

Jean Lacock's Story

Mrs Jean Lacock

I was born on 19 January 1919. That means I've had my hundredth birthday. I received this letter from the Queen and it's now hanging on my wall.

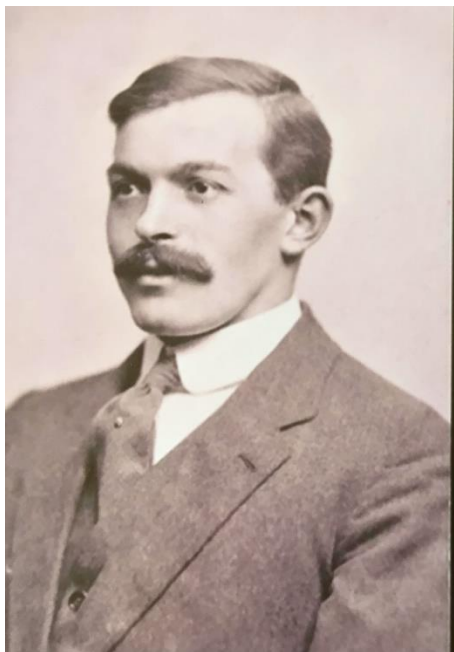
My mother, Nelly Elizabeth Smith had been born in Kennington.

She was one of seven children but only three survived. Her father, James Smith left home and her mother died when Nelly was only four – it was said of a broken heart.

James Smith had disappeared from Nelly's life, so she was effectively an orphan at the age of four.

She was brought up by foster parents (Auntie Carrie, her mother's aunt and husband Uncle Alfred Butler) who lived in Kennington. They had moved to 37 Brudenell Road, Upper Tooting by the time I was born.





My parents

Auntie Carrie



My father Alfred Lesley Barrett was born on 24 March 1889. The family lived in 21 Temple Road, Windsor. Alfred was expecting to work in a solicitor's office. His older sister paid 6d a week for him to have extra lessons and I think this is where he learned shorthand. He had a certificate for shorthand which my mother was about to tear up and throw away until my sister Ruth stopped her; it's held by Ruth's family. My father always had beautiful handwriting. But his father died when he was 14 and his father's employer offered to apprentice him as a carpenter. He earned a farthing per hour in his first year and a half-penny (pronounced ha'penny) per hour in the second year.

As a carpenter, my father was in a reserved occupation, so he did not fight in World War I. He helped to build aircraft for Martinside at Weybridge. He probably cycled from Windsor to Weybridge every day. It was a well-paid job and he was able to save.

My mother and father met in church. My mother worked in domestic service in the Chapel Royal in St James's Palace. Every Easter the family went to

Windsor and took all the staff with them. My father attended Trinity Church at the bottom of Temple Road. He was sitting in the gallery with two friends when he looked down and saw my mother sitting in the pew below. "I'm going to marry her," he said to his friends...and he did.

My mother and father married on 27 March 1918 and lived in Woking. In 1918 there was a terrible 'flu epidemic and millions of people died. My mother was expecting me, and she went to live with her foster parents in Tooting while my father went back to his mother in Windsor.

Spanish Flu

The 1918 influenza pandemic (January 1918 – December 1920; [colloquially](#) known as Spanish flu) was an unusually deadly [influenza pandemic](#), the first of the two [pandemics](#) involving [H1N1 influenza virus](#). It infected 500 million people around the world, including people on remote [Pacific islands](#) and in the [Arctic](#), and resulted in the deaths of 50 to 100 million (three to five percent of the world's population), making it one of the deadliest natural disasters in [human history](#).

When my mother started having contractions Auntie Carrie who had never had children went to Mrs Marsden next door. She advised Auntie Carrie to take my mother to the nursing home. The two of them travelled from Tooting to Pine House, on the south side of Clapham Common. She travelled by tram – not taxi or horse and carriage! I was born on 19 January 1919. My father sent Mother a letter saying he was so pleased to hear about the baby, ‘Jeane’. He misspelt the name with an extra e on the end but my mother made sure I was registered with the correct spelling.

I have a baptism certificate recording that I was baptised on 6 April 1919 at All Saints Church, Tooting.

My Childhood

I grew up for the first five years in a rented house in Frances Road, Windsor. My sister, Ruth was born two years after me on 24 February 1921. My father’s sisters, Auntie Ede (Edith) and Auntie Ann lived at 21 Temple Road which was just around the corner from Frances Road where we lived until I was five. They were regular church-goers and used to take us to All Saints’ Church in Windsor. I

remember every Good Friday the church put on a magic lantern slide show which included the Last Supper. It was wonderful to see pictures projected by the magic lantern. My parents were not regular church goers; my father was a great believer but argued you can be a good Christian without going to church. But the aunts encouraged Ruth and me. Ruth and I were both confirmed at the same time in 1934 in Windsor parish church. I waited until Ruth was 13 so we could be confirmed together.

When my grandfather, Thomas Barrett lived in Temple Road, he bought a mirror to go over the mantelpiece which eventually passed to me and Stan when we lived in Morton Way. My father made the shelf that it stood on. The mirror and shelf are now in my living room. When I was five (1924) my father was able to use his savings to buy a house, 35 Victor Road, Windsor for £200 cash! It was in an area called Spital.

I attended Little Spital Primary School in St Leonard's Road which was very close – about a quarter of a mile away from our home and very flat.

Spital

Berkshire Record Office has records of Spital CE First School (previously Royal Free Spital Infants) with Admission Registers 1874-1988 and Logbook 1875-1988.

<https://www.tapatalk.com/groups/theroyalwindsorforum/st-leonards-road-spital-and-nearby-t1263.html>

There's a discussion about Spital on this website. Suggestions it was named after a leper **hospital**. Here are some extracts: *The leper hospital was founded in 1168 and dedicated to St Peter. It's likely that the main buildings were in St Leonards Road. It was expanded about a hundred years later, by being given 120 acres of Windsor Forest. This seems to have been the area between Bolton Road and Stag Meadow.*

Lastly, anyone like to define Spital - how localised an area is it?

My grandmother always told me that Spital started at the cemetery on St. Leonard's Road and ended at the King Edward Hospital - not very scientific and I can't back that up with any proof but that's what I was told.

Maurice Bond in his book "The Story of Windsor" says that Spital is the area between King Edward VII Hospital and St Agnes Church, which agrees with what Lesley's grandmother said. Old maps show St Leonards Road as Spital Road going south from its junction with Alma Road. I'm not sure when Spital Road was changed to St Leonards Road, but it could have been about 1900.

One of my memories of school was that every day we had to show our handkerchief. I forgot mine and was sent home to get it. I complained that a little boy who didn't have his handkerchief was not sent home, but my mother said, "the school probably knew he didn't have one, but you did."

My sister was two years younger than me. When she was three, I wanted to take her to school – so I did.



Jean and her sister, Ruth (left)

I remember four childhood friends. Joan Hart lived in Victor Road, so we were neighbours.

Joan Stephenson, an only child lived in the village.

Kathy Carr lived in Windsor and went to the same secondary school. She was good at netball, I remember. I met Peggy Cole, an only child at secondary school. She was not really local, but we had a lot in common.

We children ran up 100 steps from Thames Street to Windsor Castle. There were great views from the East Terrace. There seemed to be no security then.



This is Ruth and me
with our cat, 'Bonzo'.
This was taken in the
garden at Victor Road.
You can see the swing
that our father made us.

Two of my aunts, Auntie Ede (Edith) and Auntie Ann, were apprenticed to the dressmaker at Caley's. Founded in 1823, it was very prestigious having previously made caps for Queen Victoria. Caley's was bought by John Lewis in 1940 but closed in 2006. The aunts left Caley's to set up their own dressmaking business. They made clothes for the wives of gentlemen-at-arms who lived in Windsor Castle.

When I was seven my great-aunt Carrie (who had fostered my mother) died from cancer and my great-uncle Alfred was on his own. So, my parents let their house in Windsor and the family moved into Tooting to look after my great-uncle. We stayed two years.



This photograph was taken at the time we were living in Tooting and went to Vera Tully's 14th birthday party in Muswell Hill. Vera Tully must have

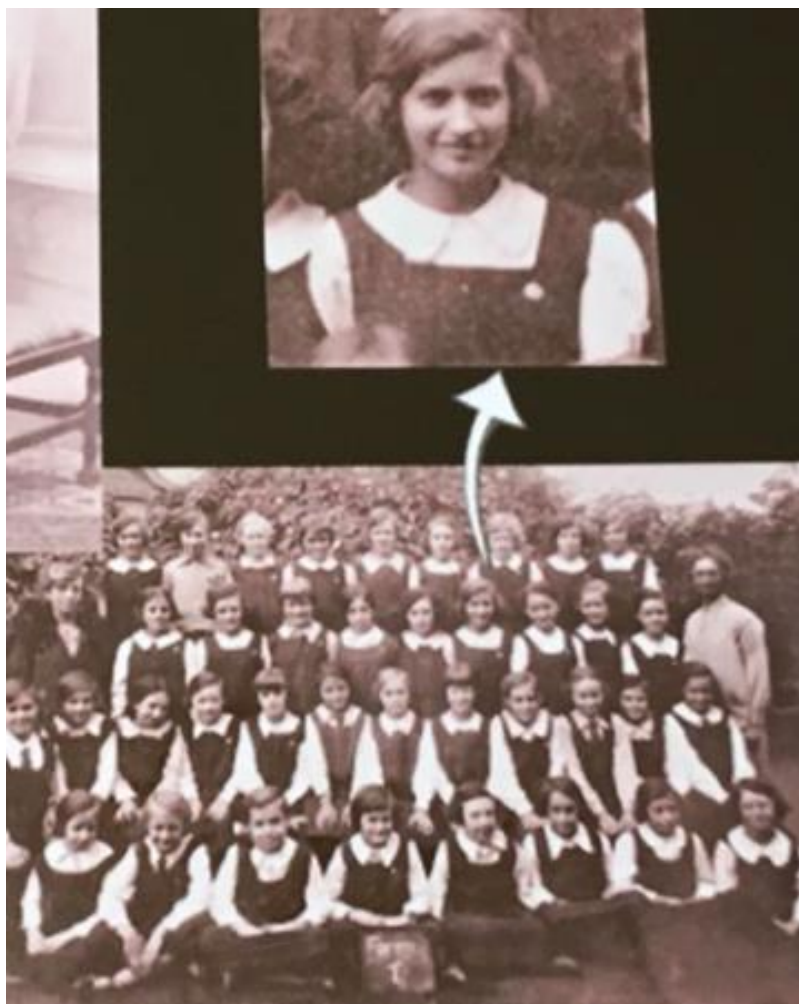
been a relation of Uncle Alf who was married to Auntie Carrie. The two children sitting in deck chairs are me and my sister Ruth. Vera Tully is standing behind me and her father and mother are behind. My father and mother are standing behind Ruth. The old gentleman with a beard is my mother's Uncle George. I don't know who the others are perhaps an aunt and uncle.

I did not like Uncle George. He came around with a plate of sandwiches and I was just about to take one when he said, "You've already got one" as I had a half-eaten sandwich on my plate. I felt so humiliated. It's the sort of thing children remember and keep remembering.

My mother's family were white collar workers; my father, bless his heart, was not. He was a carpenter and made the glass cabinet I've got in the hall. He was looked down upon.



The cabinet made by my father which stands in my hall.



Jean at school

When we moved to Tooting, I went to Hillbrook Road School which was a very big school with lots

of older children. I remember the lessons there; arithmetic and reading. At the start of the next school year I did not go up to the next class. I did well that next year and won a prize which was a book about zoo animals.

Empire Day was celebrated on 24 May and the whole school gathered on the playground. At age 8, (1927) it was the first time I heard the singing of *Jerusalem* by older children in a big choir.

Empire Day

It was not until after the death of Queen Victoria, who died on 22 January 1901, that Empire Day was first celebrated. The first 'Empire Day' took place on 24th May 1902, the Queen's birthday. Although not officially recognised as an annual event until 1916, many schools across the British Empire were celebrating it before then.

Each Empire Day, millions of school children from all walks of life across the length and breadth of the British Empire would typically salute the Union Flag and sing patriotic songs like *Jerusalem* and *God Save the Queen*. They would hear inspirational speeches and listen to

tales of 'daring do' from across the Empire, stories that included such heroes as Clive of India, Wolfe of Québec and 'Chinese Gordon' of Khartoum. But of course, the real highlight of the day for the children was that they were let out of school early in order to take part in the thousands of marches, maypole dances, concerts and parties that celebrated the event.

<https://www.historic-uk.com/HistoryUK/HistoryofBritain/Empire-Day/>

Learning to play the piano

It was when I lived in Tooting that I began to learn the piano. There was a piano in the house. My teacher was Miss Peyton who lived three doors down from us. She was very pleased with me because I passed my grade exam 'with honourable mention'. When the family moved back to Windsor my mother bought a beautiful new piano from Dysons in Windsor. I had lessons with Miss Crane, and I think I passed grade 4 or 5. Ruth also started lessons once we were back in Windsor. She could syncopate but I never managed that and always needed to play from sheet music.

I had a lovely book of Chopin Studies. Chopin is difficult but I did play one piece. I often used to strike up in the lounge and my sister told me my mother would stop what she was doing in the next room to listen: “Jean’s playing that lovely music” It was the Nocturne in E flat minor. I hear it on *Classic FM*, and I recognized it just this week.

My father worked for Johnson Matthey who were based at Hatton Garden. They are a science company; I don’t know what they employed him to do; probably maintenance work on their property.

After two years, the tenants in Windsor were due to move out and my great-uncle went to live with our cousins, so the family were able to return to Victor Road in Windsor. By that time, I was ten years old and so I was ready for secondary school.

Secondary school

Back in Windsor, I went to St Stephen’s School which was very near St Stephen’s Church. I started in the ‘B’ stream for a few years but my teacher realised I was clever and so I was promoted to Class 5A. The school used to go to

St Stephen's Church once a month. It was Anglo-Catholic and had nuns. During the services they used to shake the incense. I didn't like the smell at the time, but I went to Buckfast Abbey a few years ago where they had incense and I thought it was lovely. St Stephen's School had a big Mulberry tree in the playground which used to shed its purple fruit. Did we eat the fruit? I can't remember. I used to practise netball in the playground. I liked playing shooter; I was fairly tall for my age...and good at aiming.

Mrs Clancy, one of my teachers, knew that my aunts were needlewomen and she expected me to inherit needle skills; I told my aunties that something I had done wasn't very good and she had grumbled at me. My aunt, bless her, said: "I will help you make something, and we shall show her." My aunt helped me to make a little pouch – a sort of sachet - for my handkerchief; it had a ring for a fastener with button-hole stitch. My aunt advised me, but I did it all myself. Auntie took me round to Mrs Clancy's house. "This is what Jean can do." I was quite in awe of this teacher and I wasn't relaxed. I can't remember Mrs Clancy ever

encouraging me, but she did send me up to the A stream. I wasn't really very clever, but I was about the middle of the class in the A stream.

Mrs Clancy was a widow with a son who attended Bluecoat School in London.

When I was 14, I should have gone on to Class 6A but by then I was able to leave school. This was 1933 which was a time of depression and high unemployment. My father was out of work and I knew he was having a rough time so I told the school I would be leaving at Easter. I suppose the teachers checked with my parents. They agreed because they thought that was what I wanted to do.



Jean aged 12

The Great Depression

In October 1929, the [Stock Market Crash](#) in New York heralded the worldwide [Great Depression](#). The ensuing American economic collapse shook the world: World trade contracted, prices fell, and governments faced financial crisis as the supply of American credit dried up. Many countries adopted an emergency response to the crisis by erecting trade barriers and tariffs, which

worsened the crisis by further hindering global trade.

The effects on the industrial areas of Britain were immediate and devastating, as demand for British products collapsed. By the end of 1930, [unemployment](#) had more than doubled from 1 million to 2.5 million (from 12% to 20% of the insured workforce), and exports had fallen in value by 50%. During this time there were little to no unemployment benefits, so this mass unemployment led to many of Britain's population becoming impoverished. Government revenues contracted as national income fell, while the cost of assisting the jobless rose. The industrial areas were hardest hit, along with the [coal mining](#) districts. London and the south-east of England were hurt less. In 1933, 30% of [Glaswegians](#) were unemployed due to the severe decline in heavy industry.

Although the overall picture for the British economy in the 1930s was bleak, the effects of the depression were uneven. Some parts of the country, and some industries, fared better than others. Some parts of the country such as the [South Wales Valleys](#) experienced mass

unemployment and poverty, while some areas in the [Home Counties](#) did not.

The brightest spot was in home building. From 1926 through 1939 over 200,000 new houses were built every year, with the peak reaching 365,000 in 1936.^[14] Many suburban districts in London and other cities were built at this time, and Brighton shows many signs of more "high deco" home architecture.

In London and the [south east of England](#) unemployment was initially as high as 13.5%,^[11] the later 1930s were a prosperous time in these areas, as a suburban house-building boom was fuelled by the low interest rates which followed the abolition of the gold standard, and as London's growing population buoyed the economy of the [Home Counties](#).

The south was also the home of new developing industries such as the electrical industry, which prospered from the large-scale electrification of housing and industry. [Mass production](#) methods brought new products such as electrical [cookers](#) and radios into the reach of the [middle classes](#), and the industries which produced these prospered. Nearly half of all new

factories that opened in Britain between 1932 and 1937 were in the [Greater London](#) area.^[1]

Extracts from Wikipedia

After School

I started work as a shop assistant at the Token House. It was a very beautiful shop where Queen Mary took the Lascelles boys to buy a birthday present for Queen Elizabeth (that was before Easter, so I missed that excitement). There were 200 applicants for the job, but I got it. The owner, Mrs Pratt was a customer of my aunts' dressmaking business, so she knew that my family was not rich but honest.

The Token House sold beautiful ornaments at the front of the shop, glassware in the middle and wonderful china at the back. That was where I worked. I loved Shelly, Minton and Royal Doulton china. The hours were long: 9.00am – 7.00pm on weekdays and 9.00am to 9.00pm on Saturdays. I worked there for six months. Then my mother said, “that’s not what I want for Jean”, so I left and went to Commercial College run by Mrs Sheppard.

That's where I learned shorthand and typing. My father was able to help me because he had learned shorthand in his youth (when he was hoping to work in a solicitor's office). I passed exams and my shorthand speed was 120 words per minute. I was able to get a job in an Insurance Office in Slough. There, I remember, we listened on the radio to the wedding of Princess Marina and the Duke of Kent.

Later, I became a secretary in an office of British Bitumen Emulsions, which made tarmacadam for roads, in Slough Industrial Estate.

My mother insisted that I went to night school to learn French. My mother worked as a cook in domestic service; the recipes were very often in French so she had an inkling of the language and thought it would help me. It was only once a week

which wasn't really often enough for me to learn properly.



With my father at
Cliftonville near
Margate

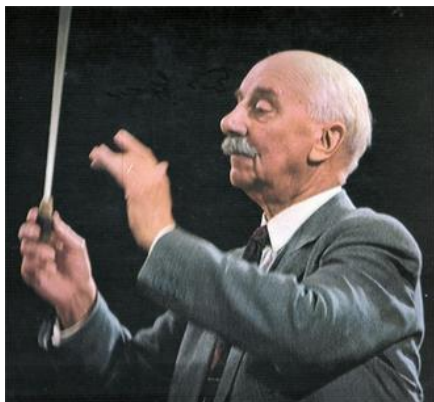
Ruth and I



My father got work with Joe Lyons working on maintenance jobs in London. His journey to work was very trying; it involved a 45-60-minute walk to the station to catch the 6.20 train to Waterloo. We moved into London to be closer to his work. My parents let their house again in Victor Road and were able to buy another house in 59 Rosemary Road, Whitton. They were able to afford the deposit because my mother had an insurance policy which matured; with that my parents bought a plot of land in Old Windsor opposite the Bells of Ousley, where Dad planned to build a bungalow; doing most of the work himself – window frames and that sort of thing. There were other plots being developed. The man who was building a big house in the adjacent plot offered to buy Dad's land so he could have a big garden. My father said, "No, I'm going to build here." The man didn't want that. When my father told mother, she said "if he wants it, he will have to pay double for it". Dad was working on the footings when the man came over. Dad said, "You'll have to pay double". The man refused but a week later he came back and said, "Yes" he would pay double. And that's how we had enough money to pay a deposit on the house in Whitton. The rent

from the Windsor house was enough to pay the mortgage. The large house and garden on the plot my father sold later belonged to Elton John.

Our new house at 59 Rosemary Road, Whitton was very near Twickenham Rugby Stadium. The house was also very near Kneller Hall, Military School of Music: we could hear them practising. Every week there was a concert and on one occasion it was conducted by a famous conductor, Sir Adrian Boult.



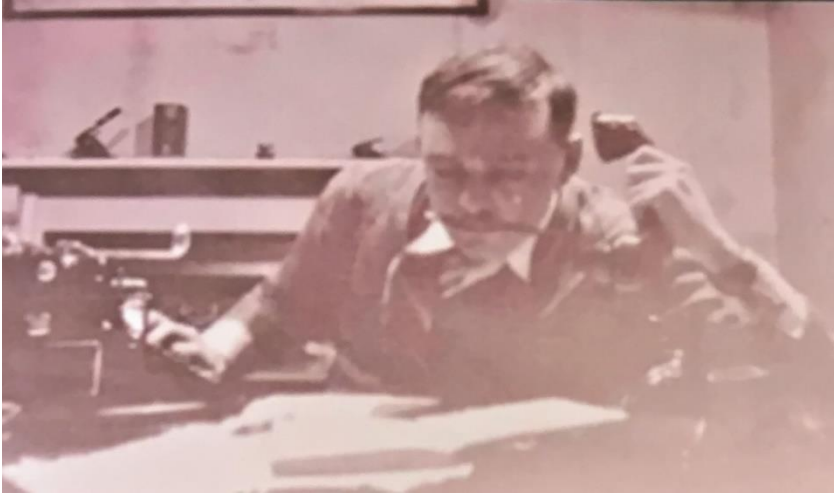
Sir Adrian Boult 1889-1983 was appointed director of music at the BBC. He founded the BBC Symphony Orchestra and became its chief conductor.

Wikipedia

I commuted back to Slough after the family moved to Whitton. I had to catch a train to Windsor and then a bus to Slough.

How I met Stan

I met Stan when working in Slough after I moved to London. He worked for the same firm in their London office (near Victoria) but had to go to Slough office to cover in the holidays. He offered to drive me home in his car because he thought I lived close by and then discovered I lived in Twickenham, He dropped me near Osterley to catch a bus home. There were plenty of buses, but none were going to Whitton. The bus conductor thought I was a bit confused. He said, "We're going to Hounslow and you can get another bus from there. I remember it was the No.27. We used to drive past Osterley many times subsequently and we always called it 'dangerous corner'.



Stan in his office

Stan telephoned me and asked for a date. I wasn't that keen, and I said he must meet my family.



Stan in 1937

He took me to Richmond. When we got home my mother gave him a nice supper.

We lived a long distance apart; Stan lived in Arnos Grove which was a long way from Whitton. I thought it was too far to travel and we didn't get on all that well, so the friendship dropped. Then I received a letter inviting me to his 21st birthday party in 1936. I said, "I'm not going all that way to make up the numbers." My mother said very quietly, "I would if I were you." "I'll be home late", I objected. "Dad and I will come and bring you

home.” So, I went. There were only four girls and all the rest were boys. Stan seemed fond of a girl called Edith; I didn’t mind and was having a good time with so many boys. I caught a train from Arnos Grove to Hounslow after 11.00. Everything was quite safe then. My parents met me at Hounslow station, and we walked (or got the bus) home. Later I got a call: Stan would like to see me. It turned out that other boys were asking Stan for my address; so that made him think, ‘Ooohhh!’



Stan and me in 1937. We are on a seaside promenade and the picture was taken by one of those photographers who used to snap holiday makers in the years before everyone had cameras.

Finding work closer to my London home

I sent lots of letters to firms on the Great West Road at Osterley because I wanted to work closer to home. The only company that replied was MacFarlane Lang, biscuit manufacturer. They said they had no vacancy at that time, but they would let me know when there was. I resigned my job in Slough and took a job in an estate agent in Hounslow. I had only been working for them two weeks when MacFarlane Land called me for interview. When I told my father, he said, "You've already got a job; you've only been there two weeks." I told the estate agents and they told me they were prepared to give me a rise in order to keep me. They said, "When you go for your interview remember that we will raise your salary."

At MacFarlane Lang I was given a shorthand and typing test which I passed. Mr Walker told me the wages and I said, "that's not as much as I'm earning now". He said, "I'm not prepared to bargain but you will get a rise in six months". I realised that there was more scope working for MacFarlane Lang, so I was very happy to take the job.

MacFarlane Lang

The business began as Lang's bakery in 1817, before becoming MacFarlane Lang in 1841. The first biscuit factory opened in 1886, and changed its name to MacFarlane Lang & Co in the same year. The business then opened a factory in Fulham, London in 1903, and in 1904 became MacFarlane Lang & Co Ltd . A new Victoria Biscuit Works with modern equipment was opened in 1925 in Tollcross. In 1948 it formed United Biscuits Ltd along with McVitie and Price.

I travelled by train from Hounslow to Syon Lane then had a short walk. The office was near the Gillette building with its clock tower which is still there.



MacFarlane Lang had a factory in Scotland run by John MacFarlane and the factory in Osterley was run by his brother Robert MacFarlane. The office was next to the factory. Some of the secretaries had come

from the Fulham office.



I loved being a secretary; I had very good bosses especially Mr Maxwell who was company secretary. I kept in touch with Ruby who worked for MacFarlane Lang in the typing pool. I have a letter Ruby sent me on my birthday in 1994, one year after Stan died. MacFarlane Lang was a very good firm to work for; they had a sports ground where I played tennis and did Keep Fit classes. They had a drama group and put on plays in the Pavilion. I took Hilda's part when she was ill. We didn't have

school plays, so it was my first time. Ruby left MacFarlane Lang to work in Hounslow Council Offices which was a reserved occupation so she would not be called up and would continue to look after her widowed mother.

World War II

It was 1940 and there was wartime rationing at the time of my 21st birthday. I had the party at home with friends and family. We didn't book a hall. My mother's sister, Auntie Alice was able to provide lovely crackers to decorate the table. Where she got them from, I really don't know. Auntie Em's husband Uncle Tom Kearvell was manager of the Home & Colonial Store in Godalming. I think he was able to send extra to my aunts, so they managed to let my mother have extra sugar. She was able to make a cake.... And she was able to make our wedding cake in 1944 too.

Rationing in World War II

Rationing began on 8th January 1940 when bacon, butter and sugar were rationed. By 1942 many other foodstuffs, including meat, milk, cheese, eggs and cooking fat were also 'on the ration'.

This is a typical weekly food ration for an adult:

- **Bacon & Ham** 4 oz
- **Other meat** value of 1 shilling and 2 pence (equivalent to 2 chops)
- **Butter** 2 oz
- **Cheese** 2 oz
- **Margarine** 4 oz
- **Cooking fat** 4 oz
- **Milk** 3 pints
- **Sugar** 8 oz
- **Preserves** 1 lb every 2 months
- **Tea** 2 oz
- **Eggs** 1 fresh egg (plus allowance of dried egg)
- **Sweets** 12 oz every 4 weeks

Stan was called up in 1941. He had a medical and was passed B2 (rather than A1) because of chest trouble. This meant he was posted to the Royal Pay Corps. Stan was very cross about this because he wanted to get out of office work. He was posted for most of the time to Oldham, but the climate did not suit him (his chest) so was moved to near Bournemouth.

We kept in touch with each other by letter writing and we met when he came home on leave. There were no young people around the place because they had all been called up. MacFarlane Lang stopped making their peacetime biscuits and changed to producing biscuits for the Services.

My parents encouraged me to get a reserve job so I would not be called up. I applied for a job as a hospital almoner. I was surprised that they contacted my boss at MacFarlane Lang to obtain a reference before I was interviewed. The head of the typing pool called me into a private office and talked to me for a long time persuading me to stay. I said, "I haven't had an interview yet." I decided not to go for interview; she talked me out of it, but

now MacFarlane Lang knew I wanted a reserve occupation.



This photograph of Stan with me must have been taken after 1941.

My sister was called up first and she went into the WAAF (Women's Auxiliary Air Force).

I got called up on in December 1942. Mr Maxwell offered to get my work designated as a reserved occupation, but I said I wanted to serve in the military and I too became a WAAF. I must have felt quite differently about joining up in 1942 having tried to get a reserve job earlier in the war; I

suppose I missed all the young people who had already been called up. But I should have thought of my parents with both their daughters in the WAAF. They never showed their concern; they were very good parents, ready with very good advice but they didn't interfere. Mr Maxwell kept in touch with me until his untimely death. Although it was just before Christmas, they insisted that I report for duty at Insworth, Gloucester, on 23 December. The stores were closed for Christmas and they couldn't give me a uniform. This meant that I, and other women who joined at the same time couldn't go to any Christmas celebrations because we were still in civvies.

I did my initial three-week training in Hereford. The training involved square bashing and route marches, but the base included the RAF School of Catering, so we had delicious food and as much as we liked. Stan and Mum met me at Paddington Station when my three-week training had finished. Stan said, "Doesn't she look well!" I had been very thin (seven and a half stone) but I had filled out in just three weeks.

The School of Catering food was a real treat after years of wartime rationing. Before I was called up my mother said, "don't think you can have sugar in your tea if you want me to make cakes." (My father and sister had saccharine in their tea). I don't know how my mother fed us on rations. My dad, like most people took sandwiches to work. A chap at work moaned, "Oh, paste again!". My Dad said, "You can't blame your wife. What else can they put in it?" My mother managed very well. Once I was in the services, we were given our own ration book so when we went home on leave mother could get our rations.

I became a Leading Aircraft woman (LACW) on the technical side.

I had to receive my technical training at RAF Cranwell, but I had a long wait (four months) to get there. In the meantime, they moved me round. One of the bases was at Stafford Maintenance Unit. It was an awful place and it's still there. It was January 1943. I was put in the adjutant's office which was so far from the huts where we were billeted on the base that I needed a bicycle. I told my friend Irene I was thinking of working as a

shorthand typist “if you do that, they’ll keep you here!” So, I kept my mouth shut.

Eventually, in April 1943 I got to Cranwell. It was a six or eight-week course and we had lovely dances every Friday evening with airmen training to be navigators. There wasn’t a band so we must have danced to records. I often wonder about what happened to the men I met at Cranwell.

After my training, I was an Aircraft telephone operator in flying control. This involved being a direction finder and communicating with aircraft to give them the direction they needed to return to base. I would work out the direction they were flying (in degrees); that would be passed to the plotters who passed information to the flying officer. (We had to be careful that we turned it the right way – otherwise we would be instructing the pilot to fly away!)

I was posted to Atcham (near Shrewsbury) and was billeted at Attingham Hall (now a National Trust property). We slept in the servants’ quarters on the top floor and ate our meals in the basement, but we were allowed into one room upstairs to use as a common room. This had a piano in it. When I was

home on leave, I took the opportunity to pick up my music and bring it back to Attingham Hall. I couldn't syncopate or play popular dance music, so they weren't very interested, and I didn't play much.

Atcham was a training station for American pilots. I only saw small fighter aircraft. We didn't like them; they wanted to be too friendly.

During that time an accident occurred where a pilot, flying solo, crashed. I imagine it was into the Wrekin, but I don't know. I picked up a very quiet voice and was able to give plotters the direction so that they could send an ambulance to recover the pilot. The plane must have been full of petrol and it caught fire. When they got there, they could only recover his boots. I was commended for my speed and accuracy in passing information to the plotters. The warrant Officer was very pleased. "I'll recommend you for your tapes," to become a corporal; but we were all posted elsewhere before then and I never became a corporal.

When the Atcham base was closed, I was posted to Nantwich in Cheshire where I worked with radar. Nantwich had a Receiver Station which was staffed

with WAAF and a Transmitter station run my male airmen. We had earphones and we were listening out. If we heard anything, we would report it. I don't remember hearing anything. It was a secret establishment because radar was being developed. I didn't have to sign the official secrets act but it was special; it's still a museum. The Receiving Station was on a farm run by a lovely couple called Wilton and Mary Jones. We went to their door for milk for our tea. We became good friends with them. When I went home on leave, they gave half a dozen eggs. Two WAAFs were on duty night and day listening out all the time. The transmitters operated by airmen were in another field.

We were picked up by RAF coaches and dropped off on the road. It was quite a long walk from the road, through the farm to the receiving station which was a separate building. If the cows were anywhere near, I hated it. I didn't like the cows.



We were billeted in the Brine Baths Hotel which was commandeered by the army and was then passed to the RAF. In 1948 it became a convalescent home for miners and was demolished in 1959.

Coming off duty one night the coach I was in was hit by a train; two were killed. I remember sitting at the back of the bus and falling, falling, falling but landed on the grass not on the rails. I was taken to hospital with concussion and injuries to my legs but they weren't broken – but I still have scars. My parents received a telegram to say I'd been injured. I was among those who were not badly injured and we could write letters. We gave money to the nurse

to buy stamps and post the letters. The nurse did not send the letters but kept the money. She could have posted the letter without a stamp because my parents would have been happy to pay the postage. My parents wondered why I hadn't sent them a letter to let them know I was recovering. My aunt was working for Lady Ampthill, Head of the Red Cross and my aunt happened to tell her that my parents were worried, so Lady Ampthill managed to speak to the powers that be, and she was able to talk to the hospital. She rang my parents' neighbour, Mrs Avery, who had a telephone and helped my parents speak to me in hospital by telephone so I could reassure them I was alright. When I was at home on sick leave and about to return my father said, "Remember to tell the officer about the letter," so I did, and the officer told me it was being dealt with but we never heard the outcome.

My sister who was stationed at Medmenham, working on a photographic station with Mary Soames, was posted to Nantwich to join me. She must have missed Medmenham where she was a shorthand typist. My sister who was a good letter

writer kept in touch with Mr and Mrs Jones, the farming couple, after the war. They gave up farming as a result of a foot and mouth outbreak in the 1950s.

After Nantwich I was posted to Wittering, near Stamford. Then after we married, I had a compassionate posting to Honsley South, 10 miles from Bournemouth to be near Stan.

The image shows an open military service record book. The left page, titled 'SERVED PARTICULARS', contains handwritten information for a woman named 'S. J. LACOCK'. The right page, titled 'REMARKS', contains a handwritten recommendation for her service.

SERVED PARTICULARS:

- NAME: S. J. LACOCK
- REGIMENT: R.T. 40
- COMPANY: 4th
- GRADE: P.O.
- DATE OF ENTRY: 19.1.19
- DATE OF LEAVE: 5.5.19
- REMARKS: from Lancs.

REMARKS:

This airwoman is an intelligent, hard working type who could always be relied upon to carry out conscientiously any duties assigned to her.

22/6/45

This is my reference

This airwoman is an intelligent, hardworking type(?) who could always be relied upon to carry out conscientiously any duties assigned

Married Life

We married on 19 February 1944 not long before D Day. My aunts made me a wedding dress of silk taffeta. My aunts who lived in Windsor and had worked for Caley's made it. It was unusual to have a wedding dress in wartime; most weddings the bride wore a suit. The wedding dress was passed around and used by my sister and a lot of my friends. I still kept it and I put it in the washing machine at some time and it washed beautifully!



My daughter's got it now. I said "wouldn't it be nice if your daughter were to wear

**My RAF
Service and
Release Book**



Wally was best man; Ruth was bridesmaid and
my father Alfred Barrettt gave me away

it." She can get into it but it's very plain and I think
they like something



My father provided the lovely bouquet.

different. I also had a lovely bouquet at my wedding. My father said he would supply the flowers; he might have known someone; I don't know but he arranged the

bouquets.

Wally was Stan's best man. At the end of the service, the verger asked Wally to pay for the ceremony, so he did. At the reception he mentioned that he had paid. Stan had paid the bill already and the verger was deliberately trying to gain a double fee. We reported the matter and I think the man was prosecuted for dishonesty.

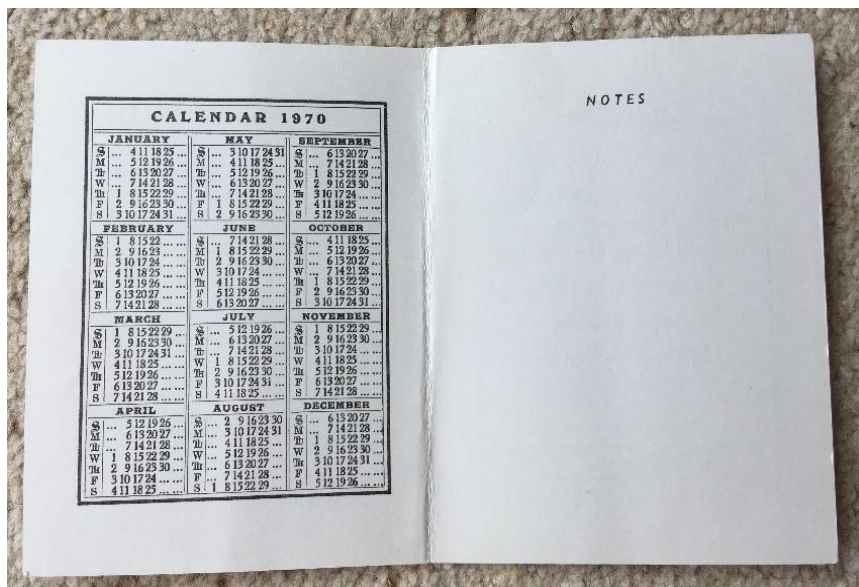
My wedding cake was a single storey cake made with fruit, marzipan and royal icing. My auntie (and Uncle Tom at Home & Colonial) were a great help in supplying fruit and sugar for it.

Married people were demobbed first, so I was demobbed on 28 August 1945. But I worked for the military, supervising a number of other civilians until Stan was demobbed in 1946.

Stan's new career

After Stan was released from the RAF, we had a holiday in a guest house in Croyde in north Devon. We became friends with another couple in the guest house and we all decided to hire a car to explore the area. Stan enjoyed this: "that's a nice job, I think I would like that." When we got home, which we shared with Stan's parents in Southgate, Stan started looking for a car with £100 his mother gave him. It was a small Ford. He could get a small amount of petrol on ration for domestic use, but he needed a lot more petrol for a driving business. He registered the business and obtained a disc with a government card and tried to get petrol with that. I remember Stan's mother saying to me, "Don't let Stan spend all his money trying to get petrol." I said

“No, no; no need to worry; I won’t let him. We’re doing this together. We won’t do anything rash” In the end, someone told us about Beverley Baxter the Conservative MP, who was helping servicemen get into employment. “Why don’t you talk to him?” I think it was his influence which helped Stan to get the petrol he needed. He was ready to launch his chauffeur driven car hire service. Then he had to get the clientele. He had 500 little cards printed with a calendar – ‘keep that date!’ My sister and her husband thought it was rather silly, but it worked. I have a later version from 1970 and a business card which says ‘established over than 35 years ago’ so that makes the date 1980s.



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The later version

The business started in early 1947. That was the very bad winter with snow and ice. That's what made him. Snow and ice were no problem to Stan. Stan's first customers were a couple who lived in Evesham Road up a hill near us. They were celebrating their engagement and they were so grateful to Stan taking them to where they wanted to go and picking them up afterwards. They didn't know how they would get there otherwise. My daughter, Claire is still in touch with their children. Very few people had cars, so he started to build a little business with customers from BBC and Livery

Companies. He also covered small journeys for local people – “nothing’s too small for me!”

The 1946-47 winter

The **winter of 1946–47** was a harsh European winter noted for its impact in the United Kingdom. It caused severe hardships in economic terms and living conditions in a country still recovering from the [Second World War](#). There were massive disruptions of energy supply for homes, offices and factories. Animal herds froze or starved to death. People suffered from the persistent cold, and many businesses shut down temporarily. When warm weather returned, the ice thawed, and flooding was severe in most low-lying areas.

Beginning on 21 January 1947, the UK experienced several cold spells that brought large [drifts of snow](#) to the country, blocking roads and railways, which caused problems transporting coal to the electric [power stations](#). Many had to shut down, forcing severe restrictions to cut power consumption, including restricting domestic electricity to nineteen hours

per day and cutting some industrial supplies completely. In addition, radio broadcasts were limited, television services were suspended, some magazines were ordered to stop publishing, and newspapers were reduced in size. These measures, on top of the low temperatures, badly affected public morale and the [Minister of Fuel and Power](#), [Emanuel Shinwell](#), became a [scapegoat](#); he received death threats and had to be placed under police guard. Towards the end of February, there were also fears of a food shortage as supplies were cut off and vegetables were frozen into the ground.

Wikipedia

I was working in a solicitor's office in Welbeck Street. They knew we had registered our business. One of them said, "what about tax - does your husband pay tax?" No, we hadn't thought of that. So, they recommended an accountant firm called

Andrews and Collins above the Midland Bank in Commercial Road near Spitalfields Market. The accountants were very helpful.

Bringing up our family in Southgate

Stan's parents Arthur and Frances Kate (nee Richardson) divided their home, 37 Telford Road, to provide us with a flat. We had a kitchen, bedroom and lounge dining room.

It was there they we had two daughters: Nanette born on 1 April 1950 and Claire born on 28 November 1952. When I told Stan, I thought Nanette was coming he said, "You're not catching me out like that" because it was April Fools' Day but I said "No, really!"



Granny Kate Lacock with Nanette. Kate Lacock died of cancer in 1952 (about the same time as George VI – 6 February). She was a lovely person – always laughing.



Jean with
Nanette at
about 3
months



Jean,
Nanette and
Stan

My sister, Ruth and I had four daughters in quick succession. I had Nanette first, then Ruth had Carolyn, then I had Claire and then Ruth had Susan; and I think my parents thought, “when are they going to stop?” Anyway, we did.



Claire at six months. The Marmet pram was chosen because it folded down to fit in our car



**Granny Barrett (Nelly), Nanette, Claire and Jean
(1953)**

We were now a family of four sleeping in one bedroom, so we wanted to look for a house. Alf discussed this with his two sisters who lived nearby, and he told them he would miss us. So, his sisters suggested splitting the house differently to give us the amount of room we needed. As a result, we had all the rooms downstairs and one-bedroom upstairs. Stan's father lived upstairs with a bedroom/sitting room and a kitchen. That's all he needed. He had a little shack in Jaywick, so he

used to go there a lot of the time, travelling by coach. He didn't use the rooms in Telford Road very much until he was ill. We lived like that until Stan's father died in 1957. They were the happiest days. I got to know so many people with children.

We bought a second-hand piano when Nanette was about 10. Claire at first showed no inclination to play. The piano teacher, Mr Jones, lived next door and could hear Nanette practising. He had a daughter two years older called Kathleen and they became great friends. One day they played a duet and Claire was very impressed and wanted to learn. So, she started having lessons with Mr Jones. Claire never practised and discovered it wasn't as easy as she thought it would be. After a year we stopped her lessons and Mr Jones thought that was the right thing.

When the girls were learning the piano, I asked my mother if I could give them my sheet music. My mother said, "I haven't got it. I have given it to the Scouts." My mother was always clearing out. There was a family, the Avery's, my mother was friendly with and their son was in the Scouts and he must have asked my mother if she had something

for a Scout event. My mother probably didn't have anything because she had cleared out so much; so, she picked up all this music and gave it to him. She could have given him one piece: there was a piece of music – *In a Monastery Garden* - my music teacher gave me that I didn't like: she could have given him that but not the whole lot! I didn't say anything at the time; I couldn't believe it and had no words, but I didn't blame her. Later, a few years before she died, she did say to me, "I cleared out a lot that I shouldn't have done." We didn't discuss it, but I took that to be an apology. The incident had probably preyed on my mother's mind for years. If she had discussed it sooner, she would have known it was alright.

When Stan's parents bought 37 Telford Road (the A406) in 1926 it was a very quiet road because so few people had cars. The milkman had a horse called Nelson. He was able to stop with his horse and deliver our milk. Stan's birthday was on July 6th, so we always ordered cream that day and had strawberries and cream. The milkman said, "That's my birthday too." So, he always remembered we needed cream that day.

When we were living in Telford Road there were lots of young families with children. We used to take them to school at Stanley Road. It was a happy time. The children would play together. They nearly always came into our garden. We had a shed and didn't keep much in it; they used to play all sorts of games. And then there was always

something going on at the school: sports day, concerts

Claire, Nanette and Patch



At Arnos Park



Stan built a big garage to keep the cars clean and ensure they were ready to take out.

Through the fifties and sixties traffic quickly increased on the A406 and it became a very busy road.



Claire and Nanette

Below is Claire in the front garden of 37 Telford Road.

There was a wide grass verge. It's part of the North Circular Road.

I have heard many houses have been demolished for road widening. The underground railway went

over it on a bridge which limited the road width but I expect they've dealt with that now.



Our holiday home in Jaywick Sands

It was a very sad story. Stan's auntie Kate owned a bungalow at Jaywick Sands. The area was flooded in the terrible North Sea flood in 1953 and Auntie Kate was drowned. She left the bungalow to Stan and we spent holidays there from 1953 to 1956 or 57. At that time we sold the bungalow and bought a piece of land opposite where we built another bungalow: but we made sure to include stairs to escape a future flood.



Claire and Nanette on Jaywick Sands

The **1953 North Sea flood** was a major [flood](#) caused by a heavy storm that occurred on the night of Saturday, 31 January 1953 and morning of Sunday, 1 February 1953. The floods struck the [Netherlands](#), [Belgium](#), [England](#) and [Scotland](#). A combination of a high [spring tide](#) and a severe [European windstorm](#) over the [North Sea](#) caused a [storm tide](#); the combination of wind, high tide, and low pressure led to a water level of more than 5.6 metres (18.4 ft) above mean sea level in some locations. The flood and waves overwhelmed sea defences and caused extensive flooding. The [Netherlands](#), a country with 20% of its territory below [mean sea level](#) and 50% less than 1 metre (3.3 ft) above sea level and which relies heavily on sea defences, was worst affected, recording 1,836 deaths and widespread property damage. Most of the casualties occurred in the southern province of [Zeeland](#). In England, 307 people were killed in the [counties](#) of [Lincolnshire](#), [Norfolk](#), [Suffolk](#) and [Essex](#). Nineteen were killed in Scotland. Twenty-eight people were killed in [West Flanders](#), Belgium.

Wikipedia

We had lots of holidays on Jaywick Sands. It was very small but had lovely sand, pleasant and safe bathing with little seaside shops. We had happy memories. Stan didn't like taking time away from his chauffer business but my sister Ruth and her husband used to go at Whitsun (with their children) and took Nanette and Claire.



40 Golf Green Road, Jaywick Sands

My parents moved from Whitton in 1958 to a bungalow only five or six miles from Jaywick at a place called Holland-on-Sea. They had been to Jaywick to visit us and saw that this bungalow was

empty and took a fancy to it but they hadn't made up their mind to move. When they returned the next year and it was still for sale they decided to buy it. I thought it was very big. I said, "It's a barn of a place". Houses built after the war were very restricted in size because of the shortage of materials so Ruth's bungalow near Heathrow was not as large as she would have liked. When she saw my parents' bungalow she exclaimed, "Oh! This is lovely". It had a lovely kitchen and everything but I realised looking at my father's letters that as they got older they wanted something smaller. They remained in the bungalow until my father died in 1975. Then in 1976 my mother moved into a small flat to be near Ruth in Ashford near Heathrow. My mother died in 1982.

Television in the 1950s

We bought our first television in 1955 or 1956. Friends were having a new set and offered to sell their old one so Stan's father bought it for £6 on condition that he could come downstairs and watch programmes that he liked. It had a very small screen but we had a magnifier in front.



The children used to like watching *Andy Pandy*, *the Woodentops* and *the Flowerpot Men*, Bill and Ben and Weeeeed. We used to watch 'What's My Line' with Gilbert Harding and Isobel Barnett, 'This is Your Life' with Eamon Andrews and gardening programmes with Percy Thrower and later, Geoff Hamilton. Stan was not interested in sport and

didn't watch Grandstand on Saturdays; in any case Stan was always busy on Saturdays. Actually, he was interested in motor sport, especially the Le Mans 24-hour race and Motor Rallying. We did enjoy *University Challenge* with Bamber Gascoigne and anything to do with space; there was talk about going to the moon in the 1950s; I thought it was impossible and would never happen. Now we're celebrating the 50th anniversary!

More about Stan's Chauffeur business

Originally Stan had a small Ford but later he bought an **Austin 18**.



When Stan's father died in 1957, he left us the house and money which Stan used to buy two limousines - Austin Princess - which were used for weddings and funerals. I think with the cost of them really, we should have done very much more business. I said to our accountant, "We haven't made a fortune." He said, "No, but you have made a living." And I said, "Yes, that's the main thing." But of course, it took up all our social life. Stan was so conscientious; he didn't want to miss a call. Later on, the girls used to say, "You should retire, Dad."

But he said, "No, I'll go on until I drop"; he was still working until he had to give up with his illness.



The Austin Princesses

ambulance drivers or firemen who worked shifts and were available to drive for us at odd times.



**Stan the
Chauffer**

Living in 72 Morton Way

In 1968 we sold 37 Telford Road and moved to 72 Morton Way, Southgate. I didn't think Stan would want to move from the A406, but Stan loved Morton Way. The road was lined with Japanese Cherry trees and backed onto Arnos Park. It was built in 1934, I remember seeing the deeds, and was a lovely house; it had the same number of rooms as 37 Telford Road, but they were bigger,

and it had a lovely garden. There was a garage which took one car. When we lived in Telford Road it was on the main road and nobody worried about us running a business from there, but when we moved to 72 Morton Way it was a different environment. I said to Stan, "We won't be able to have cars up here." But we had already thought about expanding and having an office. A little shop which had been a delicatessen was advertised for rent so we took it as our office with a sign 'Lacock Car Hire'. There was a garage at the back which took one of the limousines; the other was parked outside the shop. The shop had to be stripped out

and my father, the carpenter was a great help
although we got builders to do some of the work.



The back garden of 72 Morton Way



There's a photo of Stan and me with Ann and Ray Myhill. Ray was in the Pay Corps with Stan and they stayed great friends. Ray and his mother rented a house in Bournemouth.

Ray's mother was a pianist and Stan liked composing lyrics. So, we had good evenings of music and songs. We went to Tin Pan Alley and met Billy Cotton who was a lovely chap – not at all pompous. Stan showed him lots of songs he had composed. Billy Cotton said, "one of them might be popular but I can't take it on."

Holiday memories

In 1964 we spent an Easter holiday in Guernsey; the girls were fed up with going to Jaywick all the time. We stayed in a hotel with a swimming pool.

Claire was the energetic one who spent a long-time swimming although it was very cold. We had a self-drive car and toured the island. We went to St Martin, such a pretty part of Guernsey. I have often thought I would like to go there again.



The dog was not ours. It must have belonged to another guest and got into the picture. We took a boat to Sark. When we set out it was very good weather but soon changed, the sea became very rough and we were all ill. We didn't see much of Sark; we only managed to go into the local pub; someone said whisky would settle my stomach, so I had a little whisky and then we returned. We just waited for the boat to take us back. When we got back to the hotel we told the proprietor what happened and he said, "Oh if you'd told me you were going to do that I would have warned you against it because I knew the storm would be coming up".



In 1969 we had a holiday in Majorca, at the Palma Nova. Magaluf was not commercialised then; now it's built up and rowdy, I think.

Art in the family

When we had a little more time, Stan and I decided to go to night school together. I suggested upholstery but Stan said he would prefer art. I appreciate art but I am not good at drawing.

Stan was good at art and I have a still life that he painted at night school on my wall.



My grandchildren take after Stan. I have a large still life that Claire painted for her A level and Annabel painted a lovely picture of a swan which is hanging in my hall.



Grandchildren and Great grandchildren

Nanette married Keith and they have two daughters, Annabel (born 28 June 1978) and Amy (born 2 February 1981).



Nanette, Annabel, the first grandchild with Great Granny Nelly (Barrett) and Granny Jean (1978)

My second grand child, Amy was born on 2 February 1981 when Nanette and her first husband Keith had moved to the United States and were living in Seattle. We planned to be there in time for the birth which was due on 21 February. Stan said, "Well, we'll go three weeks early and then we'll have two weeks in San Francisco and tour California, and we'll go to Seattle when the baby's born." We were on our way – on the plane – when Nanette got a call to say the baby had arrived!



“There’s no need to get a message to them; they’re booked to San Francisco and it will worry them.” When we landed, Stan said, “Shall we ring them?” and I replied, “No. Wait until we get to our hotel.” When we phoned from the hotel, Keith said “You’re in the wrong place.” “Are we?” “Yes, the baby’s here! Have two days to get over your flight, then fly to Seattle.” So that’s what we did.



This is a photo of
Annabel, Great
Granny and Amy.



Summer 1983 in the garden of 72 Morton Way



Amy, me and Annabel,
Christmas 2010

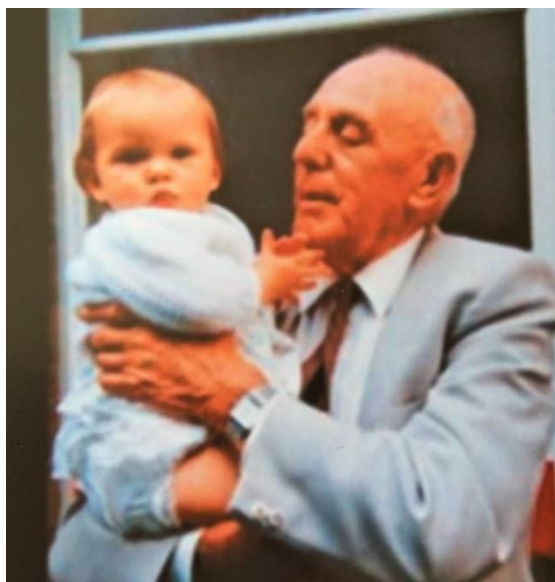
Claire has a daughter, Fiona (born 24 September 1987) and a son, Angus (born 25 July 1989).

Fiona as a new-born





Claire, the proud mother



Stan
holding
Angus

Stan wanted a
grandson. I
was so
pleased when

Angus was born. I could ring him and say, “you’ve got a grandson!”



Ian, Fiona, Claire and Angus



Fiona and
Angus with
Stan and
Jean in
Amersham in
1989

Nanette's daughter, Annabel and her husband Robbie produced my first great grandchild, Darcey Jean (born 31 March 2017 in San Diego)



Annabel brought Darcey Jean to see me at Christmas 2017. I think they found it very cold.

Fiona and her partner, Alex have just produced my second great grandchild born on 11 August 2019. They are calling her Martha Jean. Fiona is a solicitor

and Alex is a barrister. They live near Cannonbury in London.



We are a very close family; also, with my sister's family my nieces.... I think we were always a close family. I hear so much from people I know about their families and the trouble they have, and I think: I was so lucky. One of my friends has two grown up children that will never meet on any occasion and she doesn't know the cause. Well, actually if it

had been me, I would have asked. They often say I'm inquisitive. I'm not, but I am interested; but I said if there's anything you don't want to tell me, you don't have to tell me. Of course, I respect their privacy too..... What I would have done without my family when I lost Stan, I really don't know.

Cats



Stan and me with our cat, Simon. After we had to have Patch put to sleep, I said, “We won’t have another one.” The girls had different ideas. They had a look in the local pet shop and came back and said, “We’ve seen such a lovely kitten. Can we have it?” I gave in and that’s

how we acquired him.



I adopted Holly in 2006. Nanette was moving to Grenada and Amy was starting university, so they were looking for a good home for Holly. I was recovering from a heart attack and I made the decision to take care of Holly. I had a cat flap put in

the door. I had Holly for eight years. She was such a dear: a great companion. I do miss her.

She only had one eye after a car accident in Stoke Poges. Nanette found her upstairs on the bed with one eye hanging out. They took her to the vet who said the eye could not be saved but the other eye was OK. Nanette said, "Holly is a very lively cat; I wonder how you'll manage?" In fact, Holly was no problem; "Of course your home is quieter," she said.

Minneapolis 1984

This was where Nanette and her first husband, Keith lived after Seattle. Keith had a job in Atlanta with United Airlines, and they lived very close to the airport. Nanette could not stand the noise and the heat. Keith had to travel to Minneapolis every fortnight, so they decided to move to Minneapolis. Keith flew home at weekends.

We stayed in a neighbour's house belonging to Judy and Jeff MacFarlane so that Nanette's daughter Amy would not have to give up her bedroom. Judy and Jeff had already stayed with us in Southgate a year before; when they were planning to travel to London they asked, "do you know good and

of a
bed



breakfast in London?” and Nanette’s husband said, “Yes, stay with Jean and Stan.” We took them to the Lake District, but they were unimpressed because the USA had much bigger lakes. They took us to see some of them; yes, they were big, but they had no scenery.

Paris.... twice

Stan and I spent four days in Paris. We travelled by Hovercraft to Boulogne and then caught a train to Paris. We took a boat up the Seine and had a wonderful view of Notre Dame Cathedral from the river. Stan’s camera was everywhere. I wanted to go to the Louvre but there was a queue to get in. Stan would never queue anywhere, so we went to a part of the Louvre across the road. It only had

ceramics. I was so disappointed not to see the paintings.



returned on Eurostar for a Boxing Day treat recently. It was a surprise present. I was spending Christmas with Nanette and Robin. She tried to get hold of my passport but couldn't find it, so she had to ask me but pretended it was to play a game. I said, "I can use my old passport." "No", they said, "It has to be your current one." On Christmas Day I unwrapped my present and there was a ticket to go on Eurostar the very next day! We went there and back in a day, starting at 8.00am and travelling first class to the Gare du Nord. We had lunch on

the Champs Elysee and then went into Notre Dame where we lit candles for our loved ones. We walked along the Seine and then took the train home.



The photo below on our patio with Amy and Annabel was also taken in 1991



Here's a portrait
of me and Stan
taken in 1991 in a
studio in
Chesham

Stan died of cancer on 5 February 1993. Macmillan Nurses wanted to move him to hospital, but I wanted to nurse him at home. I'm very proud that I nursed Stan as well as my own mother and father who all died at home. Stan had a wonderful sense of humour and would delight in the play on words. Nanette has inherited that trait and they used to word play against each other. When he

died Nanette said, "I miss that way we used to joke with one another."

The girls and my grandchildren were very good at coming every week to check on me. I was alright but it made more sense for me to move to Amersham to be near them. When I moved to Little Chalfont in 1993, I was able to help with the grandchildren. "You do far more for us than we do for you," they said, but now the tables are turned.



Family
gathering in
Stoke Poges
1993

After Stan died, I went to a bereavement club run by Cancer Research once a month. I met Bill there. I needed to go there by bus but Bill offered to take me home. He became a family friend.

Lake Windemere 1993

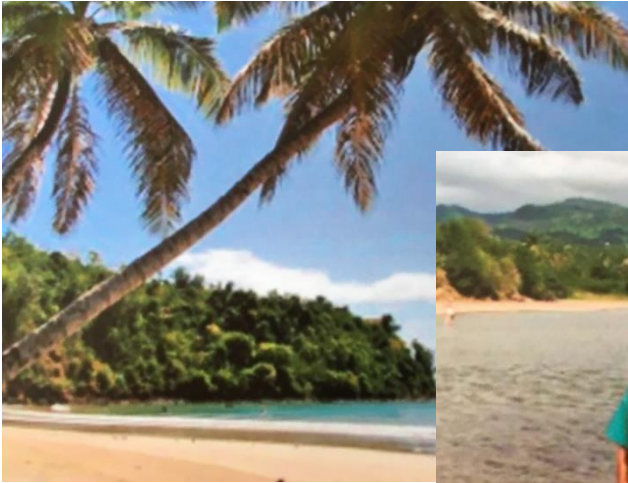


I went on holiday with Nanette, Robin and Gladys, Robin's mother. It was my first holiday after Stan died.

We drove to Scotland and broke our journey at Kendal in the Lake District. We stayed in a B&B there.

Grenada

Nanette and her second husband Robin have a house there, I have been to Grenada seven times between 2004 and 2010.

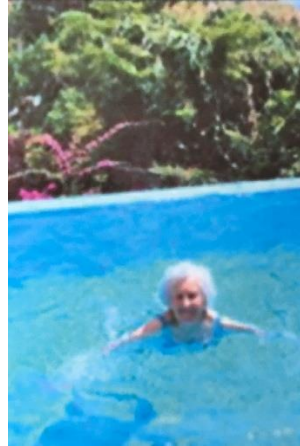


Robin worked for the
Department of
International

Development first in Tanzania and then was offered
a job in the Caribbean. Before he accepted the
post, he took Nanette to see Grenada. She fell in
love with it and agreed to go out to Grenada with
him. The girls were at university by this time and
were able to look after themselves, Nanette and
Robin started with a very nice three bedroom flat in

lovely grounds and then they purchased a house which needed a terrific lot doing to it. While Nanette was being taken around the house by the agent, I was sitting on the veranda I thought: 'this looks terrible' but I told myself, 'Jean, don't say anything, don't say anything'. Nanette declared about the basement: "we saw a dead rat in there"'Oh no, Oh no!' But they turned it into a lovely house and constructed a large swimming pool. That's me in the pool aged 91! The water was usually warm with the sunshine. I only wish my husband could have enjoyed it. He loved the sun and the sea.

The Hotel Calabash not far from them had apartments in the grounds and one of them belonged to Lord Thorneycroft a well- known MP. The hotel allowed you to go on their private beach if you had lunch at their beach restaurant.



Lord Thorneycroft

Peter Thorneycroft served a Chancellor of the Exchequer in Harold Macmillan's Conservative government between 1957 and 1958. He resigned with two junior Treasury ministers (Enoch Powell and Nigel Birch) in protest at increased government spending. He was made Baron Thorneycroft and died in 1994.

Wikipedia

I had beautiful holidays. Nanette and family would come to Amersham for Christmas and my birthday.

I went back to Grenada with them and would then return to Little Chalfont on my own. I had assistance, of course.

Nanette and Robin spend six months in Grenada and six months in Seer Green.

Bosham

We have been going every year for four days for the last five or six years. We usually go the week after Wimbledon. It's not too far for Nanette to drive (90 minutes). Claire does the caring while we're away. We have a large room on the ground floor with twin beds, a settee, easy chairs and our own private garden. The food is very good, and they allow me to have two starters because the main servings are too big for me.



Race for Life 2002



Gladys, Nanette's mother-in-law and I took part in this. It was five kilometres. I think we were the two eldest. We walked it together and we were the last to finish, of course. Nanette and Robin came back to check we were OK, but we did finish it. It was quite an achievement for us at age 83.



Dancing at Claire's 50th birthday party 2002

Christmas 2003



I bought this white piano for Claire's family when I moved to Little Chalfont. There was a piano shop in Little Chalfont when I moved here; then it moved to Hazelmere. I think we bought it in Hazelmere. Fiona took a fancy to it and she still has it. She took it with her when she moved to London. I can't play anymore because I can't see the music.

Buckingham Palace Garden Party 2015



It was the centenary of the Blind Veterans, previously known as St Dunstan's. The Queen was attending the celebrations of the Women's Institute centenary on the same day, so our

party was hosted by the Duchess of Wessex. Claire took me. In October of that year Nanette took me to a Service of Thanksgiving in Westminster Abbey.

Duxford 2015

Towards the end of the war two airmen landed at our base in a Rapide biplane. "We are flying to Suffolk to pick up some eggs and we can take two WAAFs." I was chosen because my officer knew I would behave. We had a view of Suffolk from the plane, picked up the eggs and flew back. When I told this story to Terry and Trevor of Classic Wings at Duxford, they said they had a restored Rapide.

“Will you be able to get in?” “Yes, of course”, I replied so they took me up in it for a half hour flight.



Bletchley Park 2017



We went there two years ago, 2017, I did have to have a wheelchair to push me around. I was very interested to hear that Alan Turing's image has been put on the £50 note. He died when he was only 40. Just think what he might have achieved if he had lived another 40 years.

My sister Ruth



My darling sister, Ruth at Annabel and Rupert's wedding.

She and her husband lived in Ashford very near Heathrow, but they didn't get any noise because they weren't under the flight path. She died six years ago, aged 92. We were very happy together. I miss her very much; she used to ring up and, goodness, she remembered so much about days gone by.

Her daughters sold the bungalow to the drummer in the Jools Holland band. The property had a lot

of land because it was on a corner, so he was able to enlarge it.

Remembering Stan



We gave a seat in Stan's memory to the Memorial Garden in Stoke Poges where Stan's ashes are interred. The seat looks over the lake. The family came to remember Stan on 6 July 2018. It was a very happy day. I remember it was beautifully sunny. We walked through the gate to the little church where Gray's *Elegy* was written, and the wedding bells were ringing. It was beautiful. I thought, what a lovely day, remembering Stan.