bristol. When we met at the Manchester Bahá'í Centre, Joan and I drove and we stayed with her mother.

In 1982 I had to chair a Bahá'í National Teaching Conference in Cheltenham along with Jodi Munsiff, who had visited our place in Forest, Ontario, when she was a little girl. I drove back and forth daily from Wells as it was only about 75 miles away and there was a motorway nearly all the way.

The year before I represented the Bahá'í National Teaching Conference at a North Sea Teaching Conference held in Saxmundham in Suffolk. There were representatives there from Holland, Belgium, Denmark, France, as well as the UK. I drove there via London taking the inner ring road (the M25 motorway had not been built yet) and through Chelmsford, Colchester and Ipswich. It seemed to take forever so when I came back I traveled via Bury St. Edmonds, Cambridge and Oxford. It was further but took less time. This was on the Easter weekend, so it was a three-day affair. We all stayed at the homes of Bahá'ís in the area.

One weekend I was invited along with a dozen or so other people to the home of Norman Stanley Bailey, an operatic bass-baritone, for a conference on the arts. He had purchased a large house in the country near Reigate, Surrey. Some of us stayed in the 8-room gatehouse but we had our meals in the main house. In the house he has a fully equipped recording studio. Joan and I had visited them when they lived in Bedford, while we were in Oakham. At that time he was preparing for the role of Amfortas in Parsifal for the Royal Opera, Covent Garden, central London.

There is a castle in Farleigh Hungerford, which is at the north-east corner of Somerset where Avon and Wiltshire come together. We were there a couple of times. There were antique fairs that we attended in Mells, Frome, and Nunney, and we also visited Nunney Castle.

During the summer of 1983, Linda, Joan and I took day trips to the Isle of Wight. These were bus trips direct from Wells and were quite reasonably priced. We went by ferry from Southampton to Cowes, Phillip Island. The ferry ride was interesting as the Queen Elizabeth 2 was in port at the time and the Royal Yacht Britannia was at anchor in the Solent. The first trip was a journey around Phillip Island via Ryde, Sandown and Ventnor to Blackgang Chine Family Theme Park), which is right on the Channel. We did not walk down to the Blackgang beach, which was quite steep. We next stopped at Brighstone, an old fashioned village where even the post office is thatched and rose covered. Our last stop was at Yarmouth before returning to Cowes for the trip home.

The second trip was during Cowes week and the Solent was full of sail boats preparing for the regatta. It was a shorter trip so we had more time at the bus stops, the first of which was at Osborne House, a summer home belonging to Queen Victoria. It had a Swiss type of chalet on the property that was a play home for her many children. The second stop was a Carisbrooke Castle where we had lots of time to explore. This is where King Charles I was held awaiting execution. From the ramparts we could see Parkhurst, near Newport, where one of England's main maximum security prisons is located. On the way home we returned via back roads and got held up in some village where we were stopped until one of the natives was found and asked to move her car which was parked on the street so we could not get by.

There were several events in Wells, including the annual Guy Fawkes Carnival, which was known all over England. In fact several floats were asked to take part in London's Lord Mayor's Parade. One May Day the market square was cleared of cars and a May Fair was held complete with a May Pole and Morris Dancers all in costume. Then one summer the Queen Mother paid a visit. We were so close to her car that we could almost reach out and touch her. Prince Charles also came to Wells from time to time as he was chairman of the Wells Cathedral Restoration Project.

I have already mentioned the performance of “Joseph and the Amazing Technicolor Dreamcoat” which was performed in the Wells Cathedral, in which Carl took part. And the two times I met the Bishop of Bath and Wells on behalf of the Bahá’í Community. It was around the time of the resumption of the persecutions of Bahá’ís in Iran.

Then there was the Siege of Wells. This was a re-enactment of a Civil War battle put on by the Sealed Knot Society. This is a volunteer organization that often performs in period films. There were about 1,800 of them who came, soldiers, horsemen and camp followers and they camped in the field behind our house.

23. Time to return to Canada

We decided to return to Canada in September of 1983. Larry had provided me with literature from the Department of Veterans Affairs (DVA), which meant I was able to receive a pension that would hold me over until I reached 65 when I would receive the Old Age Security pension. This time we hired a mover who came to the house and wrapped everything. We did not need to do anything except tell them where things were, and they were very efficient.

After they had gone we discovered that Carl's passport had been packed and panic stations were in order. We called the movers and found our stuff was already in the big container at Avonmouth. Carl and I took off and managed to retrieve the missing passport. Fortunately the container was not filled and they were very helpful to us.

Before leaving the staff at the *Wells Journal* presented me with the gift of a book on Somerset; and I also received a pen set from my snooker partners at the British Legion, which I had joined.

When we arrived at Toronto, flying from Heathrow, we were met by Larry who took us to his home in Sarnia where we stayed for a few days. At that time Bruce was only a little over two years old and was a real pill. From there we took the train into London and we stayed a few days with Ruth while I contacted DVA and Joan and Ruth went house hunting.

We finally found one, a duplex, on McClary Street, London, which was within our price range. We moved in in October but we had to threaten the landlord with the Department of Health before he would properly clean it up. Having no furniture we were helped out by several people including Gladys' father, Keith Greenham and Bob and Dorothy Smith. The place was pretty small for the four of us, but we managed.

The biggest disappointment was when our furniture and the rest of our household did not arrive until February, and then they wanted to charge us extra because we were a few miles beyond their limit, but we managed to talk them out of that.

In the fall I contacted a Dr Mayor who had an office around the corner on Grand Avenue and whom we still go to although he has moved a

couple of times since.

Before leaving England we had received a letter from the Local Spiritual Assembly of London and we contacted the secretary after we had settled in. I attended my first Bahá'í Feast at the home of Chet and Ruby Turner whom we had known before and who lived on Grand Avenue. At this Bahá'í Feast there was a by-election to fill two vacancies on the Local Spiritual Assembly and Terry Drakhs and myself were elected. I remained on the Assembly for about the next seven years.

In the spring Terry went with me to buy a car. We found one at a lot on east Dundas Street for \$1,500, a red Chevette, so I cashed in my life insurance policy and bought it. Terry also went with me for my insurance, road test and driving licence, and I am still with the same insurance broker who has also moved twice since his first office on Bradley Ave.

During that year we lived on McClary Street we would walk downtown as Eaton's was on Wellington (closed 1999) and it was the largest store in a small indoor mall. I also did quite a bit of walking along the river, which was close by and had a walking path its full length. Over several weeks I walked from Highbury as far as Springbank Park in the Byron district.

Joan and Linda would walk to the A & P Food Store on Byron Baseline Road (now Metro Supermarket and at a different location) for groceries and only when they had a lot to carry would they take the Richmond bus that stopped within a few houses of where we lived.

Both kids eventually got jobs, Carl in an electronics firm on Dundas Street and Linda in a video rental store, first on Baseline Road and later on Wonderland Road near Commissioners Rd. They both went to work by bus but occasionally when the weather was bad I would pick them up.

By fall, when we had been in that house for nearly a year, we decided we needed more room so we started looking for another house. The real estate agent we contacted talked us into buying rather than renting so Joan looked at a

lot of properties that were within our price range. I also went to see many of them. We eventually settled on the place we are in now, a townhouse in a condo complex, three bedrooms, one and a half baths, and a recreation room and laundry and storage in the basement.

We moved in in October and have been here since. Carl decided to go to Venezuela, where Cathy Khan was living, once he had worked long enough to pay for the flight. He had been corresponding with her since they met on a bus to Calgary back in 1982.

In May of 1985 we decided to take a trip down to The Maritimes and Linda decided to come with us and share expenses. We left on a Sunday and stopped overnight at a motel just outside the town of Gananoque, Ontario. The next day we drove down the St. Lawrence Parkway and took the Long Sault Parkway drive out into the St. Lawrence River, the other side of Cornwall.

We got on to the wrong road through Montreal and were held up quite a bit so we did not get as far as we had planned. We stopped at a motel in Plessisville, Québec, overnight. From there we carried on down the St. Lawrence on the Trans Canada as far as Rivière-du-Loup, Québec, where we turned south and stopped overnight at Grand Falls, New Brunswick. Our motel was right beside the falls. From there we followed the St. John River first to Hartland where we crossed over the longest covered bridge in Canada. It is a good thing there was no traffic on it as we found out it was a one way bridge and we were going the wrong way. Next we drove through the city of Fredericton instead of taking the city by-pass. We had thought of visiting the pioneer village at Kings Landing ,but it was not open yet.

We carried on to Moncton, New Brunswick, where we stopped for the night. The next morning before continuing, we visited the famous magnetic hill and experienced the sensation of feeling the car coasting up the hill. From there we went to Fort Beauséjour (renamed Fort Cumberland in 1755). It was cold and windy and there were very few people there but we wandered around anyway.

At Amhurst, Nova Scotia, we turned off the Trans Canada and followed the lighthouse route along Northumberland Straits through Pugwash and Tatamagouche to Pictou where I spent three months during the war. I did not recognize anything; even the dockyard, which was outside the town and where we were undergoing refit, was now inside the town. From there we

went through New Glasgow and east the Canso Causeway, then northeast to Baddeck where we got a good deal on a motel for two nights. The next day we followed the Cabot Trail through the Cape Breton Highlands National Park. The following day we visited the Alexander Graham Bell museum in Baddeck, which contains many of his inventions. Bell spent his last years in Baddeck where he experimented with aircraft and hydrofoils. His home is nearby and is still lived in by his descendants.

We went east from there to the Fortress of Louisbourg National Historic Site, which has been much restored and is inhabited in the summer by students dressed in the 18th century clothing. We were there on June 1st, the first day they were officially open. Leaving there we followed the south shore of Bras d'Or Lake back to the mainland and stayed overnight in Sherbrooke, Nova Scotia, on the west shore of Sherbrooke Lake, where it was pouring rain. Sherbrooke is another community that is attempting to preserve it as it was back in the 19th century.

The next day we followed the Nova Scotia south coast to Dartmouth, the first time we had been there since just after the war. The city has expanded considerably and we went out to the naval air station, now called HMCS 12 Wing Shearwater, but we could not find Marion Heights where we lived for nearly a year. We crossed the nearby, new Angus L. MacDonald Bridge to Halifax, but we did not stop there but went northwest up the valley to Grand Pré where the Evangeline Statue and church are located. We stayed the night to the west in Kentville.

From there we left Nova Scotia and drove up through New Brunswick to Campbellton. On the way, between Miramichi and Bathurst, the road was under construction and we lost a lot of time there. It was not a very nice place where we spent the night Campbellton.

In the morning we crossed into Matapedia, Québec, and decided to drive around the Gaspé Peninsula. We had a nice day and were able to see Île Bonaventure and Percé Rock. We stopped for a while in the town of Gaspé where my ship had put in for a boiler cleaning during the war. We continued on around the peninsula, which is a very scenic route, and we stopped for the night in the little village of Grande-Vallée where no one could speak English.

We went on the next day through Rimouski and Rivière-du-Loup until we reached Québec City where we stayed two nights. The next day

we took a well worth while sightseeing bus throughout the city. We covered both the upper and lower town, as well as the Plains of Abraham.

From there we drove to Montreal along the north shore of the St. Lawrence River. We hit the city at rush hour and it seemed to take forever to get through the city. Eventually we reached Ontario where we stayed the night in Gananoque and returned home the following day.

24. Illness and university

After coming back to Canada, I considered the idea of going back to university when I found it would not cost me anything for tuition as a senior citizen. So I went and secured a syllabus and found I could take a second year history course in music providing I had permission of the head of the department. I found out the head was Jeff Stokes so I made an appointment for an interview.

As luck would have it, before I could see him, I took quite ill and was admitted to hospital. I went into the emergency room and do not remember anything after that until a week later. I learned that I had been in the intensive care unit during that time with tubes all over me. Joan was with me a good deal of the time and when I came to in the recovery room I was transferred to a ward. I found out that Joan had called Dr Stokes and postponed the interview.

I came out of hospital after about five days and then went to the school for the interview. It went well and I started in September. I went to the registry office where they were able to obtain my transcripts from high school and the University of Toronto, but they could not give me any credits for the courses I took back then.

The only reason I can think of for my illness was as a result of the stress and pollution I experienced when we went through Montreal during rush hour.

I obtained a parking permit for the university and parked the two days a week in the Medway parking lot. The course itself was a lecture, one with tutorials and my tutor was Jeff Stokes. The other professor was Philip Downs. It was a large class of about 75 students, and I was the only one over 25 years of age. I only got to know a couple of kids that first year but they seemed to accept my presence with no difficulty. I had to write three essays that first year, something I had not done for nearly 50 years.

Before starting school, I took a two-day course at the public library through Fanshaw College to prepare me, consisting of how to take notes, prepare for examinations, etc., and I think it helped. I ended the year with a B average.

25. A trip back to Britain

The next year, 1986, we decided to go back to England. I would be 65 that year and I wanted to sort out my pension, both from the paper and from the government. I had some money in the bank in Wells and it would be a good opportunity to close the account.

We left around the 25th of May and flew into Cardiff airport because it was close to Wells. We had arranged to rent a car for a month and we picked it up in downtown Cardiff. I had been feeling not all that great and by the time we got to the service centre just over the Severn Bridge, I was bushed. I sat in the parking lot while Joan got some coffee.

We went on to Wells where we had arranged to stay a few days with Gwen and Gordon McKenzie. Since we had returned to Canada they had moved out to Coxley, a little village between Wells and Glastonbury. While there I went to the bank in Wells and to the *Wells Journal* and renewed acquaintances. Another day we drove over to Shepton Mallet to visit Jill and Farhad Shahbahram who of course knew we were coming. We learned that one of the men that worked at the *Wells Journal* had become a Bahá'í since we left. When we arrived at Wells, I went on Prednisone medication and it seemed to help.

While in Wells, we went to Bath. I left Joan there while I took the train into London where I sold some of my stamps of Greece. I also visited the Bahá'í National Office at Rutland Gate and took the 4 o'clock train back to Bath. On our way out of Wells we stopped to visit Josie at the Rifleman Arms where Joan worked for a while.

After a few more days in Wells, we set out. We drove south through Glastonbury and Street to the M5 motorway and past Taunton. We left Exeter and crossed the north boundary of Dartmoor and entered Cornwall at Launceston. We spent a short time at Jamaica Inn. From there we drove south to St. Austral and then turned back east and visited the castle at Restormel, just north of Lostwithiel. From there we went northeast to Liskeard and Tavistock, then through the Dartmoor National Park and spent the night at a B & B at Bovey Tracey.

The next day we went to Exeter and drove along the Dorset south coast. We stopped for an hour or so in Lyme Regis, which we had visited

several times before. From there we drove east through Dorchester, bypassed Bournemouth, Southampton and Portsmouth, then through Chichester and on to Brighton, East Sussex. Here we left the south coast and went to Lewes and then to the opera house at Glyndebourne. There was a performance about to begin and we could see over the fence the patrons in their evening dresses strolling in the garden before the curtain went up. The theatre is located in an old manor house. We did not attend; as well as not being properly dressed, it was much too expensive.

We left there looking for somewhere to spend the night. We headed north towards London, confident that we would find a B & B somewhere along the route, but there were none. When we reached the M25 motorway (the ring road around London), we decided to bypass the city and head north. We did not realize that we were on the ring road going clockwise for over fifty miles before we left it. We came off at Enfield and drove north; the first place we came across was a pub in Ware. Joan went in and we managed to get the last room available. However, we were able to relax and a little after 8:30 pm we came down and had an excellent pub meal in the bar. The place was right on the highway and there were trucks passing by all night long but we were tired enough that we slept well.

We headed the next day north east by back roads. We went through Sudbury to the pretty little town of Lavenham where we had a lunch. Then we went east to the north of Ipswich, we took a "B" road north to Snape where, although it was a miserable drizzly day, we wandered around The Red House, the former home of Benjamin Britten and Peter Pears, and where many of their operas were first performed. As well as Snape Maltings Concert Hall, an arts complex on the banks of the River Alde at Snape, Suffolk, where there were master classes, piano workshops, etc.

We did not go to the coast at Aldeburgh but headed northwest through Saxmundham, Suffolk, where I had stayed one weekend, to Framlingham Castle. Then by back roads through Eye, and by-passing Norwich, spent the night at a B & B in West Rudham.

Next day we went to visit the royal residence at Sandringham. We did not go into the house but wandered in the garden and bought a souvenir booklet. From there we went on to King's Lynn where we stopped in the centre of the town. It was pretty dead as it was Sunday afternoon and we drove out of the parking lot the wrong way on a one-way section but

did not meet anybody. When we left there we crossed the Ouse River and headed straight for Grantham where we stayed for a couple of days with Tim and Lyn.

The following day we visited some people in the morning and in the afternoon we went to Tattersall Castle where I got a great picture of a peacock with its tail feathers spread; it seemed to do it on queue when its picture was about to be taken. The next day we decided to go to Skegness. It was cold and windy and there were not many people at the Butlin's Holiday Camp there (now the Butlins' Skegness Resort). Tim and I played a couple of games of snooker but a lot of the attractions were not open. Maybe it was too early in the season; it was the first week of June.

The third day we went over to Oakham to see if it had changed much in the past eight years. The only person we saw that we knew was Tony, the cobbler who was a member of the local Bahá'í community.

The next morning we set off fairly early and drove straight up the A1 motorway as far as Wetherby where we turned off to the east. A few miles down this "B" road we came to the site of the civil war battle of Marston Moor (1644), west of York.

There was nothing there except a monument. We carried on to Castle Howard, by-passing the city of York. This is one of the stateliest manor houses in England and was used in the TV series "Bridgehead Revisited". It rained all the time we were there and we were able to tour of the interior but had to forego the grounds. They had a shuttle service to the house from the parking lot.

The next place we went to was Riveaulx Abbey, one of the five large abbeys of Yorkshire that were looted during the reign of King Henry VIII. It is situated in a kind of hollow and above it is a terrace with Greek styled temples at either end. There were not many people there as it was quite dull and drizzly most of the day. The walk to the terrace was quite a distance from the parking lot through the woods.

We decided to get a B & B in Ripon and it was here we had the unfortunate experience of getting some chicken in a restaurant that was inedible; Joan ended up with a hot dog we got from a street vendor.

The following day we went to visit Fountains Abbey. It is in a large park area and the abbey itself is a good mile from the parking lot. We had coffee in the visitor centre and set out. I was unable to walk the full distance to the abbey but we walked far enough that we were at least able to see it.

When we left there we headed north. We went by way of the interior avoiding the heavily traveled roads, through Heapham, Lincolnshire, before joining the A1 motorway north to Newcastle upon Tyne, and then west where we got a B & B in Haydon Bridge, a quiet little town in Hexham. We spent the night there and next day visited Hadrian's Wall. We did not have time to go to the Roman town there but we drove along the wall and at one point walked a bit along the wall for a short time. We stopped at the Roman Army Museum, Greenhead, and saw a lot of artifacts. Many new items are still being discovered. Joan bought a little model of a Roman soldier. From there we went north via Jedburgh to Galashiels where we got a B & B. It was very nice so decided to stay two nights.

That evening it was quite nice out so we drove back over to Melrose Abbey, made famous by Sir Walter Scott and where Robert Bruce's heart is supposed to be buried.

The next morning we drove east to Kels and onto Coldstream, where we visited the church at Culloden, the battle site, 1746, of the last battle on English soil between the Scots and English. From there we drove over to Lindisfarne or the Holy Island, to visit Lindisfarne Castle and the ruins of Lindisfarne Priory. This is the place where the Vikings first raided the coast of Britain. We crossed to the island on a causeway at low tide, so we had to return before high tide when the road is under water. Then we went south to the town of Bamburgh, Northumberland, which has one of the largest castles in the northwest. It has been used in many films including "Mary Queen of Scots". On the way west to Galashiels we stopped at Floors Castle northwest of Kelso. This castle has been the estate house of the Innes-Ker family for over 300 years, and was used in the movie "Greystoke, the Legend of Tarzan".

Next day before setting out we visited Abbotsford House, the home of Sir Walter Scott, on the banks of the Tweed River, just outside Galashiels, and where his great granddaughter still lives. Much of his possessions are preserved in the house. We then drove north, by-passing Edinburgh, and crossed the Forth Bridge. We drove north through Perth, past the ancient city of Scone and arrived in the early evening at Braemar, Aberdeenshire, Scotland, where some of the famous Scottish highland games are held. We stopped at a B & B, and went downtown for some pizza. I phoned Wendi Momen from a call box and we had a good chat. Back at the B & B we went into the common room where there were quite a few guests.

The next morning the rain was pouring down. We set off east, past Braemar Castle and stopped at Balmoral Castle, another royal residence. In

spite of the rain we walked the considerable distance to the house where we went through those parts of the castle open to visitors and had coffee in the coffee shop. Then we went north across the Lecht, a ski area. The elevation is fairly high and we were surprised when the rain turned to snow—this was June! Coming back down the snow turned to rain and we stopped at Cawdor Castle. We did not go in as it was so wet.

When we turned back east it cleared up somewhat and we stopped at the Culloden Battlefield, the last stand of Bonnie Prince Charlie. We only stopped at the visitor centre as it was so miserable and windy, but we saw a film on the battle. From there we went to Inverness where we found a very nice B & B. The only other guests were a couple on leave from the Israeli army.

The following day we drove down the north shore of Loch Ness. The road is right on the edge of the loch but we did not see any monster. We left the loch at Invermoristan and turned west along the lonely road to Kyle of Lochalsh, passing through Glen Moriston and near the Eileen Donan Castle made famous in many photographs and paintings, on the tidal island of the same name. We took the ferry on the short ride to the Isle of Skye and drove north as far as the capital Portree where Joan went to do some window shopping. We would have liked to drive on to Dunvegan, but did not feel we had time. We returned to the mainland via Kylerhae over a rough track and took the ferry that does not run often and we had to wait for it. The road came down a little grade over a hill and ended right on the edge of the water.

On the other side we stopped for coffee in a nice coffee shop, and then drove on to Invergarry, Scotland, where we stopped for the night. Our accommodation was not a B & B so we had to drive up the road for food.

Next day we drove south, past Fort William to Ballachulish where instead of crossing at the bridge we drove all the way around Loch Leven to the village of Kinlochleven, and down the other side. We stopped at the Glencoe visitor centre. Glencoe was the site of a great museum at one time but is now a ski centre. From there down Loch Linnhe to Dunstaffnage, where the *HMCS Orkney* underwent a refit back in 1945, and we stopped and toured the partially ruined castle there.

We then drove through Oban south as far as Lochgilphead and back north to Inveraray. We did not arrange B & B's there so we went on east to Arrochar at the head of Loch Long. The next morning we went back to

Inveraray and stopped at the castle. It is a kind of fairy tale type castle and it is where Rudolph Hess detained during World War II. We returned to Arrochar, travelled east to Loch Lomond, down the west shore of the loch and south to Dumbarton, then southeast to Kilpatrick where we crossed the Erskine Bridge over the River Clyde. We then turned west to Greenock and nearby Gourrock, but we could not find the place where we lived or where I was stationed that last year of the war. We headed south and stopped for lunch at Largs, and then drove on past Ayr to Culzean Castle. This is where General Dwight Eisenhower had apartments during the war, where he lived when he could find the time, then down the coast past Ballantrae, South Ayrshire. We could see the small island of Ailsa Craig out in the Firth of Clyde. We stopped for the night in Newton Stewart.

In the morning we drove to Castle Douglas where we had coffee and on to Dunfries where we took a side trip through Lockerbie to Ecclefechan, the birthplace home of Thomas Carlyle whose most famous work was *The French Revolution: A History*. We visited the house and then west on to Gretna Green, which at one time was a favourite destination for English couples who wanted to get married in a hurry. They still capitalize on this heritage, although it is no longer serving that purpose. We crossed back into England and stopped at Keswick, in the Lake District National Park, where we stayed for two nights.

The next day we went back towards Penrith and drove down the shore of Ullseater glacial lake, and then continued south until we came to the tourist visitor centre in Windermere. We had coffee or coke there and then to Leven House in Windermere where there was an exhibition of the work of Beatrix Potter who wrote her Peter Rabbit books near here (Hill Top Farm, east of Near Sawrey, is 3 miles to the southwest).

On our way back to Keswick, we stopped at Dove Cottage, where William Wordsworth and his sister lived for a time and where he entertained other poet friends.

The next day we drove down the west side of Lake Windermere and then drove around Coniston Water (a lake). We then headed for the M6 motorway through Kendal and headed south. The weather turned quite warm. The M6 motorway enabled us to by-pass Birmingham, and apart from a short side trip to visit the battle site of Edgehill, we arrived at Banbury for the night. We went in the centre of Banbury for dinner. It was here we had a slight accident with the car backing out of the B & B driveway.

The next day we went into Woodstock and spent the morning at Blenheim Palace, the ancestral home of the Dukes of Marlborough. From there we went to Moreton-in-Marsh (the Cotswolds district) and Bourton-on-the-Hill where we stopped as there was a kind of fair going on. We then headed for the M40

motorway through Broadway and stopped at Rose-on-Wye for coffee. Leaving there we came down through Monmouth to join the M4 motorway at Newport, which we left to drive into Llanelli and found a B & B at Pembrey where we stayed for 2 nights.

The following day we visited Kidwelly Castle and then went to the tip of Wales through Carmarthen and Haverfordwest to St. Davids, the cathedral city of Wales. We visited the cathedral and Bishops Palace, which was at the bottom of a hill. From there we went to Fishguard where we watched the Sealink Ferry (now with the Stena Line) setting out for Rosslare, Eire, and saw a couple of young people struggling with a sailboard. We stopped on the way back to Pembrey at Cardigan for coffee.

In the morning we visited the local park before setting out for Brecon. We went via Llandovery and spent some time finding Jeremy and Christine's house which was off the main road between Brecon and Sennybridge. We spent the evening there but had to sleep on the floor downstairs as their daughter had chicken pox. In the afternoon of the next day we set out for Cardiff over the Brecon Beacons to Merthyr Tydfil and Pontypridd. We spent the night at a motel there and returned the rental car and took a taxi to the airport where we left for home the next day. We caught the Robert Q Airbus back to London.

26. Holidays in Ontario, Alberta and British Columbia

The next year, 1987, we had planned to take a long trip around Ontario going up to Hearst and across to Cochrane but it did not pan out. We set off okay and drove part way along the Lake Huron shore through Kincardine and Southampton. We stopped for the night in Wiarton at a motel just to the north of the town. The next day we drove along the western shore of southeastern Georgian Bay, over near Cape Croker and stopped in Lions Head where Joan and Rita had stayed back in the sixties. We caught the afternoon ferry from Tobermory to South Baymouth and drove north to Manitoulin and through to Little Current where we stayed the night in a motel on a hill. While there we decided not to on with our original plan for some reason, and, as near as I can remember, we returned home going around the east side of southeastern Georgian Bay.

On our way home we stopped at Sault Sainte Marie among the Hurons, near modern Midland. We had been there once before when the University of Western Ontario was excavating the site. It has now been completely restored and is quite impressive.

By the next year, 1988, Linda and Jack were living in Vancouver. They invited us to visit them so we set out on May 12th by Airbus to Toronto where we caught a plane to Calgary. Paul met us at the airport and we went north straight to Innisfail, central Alberta, where he was living. The next day we took a drive around Innisfail, saw the dam and went to the mall. That evening we met Laddi's sister.

On the Saturday we picked up Michael who was living with Debbie in Calgary and went for a drive to Banff and Lake Louise, which was still frozen. It was quite cold in the mountains. We drove along the secondary roads rather than the Trans-Canada Highway and saw lots of elk and mountain goats, as well as a couple of wolves. We drove on up to where the Canadian Pacific Railway Upper Spiral, located inside Cathedral Mountain, emerges at the top of Kicking Horse Pass. On the way home we stopped for supper in Banff.

On Sunday we spent the day at the Royal Tyrrell Museum of Palaeontology, 6 km northwest of Drumheller, Alberta, the dinosaur capital of Canada, and also saw where the original dinosaur find was made by Joseph Burr Tyrrell in 1884. On Monday Michael took us into Calgary where we boarded a bus for Vancouver. The first stop was Canmore and at Banff picked up some lifesavers. Lunch was at Golden. There was a coffee break at Revelstoke and supper was in Kamloops. We drove down the Coquihalla Highway, a

fairly new road and had coffee at Hope. Jack and Linda met us at the bus depot.

On Tuesday we did not do anything as we were quite tired. Not until Wednesday did we go out and Jack was able to borrow a car for us from the dealership where he worked.

The next day it rained so we went to the planetarium. On Thursday in the morning we went to Queen Elizabeth Park and the arboretum there. On Friday we drove across the Lions Gate Bridge and up Howe Sound as far as Squamish. We were there a few hours after lunch and on the way back we stopped at Horseshoe Bay.

Saturday we took Linda to Burnaby Mall and on Sunday went downtown to Gastown; it rained all day. The next day we went to the University of British Columbia to visit the Museum of Anthropology. The building itself was closed but we could see through the windows. Outside in the grounds were several Haida buildings and totem poles. We drove around the campus and back along English Bay. In the evening the five of us (including Lori) went to play bingo but none of us won anything. We had been here a week by this time.

On Tuesday morning we took the ferry from Tsawwassen, just south of Vancouver airport to Sidney, Vancouver Island. Ferries do not go from Vancouver itself anymore. After passing through the Gulf Islands we reached Sidney where we had lunch. On the way south to Victoria we stopped a few hours at Butchart Gardens which are well-known all over. We got a motel in Esquimalt for two nights. We drove to the Canadian Forces Base in southwestern Esquimalt where I was stationed at the beginning of the war but nothing was familiar.

Next day we went east to downtown Victoria. We visited Miniature World in the Fairmont Empress Hotel and parked for a few minutes on the harbour where there was a good view of the Legislative Assembly of British Columbia building. We then drove around Beacon Hill Park and then out to Oak Bay and the Marine Drive to Uplands.

Thursday morning we drove north out of Victoria and made our first stop at the Maxwell International Bahá'í School (1988–2008) on Shawnigan Lake. We were treated to a tour but there were no classes as it was not quite ready to be opened. Some of the buildings were not quite ready. We stopped later for coffee in Duncan. We got lost just past Ladysmith while looking for the Petroglyph

Provincial Park. We arrived in Nanaimo in time for the ferry that we took back to Horseshoe Bay where we had dinner before returning to Vancouver. We were tired so the next day we stayed in and did not go anywhere.

On Saturday we went back to the planetarium to pick up some gifts. Then we took a drive around the grounds of the Simon Fraser University in Burnaby.

On Sunday the 29th Jack took Lori to Victoria for a day. I took Linda to work in the morning and at two o'clock we picked her up and went for a drive up to Capilano River canyon—it is very commercialized now. We did not go on the swinging bridge. We came back to Vancouver via the Narrows Bridge.

Next day we did not do much except take a walk. In the evening when Jack and Lori returned, he took us all up Grouse Mountain in the cable car where we had a very dinner—but there were magnificent views over the city.

On Tuesday we went to Stanley Park and after a while we crossed the Lions Gate Bridge to Park Royal Mall in West Vancouver. It was the first shopping mall in Canada. We stayed home in the evening while Jack and Linda went to play bingo.

Wednesday it rained but the three of us went downtown to Chinatown. We visited some shops and tried to get coffee in a shop but they only served tea. We visited the Sun Yat Sen Gardens before returning home.

The next day we all had breakfast out and then went to Burnaby Mall again. When we came home Jack took us to the Maritime Museum. When we came home we got packed and Jack and Linda took us to the bus station. We decided to return to Calgary by the Kettle Valley route which takes longer.

The first stop was at Hope where we had coffee, then Princeton and Penticton where we had breakfast. Then Grand Forks for a coffee break and lunch at Rossland. Stops then were at Trail, Creston and Cranbrook to Radium Hot Springs. Paul met us in Calgary. We had supper on Saturday and in Calgary on Sunday where we visited the museum. We left Calgary by plane on Monday.

27. Side trips to Ontario and Winnipeg

During the fall Tim visited us. Since leaving Waterloo where we had visited him, he had worked in White River and then gone on to North Bay, Ontario. The next spring we decided to visit him where he had a job as a bartender at the Golf Club. We stopped off at Reinette's on the way and got as far as Parry Sound that night. We went on to North Bay the next day after picking up a map at the Chamber of Commerce.

Tim gave us a tour of the hotel where he worked and we had ginger ale on the house. The next day we drove to Algonquin Provincial Park where we went into the park on the north side at Kiosh on the north side, and later drove to Callander and North Bay. In the morning I discovered I had a flat tire so I had to have it repaired. Then we took a 3-hour cruise on Lake Nipissing to Callander and back to North Bay. That evening Tim treated us to a meal at the hotel and I remember I ate venison for the first time.

On Saturday, after 3 days, we left, stopping for toast and coffee at Mattawa, and stopping for the night at Perth. The next day we went south to Gananoque where we stayed two nights. On Monday we took a cruise to the Thousand Islands in the St. Lawrence River that lasted most of the day. We had lunch on the boat.

The next day we set out for home. After having lunch at Presqu'isle Provincial Park we arrived back in London via Guelph where we had dinner, then home via Stratford.

Next year we did not take a long holiday but made several one-day tours in the area. One weekend we went and stayed at a motel in Kingsville. The first day we spent at Point Pelee National Park where we went down to the point and also walked around the marsh on the boardwalk. The next day we went on to Amherstburg where we spent some time at Fort Malden, part of which has been restored. We returned home via Highway 2 along Lake St. Clair, Chatham, Moraintown and home.

Another day we went to Dresden where we visited the Uncle Tom's Cabin Museum. Then we went on and drove around Walpole Island. On another occasion we went to Brantford where we spent some

time at the Bell Homestead. Then we went on to the Iroquois Museum and the Chapel of the Mohawks. We drove from there to the Six Nations Reserve where we visited the Pauline Johnson home.¹ It is in a badly dilapidated condition and needs restoration. We came home through the town of Ohsweken on the Indian Reserve.

On another occasion we drove to Norwich and Otterville where they have an old water mill on Otter Creek and also an herb garden.

Another time we drove up through Kitchener to St. Jacobs, Elora and Fergus. We visited the West Montrose Covered Bridge, also known as the “Kissing Bridge”, it is one of the oldest Canadian covered bridges, it is in Mennonite country.

We also did use some of *The London Free Press* Shunpiker Mystery Tours² vouchers that we had collected but not used. Some of these tours included the Longwood Conservatory area and an interesting windmill near Goderich. We generally stuck to back roads where there was less traffic. We often visited places like Bayfield and Port Stanley as well as Sparta, Port Bruce and Port Burwell.

The next year, 1991, we were invited to visit Tim in Winnipeg. It was late August and very hot. We did not get away until ten o'clock so we only got as far as Cheboygan, Michigan. The next day, after crossing the Mackinac Bridge to Mackinaw City, we stopped at a small village for some great lemon pie.

We had lunch at a picnic area on Lake Superior near Marquette. We spent the night near Ashland. The next day we went through Duluth and stopped on the other side at Starving Marvin's, a truck stop, for coffee. Stopped at Bemidji for groceries and went on to Grand Forks, which we overshot and had to turn around and come back to get the last motel room. After breakfast we stopped at Pembina on the Manitoba border for some duty free and here we damaged the tailpipe on a speed bump and had to wait an hour for repairs. We stopped for lunch at St. Jean Baptiste and arrived in Winnipeg around four. On Saturday, Paul, Laddi and Linda arrived from Alberta. They stayed at a motel and we all had brunch on Sunday morning and Tim and I went back to the house while the others went down to the Forks Market.

That evening Joan and Paul had a confrontation that had a bad effect on Joan, which still exists. Monday we did nothing and on Tuesday we took Tim up to Gimli, the old Icelandic settlement on Lake Winnipeg. The next day we had breakfast at Tim's work place—it was still extremely hot outside.

¹ Chiefswood National Historic Site: the home of Six Nations Chief George H. M. Johnson (1816–1884), the birthplace of poet Emily Pauline Johnson (1861–1913), and the Johnson family home until 1884.

² Shunpiking is the act of deliberately avoiding roads that require payment of a fee or toll to travel on them.

We set out for home on Thursday and stopped at the visitor centre at the Ontario-Manitoba border. We stopped early for the day at Kenora.

The next night we stopped at Uppsala. We bypassed Thunder Bay and got as far as Marathon. The next morning we stopped at the White River Café where Tim worked for a while; we also stopped at the Wawa Tourist Information Centre. We stopped in Lake Superior Provincial Park so Joan could make a sketch. We stayed the night at Batchawana Bay. The next day we got as far as Little Current.

The next morning we arrived at South Baymouth, but there was no room on the morning ferry and we had to wait for the four o'clock sailing. We left the car in line so we would not miss the next one and had to spend six hours on a cold and rainy day. Joan walked around the town several times while I stayed put; we were on this ferry at twenty to four. The crossing was quite rough and Joan spent the trip in the washroom along with several others. After arriving at Tobermory, we went straight on to Wiarton, where we had a bit of supper and on to Wingham for coffee at ten o'clock. It poured all the way home where we arrived at 11:30 pm.

The next year, 1992, we had a fair amount of company, so we were only able to get away for a short holiday. We decided to go back to Gananoque, Ontario, and we set out in that direction. We took the northern route and stopped to visit Reinette on the way. That evening we stayed at a motel just outside Orangeville and the next day went into Kleinburg, a very pretty town just north of Toronto where we spent a couple of hours at the McMichael Art Gallery where they have an extensive collection of Canadian paintings, most notably the work of the Group of Seven and Emily Carr.¹

Coming out of the art gallery it started to rain and then it poured. We stopped in King City for coffee and continued east. The rain did not let up and the forecast was not good, so we stopped for the night in Norwood where we had stayed before. The next day we turned back and decided to go to Huntsville driving up the east side of Lake Simcoe, through Minden and Dorset. We stayed at the same resort we had many years before when we had rented a cabin on the lake. This time there was a motel and we took several drives around the area. After three or four days we set out for home.

¹ The Group of Seven, was a group of Canadian landscape painters from 1920 to 1933, originally consisting of Franklin Carmichael, Lawren Harris, A. Y. Jackson, Frank Johnston, Arthur Lismer, J. E. H. MacDonald, and Frederick Varley. Emily Carr (1871–1945) was a Canadian artist and writer who was inspired by the Indigenous peoples of the Pacific Northwest Coast.

28. A holiday on Prince Edward Island

Next year, 1993, we decided we would like to visit Prince Edward Island where we had never been. We got away on a Sunday morning in early June and stayed the first night in Gananoque. We crossed the Ivy Lea Bridge into New York State where we crossed the Adirondacks. We were held up awhile by having to detour around Saranac Lake. We got lost in Plattsburg trying to find the ferry across Lake Champlain but eventually made it into Vermont where we started looking for a motel. We could not find one around Montpelier because of road repairs but did find one at Marshfield, which looked like the Stratford Inn on the Newhart show. Next day we entered New Hampshire and took a long detour to go through the White Mountain Park where the scenery was quite spectacular. We stayed the night at the Farmington Motel. Next day we went through Maine as far as Calais where we crossed back into New Brunswick at St. Stephen where we stayed the night.

Thursday morning it was raining. We stopped at St. George and in the afternoon left the main road to drive through Fundy National Park. We could not see much because of the rain. After leaving the park we also stopped at the Hopewell Rocks Provincial Park where it was still pouring rain. We stayed the night at a motel in Shediac. In the morning we boarded the ferry and it turned out to be a nice day. After docking we drove to Summerside where we checked into a motel there for three days. After lunch we toured the west end of the island, going to O'Leary where they have a potato museum—big disappointment, then followed the coast road up to the North Cape Wind Station where we had coffee and then back to the motel.

Next day we visited the Woodleigh Miniature Garden where they have scaled down replicas of famous buildings, but not so small you could not go in them. Then on to New London and visited the birthplace of Lucy Maud Montgomery (1874–1942; author of *Anne of Green Gables* and many other novels). Then we went to Green Gables, made famous in the novel, and also visited Ripley's Believe It or Not Museum. Then we went on to Rustico Harbour and Brackley Beach where we had dinner.

On Sunday we drove along the south coast as far as Fort Amherst. This was not open but we wandered about the old fort. Then to a doll

museum but it was not open either. We returned to Summerside by a different route.

Monday morning it was raining so we went straight into Charlottetown. We toured the Prince Edward Island Legislative Assembly building, which is called the Confederation Building because it was here that Confederation took place in 1867 when Canada became an independent nation. Joan also looked through the Art Gallery next door while I waited for her. Then we went on to Wood Island where we booked into the only motel. We took a ride around part of the east coast of the island visiting Murray Harbour, Montagne and Georgetown.

On Tuesday the sun was shining when we boarded the ferry over to Pictou where we lunched and then took the Glooscap Trail from Truro to Noel. In Wolfville we drove around the campus of Acadia University and then down the Annapolis Valley to Middleton where we spent the night.

Wednesday (our wedding anniversary) we went on to Fort Anne, Annapolis, and then on to the 1930s replica of the 1605 Port Royal Habitation, which was founded by Samuel de Champlain (1574–1635) and the first French settlement in North America. Then we stopped at the Annapolis Power Station that is powered by the Bay of Fundy tides, which are the highest in the world. We went on to the Champlain Motel outside of town that we booked for two nights as it was a quite nice place with a view over the bay. We drove on to Digby passing HMCS Cornwallis naval training base, but it started to rain so we went back to the motel.

Thursday we drove back to Digby and then down Digby Neck visiting Gullians Cove, Centreville and Sandy Cove. We crossed by ferry to Long Island and dropped into the visitor centre, then on to Flour Cove, and Freeport, and Tiverton where we went up to the lighthouse. We then returned the same way and stopped in Mink Cove and around Sandy Cove again, and the visitors park at Middle Lake. Had supper, pizza, in Digby and then back to the motel.

The next day we set off across the province to the Atlantic Ocean coast, to Kejimikujik National Park, one hundred miles of bush. At the edge there was a visitor centre but Joan would not get out of the car because of the black flies. We reached the coast at Liverpool where we had coffee. We drove along the coast via Petite River and Le Havre where we took the ferry and then on to Lunenburg, where we spent some time at the Maritime

Museum. This is where the *Bluenose* fishing and racing gaff rig schooner was built in 1921, commemorated by a replica, *Bluenose II*, built in here 1963. We went on from there and took a motel in Chester.

In the morning we drove around Chester, even though it was raining again. Then we stopped at Hubbards for coffee—Joan would like to live here (this is when the TV series “Black Harbour” was filmed). Then on to Peggy’s Cove that we had visited before. We were on our way again in the afternoon bypassing Halifax, not stopping until we reached Parrsboro, then past Springhill (Anne Murray’s home) to Amherst where we spent the night. We had to drive down the Trans Canada Highway into New Brunswick to find anything to eat, but it proved to be pretty good.

Next morning we set off for home again. We stopped outside Sussex for coffee. Another hot day, no picnic areas, so stopped at 4 o’clock at a motel at Woodstock and had our lunch for supper. The next day we reached Rivière-du-Loup by 2:30 pm and stayed the night at Berthier-sur-Mer just outside Québec City where there was a lovely view across the St. Lawrence River.

Next day was a bad one. In the morning we stopped at Saint-Antoine-de-Tilly and chatted in our broken French with the new young owners of a restaurant. Then we got lost crossing the Québec Bridge. We traveled west on the north side of the river and after by-passing Montreal tried unsuccessfully to find a motel at Lachute. We then drove all the way to Hull and got lost again, so we crossed the St. Lawrence River into Ottawa and headed out on Highway 7.

We did not find a motel until about 8 pm at Carleton Place—not great.

Next morning, Wednesday, we stopped at a park in Perth, then on through Madoc to Norwood where we stayed at the Highlander Motel, stopping around 2:30 pm where we could rest up after the previous day. The next day we went via Peterboro to Port Perry where we had coffee, then on by Uxbridge and Newmarket to Schomberg for lunch. It was a very hot day. We stopped to see Reinette in Palmerston then on home.

29. Short trips, golden anniversary, graduation and failing health

In 1994 we thought we might tour Northern Ontario again but it did not happen. We set out and lost our tail pipe in Wiarton. By the time we got it fixed with a new muffler we did not get to Tobermory until 5:30 pm where we stopped for the night. We caught the ferry to South Baymouth, Manitoulin Island, in the morning.

We stopped at Manitowaning for coffee and booked into a motel in Little Current early in the afternoon. After lunch we set out around the island. We stopped first at Kagawong and then on to Gore Bay. Then we went south to Providence Bay for coffee and a walk on the boardwalk. Then north to Mindemoya and east to Sandfield and dinner at Manitowaning. We stopped at the Indian Trading Post at Ten Mile Point and then back to the motel where we had to change rooms because of the smell.

The next morning we went north to Espanola and then east to Sudbury. We drove by the Big Nickel and into Sudbury and further east to Sturgeon Falls and North Bay where we stopped for the night, but drove south to Callander for dinner. The following day we drove as far as Huntsville to the motel we had stayed at two years earlier. We did nothing on the third day but we drove out to the "Wairgaty" for dinner. In the morning we drove to Dorset and went up to the fire tower lookout. In the afternoon went through Algonquin Provincial Park where we saw a couple of moose and looked over the visitor centre at the east end. We had dinner at Spring Lake.

Monday morning we drove around Hidden Valley, Huntsville, and stopped at Deerhurst Lodge and Great Western and picked up rate cards. After lunch we drove down to Fox Inn and then around Lake of Bays. Next day we wandered around Huntsville in the morning and the afternoon drove to Rosseau and Windermere and back to Huntsville via Port Sidney.

Wednesday we set off for home down Highway 11, which we left at Orillia and had lunch at Bear Lake Provincial Park. On to Penetanguishene but we could not find a motel there so went back to Midland. Next day we went back to Penetanguishene and visited Discovery Harbour where we rode an old fashioned wagon around the area and went aboard one of the tall ships that was guided by a man who had been in the Canadian navy. Very hot today,

the temperature was in the thirties. We stopped for lunch in Wasaga Beach Provincial Park. We stopped at Brussels and Seaforth on our way home taking back roads, and finally home.

The next two years, 1995 and 1996, we did not go anywhere. I was admitted to hospital in late May or early June each year and I was feeling pretty rough, especially since we had a lot of company both summers.

Linda was staying with us and in June of 1995, Joan and I celebrated our 50th wedding anniversary. We received congratulations from both the Canadian Prime Minister and the Governor-General of Canada. Our children living in Iceland came: Vicki and Ásgeir came with Nadia, and Geoff came with both Viktoria and Dagrún. Also Larry and Gladys came with Bruce, and Carl and Cathy with their kids. We had an open house the day before and on the day we all had dinner at Hooks Restaurant.

The next year, 1996, was the year I graduated from the University of Western Ontario with a Bachelor of Music degree. It took ten years to get enough credits, and when the convocation came, I was too ill to attend. The office at Talbot College arranged to have the Dean, Geoff Stokes, and the Assistant Dean, Peter Clemens, come to our house and perform the ceremony. The faculty secretary and Public Relations representative were there and I got a write up in the university *Western Alumni Gazette* periodical. I also got a good write-up in *The London Free Press* that resulted in my receiving congratulations from people I went to school with 50 years ago and even one from the Bahá'í Universal House of Justice in Haifa. For this occasion Tim and Aglesh came down from Iqaluit and she brought her three children with her. For both occasions the women decorated the house with streamers and balloons and it was quite festive.

We did not go further than Sarnia once or twice or Port Stanley in 1995–1996. So the next year, 1997, we took two holidays—each a week in length.

We left on June 8 1997 and arrived at San-Man Motel in Manchester, a small place just southwest of Port Perry. We had arranged with Medigas to carry a medical oxygen tank in the car. The next morning we went to Cullen Gardens in Whitby. This place has a fantastic miniature village, and we took two hours to walk around it. After returning to the motel, we went down to Palmer Park on the shore of Lake Scugog and then out to the end of Scugog Island. Next morning we went northeast to Bobcaygeon, which is on the Trent-Severn Waterway, and investigated

apartments overlooking the lock in Bobcaygeon. After lunch we went to Petroglyphs Provincial Park (site with Indigenous rock carvings) to see the exhibit, which is quite impressive. We returned to Port Perry via Burleigh Falls and Lakefield.

The next morning we left for Huntsville, stopping on the way to visit the Kirkfield Lift Lock (Trent Severn Waterway, Lock 36). After lunch at Carnarvon, we booked into the Colonial Hotel, Huntsville for four nights. It is now under new ownership. We took it easy and the next morning we went into Dwight and Dorset and up to Lookout Point and around Lake of Bays, and took it easy for the rest of the day.

After Medigas came from Orillia the next day to refill our medical oxygen tank, we took off for Windermere and Port Carling for lunch. Then we went on to Rosseau and returned to the Colonial Hotel, Huntsville. On Saturday we went into Huntsville and looked around after having car fixed (we ran out of power steering fluid).

We left for home on Sunday and got lost around Camp Borden. After stopping at a park in Grand Valley, we dropped in to see Reinette before returning home.

In September we booked into Buckeye Inn in Bobcaygeon and had Medigas from Peterborough install a medical oxygen tank in our room. On Monday Joan walked around town and picked up a street map and after lunch we drove around the town.

On Tuesday we drove into Lindsay to get the tape deck fixed and on the way saw a field of llamas! The shop in Lindsay could not fix the tape-deck, but he directed us to another shop outside town on the way to Peterborough. While it was being fixed, we went into mall in Lindsay for lunch. On the way back we travelled along some back roads. Next day we went to Lagoon City on Lake Simcoe via Fenelon Falls and looked for Frank Nutson, one of my relatives on my grandmother's side. After visiting him for a while we returned to Buckeye Inn in Bobcaygeon.

On Thursday we drove to Bancroft where we had lunch and then on to Combermere, where it took about half an hour to find Terry's place (Terry is my sister Ruth's daughter). After visiting him, we had supper at Woodview on way back to Bobcaygeon. Next afternoon we drove all around Lake Pigeon, eventually stopping at Buckhorn for coffee. Saturday morning was Fall Fair day and watched a parade go by Buckeye Inn. In the afternoon we drove all the way up to Gooderham to see the fall colours which were quite spectacular. It was on the way back to Bobcaygeon that my disabled permit flew out the window and we drove at about 10 km an hour back along our route looking for it. After several kilometres, we stopped to let some cars go by and Joan spotted it just outside the car.

We left for home on Sunday stopping for lunch at Newmarket. We stopped in to see Reinette but she was not home so visited another lady who lives in the same place, then home.

During the winter (1997–1998), Dr Patterson referred me to Dr Richard Malthaner, a thoracic surgeon in London who performs a lung volume reduction surgery to make breathing easier for people with emphysema who are in otherwise good health. Appointments with Dr Richard Malthaner occupied me for most of the next year.

I was referred to a thoracic rehabilitation program that is exclusively for people with lung problems. They only take eight people at a time and it consists of daily exercise, Monday to Friday, for six weeks. It took about an hour and a half each day and necessitated going to the hospital every day. It involved weights, stretches, and stationery bicycle and treadmill exercises. Following this I had numerous tests consisting of pulmonary functions, stress tests, nuclear scans, CAT scan, ECG and echo, etc. During this time I also had to have some liquid removed from my scrotum, and I have had cataract surgery on both eyes over the past couple of years.

Last fall Vicki and Nadia came over for a holiday in October and this year she and Ásgeir came. We went back to Bobcaygeon for a week at the end of September.

We did other things since returning from England, the United Kingdom. The first spring after getting back we got in touch with Claude Lambert in Farmington Hills, Michigan, whom I had not seen since World War II. He invited us down and we took the bus and spent a few days with him and his wife. One day we went to the Ford Museum and Greenfield Village in Dearborn that I had never seen before. Another day we went to Belle Isle where we watched some people flying kites.

We went to Niagara Falls several times. On one occasion we visited Norma Wiley at Niagara-on-the-Lake, and also visited Fort George which was occupied by the Americans during the War of 1812. Another time we attended her birthday party but we did not see much of her as there were so many people present.

On another visit we went towards Lewiston, just north of Niagara Falls, to visit the Brock's Monument in Queenston Heights Park and then to the historical museum on Lundy's Lane, St. Catherines. We drove home along the Parkway to Fort Erie and home via Highway 3.

One time we took Tim with us and visited Marineland of Canada (a themed zoo and amusement park), Niagara Falls. It was a wet day in September and we had all the rides to ourselves. Joan would not go on Dragon Mountain, but Tim and I did. We went to Marineland of Canada one other time with Carl, Kathy and family but it was a hot Sunday and the place was crowded. We did not go on any rides. We saw the whole show but that was all we had time for as we were with a chartered bus trip and we had to leave with the bus. However, the bus broke down on the way home and it took forever to arrive home.

The first eight years after returning to Canada, I was elected to the London Local Spiritual Assembly and I was the secretary for part of the time. I was also a member of the Bahá'í teaching committee and remained on it after leaving the Assembly. I was also for a couple of years an Assistant to the Auxiliary Board Member Gordon Naylor and visited several nearby communities and also attended meetings at Keith Greeham's and Gordon Naylor's place in Dundas.

While on the Local Spiritual Assembly of London, I was appointed London community representative on the Multi-Faith Committee for this area. We met monthly, mostly at the Canadian Pacific Railway office (where the secretary's office was; now the Canadian Pacific Kansas City Railway). Part of our duties was to monitor inter-faith facilities at various institutions and their chaplains. I had the occasion to visit Sarnia General Hospital, North Lambton Rest Home, Woodstock Hospital, the Elgin-Middlesex Detention Centre and the London Psychiatric Hospital. I was with the committee for five years.

30. Childhood recollections

It is really a privilege to have lived through most of the 20th century. I lived through the 1920s and have many memories of that period, bearing in mind that during the year 1930 I was only 8 years old.

One of my earliest memories was living at the Comfort Terrace, a quadraplex on Jefferson Street near the tennis courts. We moved from there to the house my parents bought on Prince Street when I was four (the house at that time cost \$2,000 and it took 15 years to pay off the mortgage). An early recollection was very general, that of impressions of the town. At that time the streets of Forest were not paved and the gravel streets had to be coated with oil every spring to keep the dust down. In the winter I remember a lot of sleighs and wagons on runners in the town pulled by horses. I can almost remember the smells at that time.

Very few people had automobiles then and since anti-freeze had not been invented, they had to drain their radiators, remove the tires and put their cars up on blocks before the first freeze-up. Most car owners had either a Ford Model T or the later Model A's, but there was the odd Pierce-Arrow, Stutz Bearcat and LaSalle.

At that time there were four or five livery stables in town that looked after horses and rented buggies. There were two blacksmith shops, one of which lasted into the 1930s. Most of these livery stables evolved into garages and eventually car dealerships as the number of automobiles increased.

The Kineto Theatre on King St. West opened in 1917. My parents took me to two or three films—they were silent of course. One was "Noah's Ark" and another was "Uncle Tom's Cabin". I did not see a talkie movie until about 1928 when I was taken to the Toronto Fair for a few days. The Kineto converted to talking pictures around 1929 or 1930. All I remember of them was the Saturday afternoon matinee where they showed serials that always ended with a cliff-hanger to get you to come back next week. I think the admission price was 5 cents.

I remember being able to buy bubble gum with a sports or movie star card for a penny. We collected these things avidly and traded duplicates.

These were not the first premium cards. Cigarette packets contained cards, one of which was a series of golf players. My father collected poker hands in his packets and when you collected a certain number, you could redeem them for prizes. I know we got a card table with these poker hands and probably some other gifts.

Kids today do not realize that up to the age of ten we would have maybe one birthday party where our friends would be invited. Other birthdays were family affairs and then not very special.