

CHAPTER I



'Frank' Hudleston - Joan's father.



'Frank' Hudleston's favourite photo of Joan



Evelyn Hudleston
Circa 1918

On the back of the old photographs, Joan's mother had written "Self with Marion, Helen, Dick and Jim, April 10th 1913." A stranger might have looked in vain for Dick and Jim, but Joan knew Jim as one of her mother's nicest friends, a young Irishwoman whose real name was Mary Reagan, who understood all about Joan's imaginary friends and even seemed to see and hear them as clearly as Joan herself did.

Dick had been more of a stranger, but Joan had noted her ink-stained right forefinger and wondered if she could be what people called, "A Lady Novelist."

In the photo, the five of them were not standing in a stiff solemn row, but lying on a grassy bank, as if at a picnic, with arms round each others shoulders and smiling very happily. Their clumsy long serge skirts were tucked carefully around their ankles, and their hair had been arranged as attractively as the styles of 1913 could permit.

Eve, Joans mother, wore a velvet headband to control the waves of thick brown hair on each side of her centre parting, the rest of it swept up and secured to pads, with a multitude of hairpins which were always getting lost.

Marion Campbell's hair was put up in much the same style, but it seemed more charming on Marion because her forehead was higher than Eve's, her eyes larger and her expression much gentler, or so it seemed to Joan who admired

Marion very much, but could never understand why people made such a fuss of her own mother.

Helen Fischer, a Poetess, and had actually had some of her verses printed in magazines, wore her fair hair plaited into a thick coronet all round her head, and this made her look splendidly dignified, but a little top-heavy, so that it was not alarming as a head mistress, but in Joan's eyes rather comical.

Mary Reagan, who didn't give a fig for fashion, simply twists her rather mousy hair into a bun on the nape of her neck. Dick Kendrick, the oldest and most emancipated of the five, had dared to have her hair cut like a mans, after all, it was cool and comfortable; easy to keep tidy, and she didn't give a damn what people thought anyway.

The camera was one of the early folding Kodaks, and it belonged to Marion, the only one of the friends with an income considerably higher than £500 a year. But, with the exception of Eve, the other young women were unaware of the fact, it being considered in bad taste to talk about money, except for an occasional moan amongst married women, about the cost of servants wages.

The photo had been taken in the grounds of Holloway Prison by a friendly wardress, who had secretly sympathised with the suffragettes and had been delighted to record the happiness of the five young women on the day of their release from what had turned out to be so much more terrible than any of them had anticipated.

They had been arrested and imprisoned three months previously, as Rioters and Disturbers of the Peace, being members of the Women's Social and Political Union, presided over by the brilliant Emmerline Pankhurst and her two daughters. Eve had disturbed the Peace with a crash by hurling a large stone through one of the plate-glass windows of Swan and Edgar's shop at Piccadilly Circus; a small wiry woman, with muscular arms and an unerring aim she managed, at the same time, to demolish what she considered a hideous pink vase in the centre of the window display, and felt a glow of satisfaction, especially when a male voice in the crowd behind her exclaimed, "Good Shot, By Jove!"

Eve had made arrangements for Joan, who was only six at the time, to stay in Surrey with one of her Godmothers, who had a daughter of Joan's age; this was in the event of Eve getting into any kind of a jam. The Godmother had been pleased to give Joan a temporary home, being a suffragette herself, but in order not to upset her husband unduly, she had avoided the W.S.P.U. and joined

the Freedom League, founded by the universally respected Mrs Despard, who deplored the violent methods of the W.S.P.U. which had been a splinter group from her own Association, and caused her considerable distress.

CHAPTER 2

Since her divorce, Marion had lived quite happily in a pretty Edwardian house about a mile from Barnet. It was furnished austere, in a reaction from what Marion called, “Victorian Stuffiness,” but the garden was a riot of flowers, and there were apple trees bordering a big lawn, with a hard tennis court beyond.

Sometimes Marion's elder sister, Nell, came to stay. She had never liked her brother-in-law, had thought him pompous and dull, and a quite unsuitable husband for the lively Marion so, when the marriage came to an end, Nell secretly rejoiced, and stood up for her sister when their mother talked about the “disgrace of it, and letting the family down”. Mr Bardens, their father, had refused to discuss the matter except to say firmly, “the important thing now is that our Marion is happy again, and personally I never much liked the fellow”. “But he was good looking,” wailed Mrs Bardens, “and they could have given us such beautiful grandchildren!”

A grunt was Mr Bardens only comment. He felt that there was already enough grandchildren romping through the grounds of his beautiful manor house, and any additions to their number would have been hard to endure, on top of all his wife's animals.



Photo: Joan Hudleston

Her hobby was breeding toy-dogs, and what with the Pokes barking and squabbling in their dog-runs on the South lawn, and the even more maddening yaps of the Poms as they ran round and round the dining-room table at meal-times, there was precious little of that rural peace he had longed for after retirement.

He was particularly irritated by the sound of their skittering claws on the parquet floor. Why couldn't his wife have settled for Persian cats? They at least moved soundlessly and kept their mouths shut most of the time. Come to think of it, he liked cats a lot better than dogs.

He felt a trifle guilty about this unmanly preference until somebody at a dinner-party pointed out that dogs were the slaves of their masters, but cats had minds of their own, and that some poet-fellow had written, "The dog will come when called. The cat will walk away."

He decided to give Marion a tabby cat for her 25th birthday. He would get Sampson, his chauffeur, to drive him down to Barnet on the day, to buy a cat basket. His wife might or might not decide to come too, depending on whether she had forgiven Marion.

This Votes for Women business had, of course, upset her still further, especially the sorry affair of Holloway. However she'd seemed resigned about that lately, particularly as many of her cronies had daughters or grand-daughters who had been joyfully letting steam off for the 'Cause', and quite a number of the older and more sedate mothers and aunts were even boastful about their girls activities. Whereas in previous years, they had anxiously totted up suitors or 'swains', they now collected data of the rebels more lawless doings, and every tea-party was enlivened by sensational anecdotes.

Only a minority of husbands and fathers wished the women well.

Some of the men shrugged the whole business off and dismissed it as, "just another craze". Most of them were strongly against Women's Suffrage. Not a man among them was aware of what History had in store for them all in 1914; the War which would settle the question for all time since their women took work hitherto considered the business of men only.

CHAPTER 3

When the five released prisoners had parted from each other, somewhat tearfully, and gone their separate ways, Marion, who had been collected from Holloway by Nell in their parents Daimler, with Sampson driving, sat in the back seat and was told to look inside a round basket which Nell picked up from the seat beside Sampson.

“Oh what an adorable creature!” cried Marion. It was a Skye terrier puppy with a silky grey coat parted down the centre of its back from neck to tail, the coat hairs almost reaching to the level of its paws. The whiskery muzzle and large brown eyes, and ears, were an enchantment to Muriel who had never before seen a terrier of this breed. She and the puppy fell in love at first sight, and Nell said, “Her name is Tilda. She is an aristocrat, as you can see, and even house-trained at 3 months old. Father and I thought she would be a nice companion for you in Barnet, and she is a welcome home present from us both. Actually Father was thinking of a cat, for you, but when he saw Tilda in the pet-shop, he changed his mind.”

Having given her sister a big hug, Marion asked anxiously, “How is Mother feeling now? Still furious?”

“Getting over that stage, thank goodness, and oh, Marion, our big Arthur Yeovil has at last realised he can’t live without me, and has told Father and Mother, and they are both delighted.” She removed the glove from her left hand and showed Marion the emerald ring Arthur had given her.

“It’s beautiful,” said Marion, adding, “and I’m sure you’ll make more of a success at marriage than I did.”

Guessing what Nell was about to say, she added hastily, “and it wasn’t his fault, truly. It’s just that I can’t seem to tolerate the physical side if it darling, and never shall.”

“Oh wait until you meet the right person!”



“No, I shall never marry again, I'll be quite happy living with Tilda - and you'll be happy too, my Sweet?” she said, giving the pup an affectionate squeeze.

Nell insisted that Marion should go straight up to bed, after they arrived at the Barnet Cottage, as she called it in her own mind, although it was rather grandly called, ‘Woodlands’.

She gave Sampson a meal in the kitchen of cold chicken, ham and Heinz baked beans, with a bottle of Bulwer's Sparkling Champagne Cider, all from the picnic hamper they had brought from Bishops Street. While Sampson ate, Nell boiled two eggs and spread slices of bread and butter with the family's favourite, ‘Patum Pepperonies’, or ‘Gentleman's Relish’. Foraging in the basket for something sweet, they found two packets of Fry's chocolate and a box of Carlsbad plums.

Sampson didn't much fancy these, so Nell left him with half the chocolate and asked him to carry the thermos of coffee upstairs. As they climbed the stairs Sampson said, “It's like the good old days when you and Miss Muriel were schoolgirls on holiday.” Nell answered that they had been very lucky to have so many people to attend to their smallest wishes. She did not add that she had always felt a sense of guilt at the unfairness of the great gulf between the haves and the have-nots.

When they reached Marion's room, Sampson tucked the thermos under his arm and having knocked on the door, opened it with a flourish.

“Oh what a nice man Sampson is!” exclaimed Marion, after he had gone back to the kitchen. “I do hope he is having a good meal!”

“Well, he's got chicken, ham and baked. beans, washed down with a bottle of cider, plus a fairly large chocolate. Though I suppose his wife would substitute roly-poly or treacle tart for the chocolate, or perhaps merely a sensible rice pudding. Oh Nell, do you remember those ghastly tapioca puddings we used to have at school? and the time Cook forgot to put the sugar in?”

“I think that must have been after I left,” said Nell, “but what I will never forget, is the day we had chocolate blancmange and Miss Kidd took one mouthful of it, then rushed out of the room with a scarlet face.”

“The case of the calamitous cockroach. Of course I remember that because I wrote an article about it for the school magazine, and the committee were too prim and proper to print it.”

“Perhaps,” suggested Nell, “it was only that they didn't want to upset poor Miss Kidd all over again.”
And so they passed a happy hour with school-day reminiscences, but neither felt inclined to discuss Marion's experiences in prison. Not just yet anyway.

CHAPTER 4



Nell and Sampson tidied the kitchen, washed the dishes, and put any left over food in the larder for Marion to have the following day.

The house, in Marion's absence, had been cleaned from attic to cellar and over the last week, aired through and thoroughly warmed by her amusing charwoman, Mrs Lock, who had even put flowers from the garden in various rooms.

Before she left, Nell took up some chicken, and a bowl of water for Tilda, who had been snoozing in her basket on the floor by Marion's bed. She felt sad not to be able to spend the night in Barnet, but had promised, the following day, to attend the wedding of one of her cousins to be celebrated in the Norwich Cathedral. Arthur was also invited, and was to accompany the Bardens family, and had offered to drive them over in the Daimler, as it happened to be Sampson's day off.

After her sister left, and before it got too dark, Marion ventured to take Tilda, basket and all, down into the garden for a run, and was delighted when the puppy came straight back to the basket, after relieving herself. All the same Marion thought, she would buy her a collar and lead just to be on the safe side, a green one would be nice. That first night back at home, Marion slept soundly and so did the utterly contented Tilda.

As the spring weeks slipped by to the end of April, Marion began to feel restless, especially after receiving an affectionate letter from Eve, giving news of their Holloway friends. Jim was living in Ilford sharing a 'horrid little flat', with a friend who was inclined to be bossy. Helen had had another poem

accepted by John O' London's Weekly, and Dick had obtained an excellent job as secretary to the Principal of one of the Women's Colleges at Oxford.

Eve, herself, was out of a job at the moment. Her alimony paid the rent of the Graves Inn Square flat, she hated, and Joan was still with her godmother and little girl Rhoda.

Eve sent a letter to Marrion signed, "Your ever loving Eve."

This letter brought everything back vividly, to Marion; the delightful companionship; the fun they had inventing a code to tap messages, when one of them was in solitary confinement; the uniform with arrows going up and down on the tunic, and round and round on the skirt. She thought it had been fading from her mind, but Eve's letter brought back more starkly the memories of the hunger strikes, and the resultant brutal forcible feeding, by self-righteous, and often sadistic, doctors and nurses. For a time she refused to face the fact that it was Eve's company she missed more than anything. Eve had been her closest friend, in prison, Eve, whom she now realised she loved more than she had ever been able to love her inadequate husband. Her obsessive longing for Eve drove her, in the end, to a letter which came as no surprise to it's recipient.

Woodland House Barnet
May 2nd 1913.

My dearest Eve,

Thank you for your interesting letter with its news of all our friends. I am glad they are doing well, but so sorry to hear that you are unhappy in Grays Inn Square. I remember you told me once, that you had always hated London, so I would like to make a suggestion which, I hope, may appeal to you.

How would you like to come and live here with me, bringing Joan of course, for as long as you like? This is a comfortable little house with four bedrooms and a nice little garden for Joan to play in with Tilda, my gentle Skye terrier, and for you, darling, a tennis court to keep you in tip-top condition.

Also several sturdy apple-trees to supply your favourite Cox's orange pippins, and one or two cherry trees as well. I have been missing you more than I can say, so I do hope my plea will meet with your approval.

Yours always'
Marion.

Eve had half expected an offer of this kind, from Marion, the ever warm-hearted and generous girl, who had kept up all their spirits in Holloway even when things were at their blackest.

Eve, herself, was not much good in the role of comforter, but she was increasingly aware of her power to charm both men and women, not that she intended to form any more emotional attachments to **men** - so autocratic and self-satisfied - so sublimely aware of their own importance as the Lords of Creation; the Breadwinners, and my God, how possessive! She wanted no further attempts at possession of her own small, strong and perfectly formed body, nor did she want to be told what she should wear; how she should behave; even what she should **read**, in a future she envisaged as being entirely devoted to women, whom she would invariably enchant and dominate.

Oh! This was indeed one of her lucky streaks and she would answer Marion's letter at once.

CHAPTER 5

It was nearly July before Eve had finalised the arrangements for sub-letting her flat and had packed up her personal possessions, and also made arrangements for Joan to leave Dame-School she was attending while at her Godmothers house in Surrey. Joan was used to being whisked from school to school, but she didn't like having to leave her God mother and Rhoda, although certain things had frightened her in that household, and the most alarming of these was Miss Parker, Rhoda's fierce looking Governess, who was always lurking in the background ready to pounce on the two small girls if they made the smallest deviation from what she considered correct behaviour.



Joan and the Governess

She was a big, bony, black-haired woman, with a grim expression. She always seemed to enjoy administering nasty medicines, and worst still, the enemas when the children were suffering the effects of Edwardian-style over-feeding. Rhoda had become used to these sessions, but to Joan they were not far short of torture. The earlier type of enema was no easily administrated suppository, but a dreadful apparatus of rubber tubing with a bone nozzle, and an enamel can which contained the soapy mixture which was insinuated slowly down into their bowels. The alternative treatment was a spoonful of syrup of figs, and Joan hated the taste of that so much that she usually spat it out, and had permanent stains on the frilly fronts of her flannel night dresses.

Joan detested Miss Parker, and neither had any affection for Nelly, the housemaid, who used to chant at the top of her rather tinny voice, "It's Rhoda Mary Evans, but it's PLAIN Joan Hudleston. I wonder why?" This, Joan took this to mean that she was '**plain**' in the sense of being not at all pretty, and

when in her teenage years, Eve told her she ‘had a long face like a horse’, she became convinced she was some kind of freak.

When they were at last settled at Woodland House with Marion, Joan was enchanted by Tilda, and the garden and the fruit trees, and not at all frightened of a vision she had in her bedroom, one night, of a strange vehicle which almost filled the room and looked rather like Cinderella's coach in her fairy tale books, except it was black instead of gold. She never told anyone about it of course.

She had long ago learned not to speak of things like that.

Marion and Eve were more than ever wrapped up in each other, which was no surprise to Joan, who thought Marion very nearly perfect. The two women shared a room a safe distance from Joan who slept soundly through the summer nights, totally unaware of the rapturous embraces and extraordinary antics of the grown-ups.

One day Marion suggested that Jim should spend a weekend with them. Joan gave a delighted squeal, and Eve merely shrugged her shoulders, but hastily said it may be a good idea. She was not going to give Marion the idea that she, the irresistible Eve, could possibly be jealous of a plain skinny creature like Jim. And so, when the day came, Eve and Marion set out to meet the bus Jim had told them she would be catching from Ilford. But it so happened that there was a change of route, and Jim was deposited right at Marion's gate.

She heard Joan's voice as she walked down the drive, and found her in earnest conversation with Amy March, the youngest daughter of the immortal family in “Little Women”.

When Jim appeared, Joan ran to give her a big hug and explain that her Mother and Marion had gone to meet the bus in Barnet town, and would probably soon be back. “I've had a lovely time with Amy”, she added, “She's standing just behind you”. Jim turned to say there was no body there but said, “It's fun to see you Amy. Have you done much drawing lately? I do hope so!”

“Of course she has”, Joan chimed in, “Drawing is what she likes doing best because she's good at it and doesn't have to use an India rubber all the time, like me. Do you Amy?” Joan and Jim agreed later on, that they had both actually seen Amy March toss her fair curls at the very idea of having to use a rubber at all!

After Amy had left, ‘because her sister Beth wanted her to read a story she had written’, Joan showed Jim around the garden, and introduced her to Tilda. Jim then opened up her suitcase and took a small parcel out, and handed it to Joan. It turned out to be a striped red and blue ball, with a splendid bounce, and was much appreciated by Tilda, who had never had a ball to play with before.

CHAPTER 6

Eve and Marion came back to hear excited barks from Tilda, and squeals from Joan, and a rather exhausted Jim, who had retired to sit on the porch.

Apologies and explanations followed after which Jim was given a cup of tea and taken up to her bedroom next to Joan. Joan was told to read ‘Alice in Wonderland’, to keep her quiet. It was illustrated, not by Tenniel, but by Mabel Atwell. She already knew and loved the Tenniel pictures, so thought the Atwell ones rather silly, but did not dare to say so, because the book had been a present from Marion's kind sister Nell, who had such lovely blue eyes.

She had also given her a beautiful story called, ‘Margaret's Book’, about a lucky little girl who was granted three wishes. She was turned into a rose first of all, and after that a fish, and then a bird, having the most wonderful adventures along the way. Joan had learned to read very quickly, while she was living at Rhoda's house, starting off with ‘Reading Without Tears’, going onto rag books and nursery rhymes and the story of ‘The Fairchild Family’. That had been in the home of Rhoda's first governess Miss Gush, but those heavenly days had not lasted long because Miss Gush went to Canada to be married, and was replaced by the terrible Miss Parker.



By that time Joan was reading everything she could get hold of, and each book seemed even more wonderful than the one before. The dame school had been rather fun. Not only was it an escape from Miss Parker, but as well as reading, writing and sums, they had acted, ‘Who Killed Cock Robin?’ and Joan had been given the part of the Fly.

Her godmother had made a pair of spectacles out of twisted wire and gold paint, and when Joan heard her cue of, “Who saw him die?” her hand flew up to her face to perch the spectacles on her small nose, and she put on a high squeaky voice to answer, “I, said the Fly, with my little eye. I saw him die”.

This raised a laugh and Joan felt quite pleased with herself.

That had been at the terms end, not long before her mother had come to take her away to a new life at Woodland House, Barnet. It was wonderful to have Jim to stay with them but it was only for a weekend, because Jim had to go back to her typing job in Ilford.

“Never mind”, said Jim to Joan on the day she left, “I will write and ask your mother if you can come and stay with me in Ilford. The people next door keep bees, and sometimes give us blocks of honeycombs. They have a small boy called Kenneth. You'll like him”.

Joan was not at all sure about liking Kenneth. In her limited experience, small boys could be hellish, but the honeycomb would be heavenly. Round about this time, Eve managed to persuade Marion that it would be a good idea for her to give Joan some lessons in Arithmetic, and they bought some exercise books with blue covers and squared paper sheets inside. Joan had been more at home dealing with words, which fascinated her, than figures which she found alarming, but had managed to get as far as simple division, and when she had come to Barnet was ready to tackle long division sums. Later on she even found herself enjoying the way the figures went down the squared paper, on a diagonal course, from top left to the bottom right corners, but she was to come to grief with £-s-d sums, and Marion's patience was sorely tried when again and again she had to explain, to a bewildered Joan, that if pences were ‘carried’ over to the shilling column they must be converted into shillings; shillings carried on to the pound column must similarly be converted to pounds. Many tears were to roll down Joan's round cheeks before the day when it all suddenly became magically clear to her.

CHAPTER 7

At the end of July, 1913, Marion's sister, Nell, came down to Barnet with her fiancé, Arthur Yeovil, who had bought himself a beautiful Bentley for driving Nell around Scotland on their coming honeymoon in September. The wedding date had been set for the 25th. Meanwhile they were both having a lot of fun with the car which was painted an unusual shade of violet. It reminded Joan of blackberry fool, made with whipped cream.



Joan Hudleston on a 'Royal Enfield' with a side-car

The striking colour reminded Eve of the local suffrage welcome to Mr Pankhurst and Christabel when they came to Esher, Surrey where Eve had been living there at the time of her final break with Joan's father. She also remembered how irritated she had felt by Joan's resentful expression when she learned **she** was expected to offer flowers to the rather stodgy looking Christabel, whereas Rhoda was given the honour of presenting the slender, and utterly charming Mrs Pankhurst, with a still larger bouquet tied with a wide satin ribbon in the purple, white and green colours of the W.S.P.U. Rhoda made a very graceful curtsy, but Joan hadn't managed more than a bob, and Eve only just controlled an impulse to hit her hard. However the Pankhurst's had not appeared to notice Joan's surliness, nor did it occur to Eve that the child's instinctive reaction to the charm of Emmeline Pankhurst, was scarcely in one so young, an indication of an undesirable heredity tendency, about which even Eve occasionally worried.

Joan, Eve and Marion, were all taken for 'spins' in the Bentley and had its finer points explained to them by Arthur, but it went over the head of Joan, who was not at all mechanically minded. She did, however, notice it seemed to go faster than the Daimler, and she remarked on this, pleasing Arthur enormously.

In the midst of these comings and goings, a letter arrived for Eve from Jim, asking if Joan could spend a long week-end at Ilford. Arthur and Nell said they would be delighted to take Joan with them, and Joan felt they really meant it and not saying one thing and meaning another which, she had noticed, was a very common habit among grown-ups. Marion had bought a fat brown jar of Malt and Cod Liver Oil which Joan loved. It had to be taken three times a day after meals, and was supposed to keep you from getting coughs and colds. It

seemed to work too. This was stowed in the corner of Joan's suitcase, and wrapped up in her old navy blue jersey. There was a bit of an argument with Marion about that, because Joan would have liked the malt to be put inside her black beaver hat, packed round with tissue paper, but Marion said it would be more sensible for Joan to wear the hat, while driving, in case of draughts.

Joan wondered, aloud, why tissue paper was called 'tishoo', because she had never seen anyone blow their noses with it. Even Eve laughed at that! When all was packed and safely stowed in the motorcar, they rolled away in the beautiful Bentley with everyone in high spirits - both the ones leaving and the two staying behind, but Marion, ever concerned for the welfare of those she loved, was trying to suppress a niggling worry about Eve and her growing dependence on alcohol. This must at all **costs** be hidden from Joan — Nell, who had always been close to Marion, also had misgivings about Eve, but said nothing at that time. She was, in any case, deeply in love with Arthur who was uppermost in her thoughts.

CHAPTER 8



Photo: Joan Hudleston

The arrival at Ilford was a disappointment to Joan, who was inclined to feel strongly about houses, and did not at all like the ugly red brick villa which was the home for Jim and her friend Bea. Jim and Bea were rather surprised when Joan suddenly arrived in the Bentley. Jim had already met Nell when she came to fetch Muriel from Holloway, but Bea had not been there. They had wondered what Nell's fiancé would be like, knowing he was in shipping and immensely rich, and had expected him to be much older than Nell, now here was this charming exuberant young man, words failed them. They contemplated the motorcar. The colour startled them but Jim eagerly commented on its more technical points, as though it was a rare horse, and this was much appreciated by Arthur.

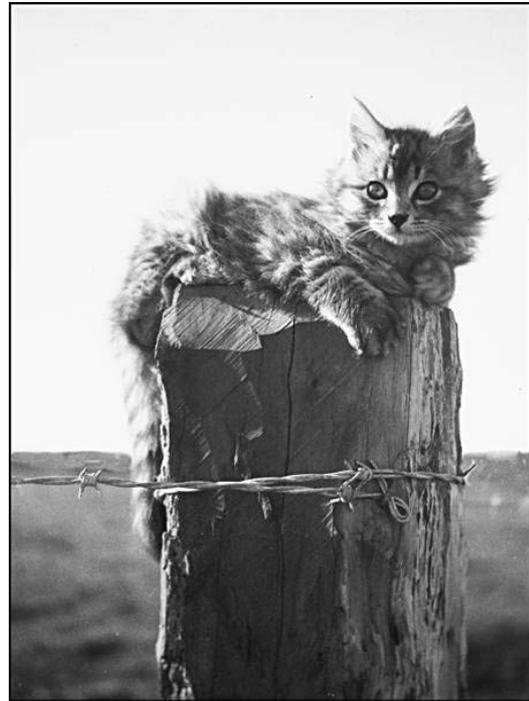
Nell gladly accepted an invitation to lunch, and it was lucky that Bea was a very good cook and could always rise to the occasion when it was a question of coping with extra guests. She would have made an excellent all-round hostess, but for her innate shyness, and the consciousness she was stout and red-faced, and that made her look a lot older than her thirty years. Nell strove to put her at ease by her sincere praise of the cooking, and Arthur, who was very hungry, certainly did justice to it.

Joan and Jim chattered incessantly all through lunch, and rather mystified the others when they got onto the subject of their invisible friends. Bea, thought privately, that Joan was too precocious by a long chalk, but that was only to be expected after the haphazard upbringing she had had so far. By the time Nell was helping Bea clear away the second course and make the coffee, she was completely delighted by the visitors, and genuinely sorry that she would be unlikely to ever see either Nell or Arthur again.

The title of a book, someone had given Jim, appeared suddenly in her mind's eye, and in the exact colours of the dust-jacket, she recalled the words, "Ship's That Pass In The Night". In the years to follow, so laden with poignant suffering, she was often to remember that moment. As they were leaving, Bea ruffled the small-girl dignity in Joan, by saying, "Now dear, you must thank Miss Campbell and Mr Yeovil for their kindness in bringing you all this way in their lovely motorcar, and wish them a safe journey home!" Joan, mortified, turned scarlet. Bother her! she thought. As if my aunts and godmother hadn't told me about that sort of thing - as if I would have forgotten about it this time! Jim could guess her thoughts and reflected that it was a great pity Bea was not as light-handed with young children as she was with her pastry. Nell tried to smooth the situation with deprecatory sounds in Bea's direction, and declared that Joan had been a very pleasant travelling companion, and after hugs and kisses for Joan, Nell climbed into the car. Arthur, preoccupied with warming up the engine, was totally unaware that anything was amiss.

CHAPTER 9

After the car had chugged off, and front window curtains had been twitched gently aside up and down the street, Joan announced she had to go upstairs to get the malt and cod-liver oil out of her suitcase. When she brought it down, she asked Jim for help in getting the lid off and when Bea handed her a teaspoon, she managed to bite back the words, “but the label says a dessertspoon”, for which Jim was thankful, but stayed on the lookout for what Joan would be up to next, and was not at all surprised when the child scooped out two large tea-spoonfuls of the sticky golden brown stuff. Bea made no remark beyond asking Jim to help Joan unpack and show her where the bathroom was, adding, “there's plenty of **hot** water today.”



'Toto'

Photo: Joan Hyde

Jim prepared a lovely hot bath for Joan, and when she had slidden happily into it and provided with a pleasant smelling cake of Wright's coal tar soap, and a large flannel, Jim made sure she washed herself thoroughly and then showed her how to blow bubbles through the tips of her thumbs and forefingers after rubbing soap on her hands. Soon the bathroom was filled with pretty iridescent bubbles and excited squeals from Joan. Hearing the laughter upstairs, Bea could only hope there would not be too much mess to clean up later on. However, Jim, mindful of the excellent midday meal they had all enjoyed, was careful that the bathroom was left spotless. She wanted no awkward moments.

Unfortunately for them all, the excitement of the day proved too much for Joan's stomach and she was violently sick at about 4 o'clock, so could not enjoy tea and cake nor even bread and butter with honey!

The last straw came when Bea said anxiously to Jim, “I think she's a little B-I-L-I-O-U-S, don't you?” and Joan's indignant outburst, “I am **not** bilious.

I'm NOT! Bilious is a horrible word and Marion and Mother never say it! And neither does my Daddy!"

This only served to convince Bea even further of Jo's precocity. Later, the evening being very warm, the grownups said she may play on the lawn for a while and have a look round for Tombola, their black cat. Outside Joan heard a voice from the garden next door saying, "Hello, Tom!" so she went over to the dividing brick wall and called the cat, a handsome fellow with green eyes, who was basking on the wall in the last rays of the evening sun, with no intention of going into his house just yet. While she was thinking how much she loved cats, the head of a boy popped up.

"Hello! You must be Joan. I'm Kenneth. Do you like honey?"

"Love it," said Joan, "Doesn't everyone?" she asked.

"Well, you can have too much of a good thing, same as people who work in a chocolate factory. We've got stacks of honeycomb on a dish in our larder, and if you would like to come out again early tomorrow morning, I'll give you a chunk of it, in time for your breakfast". Astonished at such friendliness from a boy, Joan thanked him enthusiastically and said she would come out about 7-30 the next morning.

"I've been asked to take Tombola inside with me, but he looks kind of happy and settled up there".

"Settled! I'll settle him!" and Kenneth suddenly let out a piercing whistle a few inches from Tombola's right ear. This sent the indignant animal flying along the wall and into his own garden, where he made straight for the back door, and Joan with a wave to the resourceful Ken, and a few soothing words to the cat, pushed open the door and let him in.

Bea was so pleased her cat was safely inside she decided the child had some sense in her, after all, and kissed her good night quite tenderly, to Joan's surprise. Jim brought up a mug of cocoa, and a couple of biscuits, made of honeycomb and soda. She wanted to tell Joan a fairy story, she had in her head, but Joan was too sleepy to listen.

CHAPTER 10

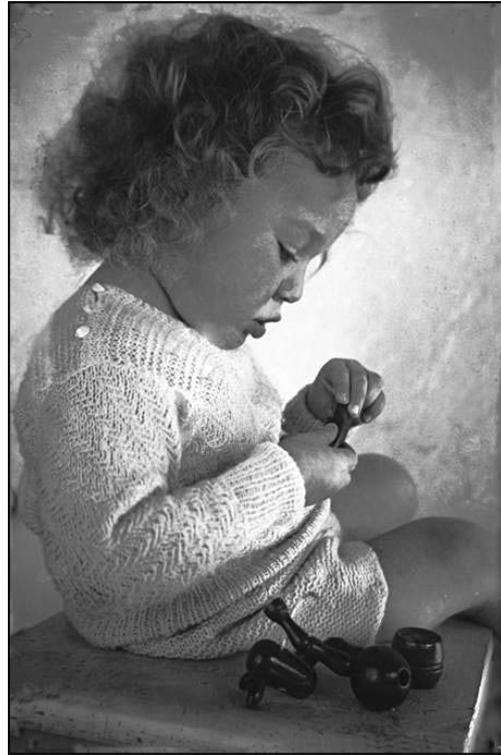
Jim received a mild scolding, from Bea, over their evening meal, for having forgotten to hear Joan's prayers.

“But she was almost too sleepy to drink her cocoa and too far gone on the way to dreamland to be able to listen to a fairy tale, let alone pray.”

“You know I'm not religious myself,” said Bea, “but this is good discipline for young children.”

“Marion thinks so too, fortunately,” said Jim. “And what about Eve?”

“Oh, you know Eve ----”



DAVID HYDE *Photo: Joan Hyde*
MSc. (I.T.), B.E. (Elec.), BSc. (Comp. Sci. & Maths.)

“No, I don't know Eve, and I don't really want to, and I tell you this Eve doesn't really care about a single soul and it will get worse and worse as she grows older. It's a black outlook for that child.”

“Ah, but Joan has a sense of humour and her fathers family will be the saving of her,” prophesied Jim, with more accuracy than she herself realised. Meanwhile, Joan was sleeping dreamlessly and slept on until after sunrise the next day, when she was awakened by kitchen sounds and after a few drowsy minutes suddenly remembered about Kenneth and his honeycomb promise.

She jumped out of bed, put on her warm blue dressing-gown, and matching slippers, and went over to the window. Looking down into the garden, she saw there was no one about, but not yet owning a watch, she could not be sure of the time. Remembering a clock in the kitchen, she thought she would try and get a look at it without drawing attention to herself.

When she got as far as the kitchen door, she peeped in cautiously, and noted the clock hands were approaching 7-30. She decided that the sooner she escaped into the garden, the better, and slipped hurriedly down the back

doorsteps and ran towards the garden wall, getting her slippers drenched in the early morning dew, as she ran. There she saw Kenneth, who had swung himself down from the wall, and was standing on her side of it - clutching a soup plate with a large piece of honeycomb on it - not in a neat section, but a sticky lump with honey trickling from it.

To Joan it looked 'delacca', a favourite word of one of her father's sisters, and she cried, "Oh thank you, thank you dear Kenneth. You're the nicest boy I've ever met!" Kenneth was startled, but gratified and was about to tell Joan there was plenty more where that came from, when he was interrupted by the shrill scolding voice of Bea, who had been hanging out some towels on the line when Joan had run across the lawn, and had been outraged by the spectacle of Joan in her dressing gown, and far, far, worse, now practically **MAKING LOVE** to the boy next door.

"Just you give that to me Miss!" she shrilled, quite beside herself with indignation.

Kenneth made himself scarce with amazing rapidity, grazing both knees in the process. Bea grabbed at the soup plate and Joan snatched her precious honeycomb from the plate, and ran sobbing back to the house, honey dripping all down the front of her dressing gown and onto the linoleum, when she got inside.

Jim, who by this time was preparing breakfast, cried out "Mother of mercies, what have you done now? Go to the bathroom and put that sticky dressing gown in warm water to soak, and then wash your face and hands and get dressed. Oh don't cry anymore dear. Here is a clean plate for the honey, and I will take care of it for you"

When Joan had gone upstairs, Jim began to laugh helplessly and laughed until her ribs ached, and was quite speechless by the time Bea stormed in. Joan stayed another 2 days at Ilford, and managed to mind her P's & Q's during that time, but was conscious of being carefully watched, by Bea, and this made her uneasy and she was to have this same feeling many times in later years. It gradually developed into a defensive distrust in later years and her attitude often made others shy of her as she was of them. In short, she grew a shell, and in the forming of it, her natural spontaneous character was checked, and she became secretive.

CHAPTER 11

Colonel Josiah Hudleston's 'Quartet' - Bournemouth 1890



Joan's father was much loved by his three sisters, especially since the break with Eve. Winifred, nearest in age to him, and the most mercilessly teased, had been deeply distressed to find her hitherto high-spirited brother in tears, one evening, and her hatred of Eve intensified for the pain she had caused her beloved brother.

He had been staying with Win and her husband a young barrister called Gerald Pease. He regarded Eve as a depraved and perverted woman, and fully agreed with his own wife's inflexible attitude. The younger sister Dolly, had been friendlier with Eve, but she never gave any indication to her two sisters that she thought there were faults on both sides, and so Eve was never mentioned by any of them.

Joan was popular with them, as she so much resembled her father, and even had many of his gestures and turns of speech. "You looked so like your Daddy when you were asleep," Win said to her one morning of their summer holidays. This should have pleased Joan, but made no comment because she felt it to be a dreadfully sentimental remark, and felt that Daddy would have cringed.

When they were all on holiday at Penally, Eve was banished from everyone's thoughts and they were all so delighted to be back in their well-loved holiday surroundings that all was happy and harmonious. Gerald and Win, and their two daughters, Purefoy and Monica, stayed in a rather ugly terrace of houses, but between the houses strung along the hillside, were steep steps rising up through colourful gardens with masses of montbretias, primulas, red hot pokers and lupins. The front windows overlooked the dunes, and beyond the expanse of sea - the Island of Caldy with its white-red monastery being the main feature of the view.

In 1913, Joan and her Father, boarded in the centre of the village at the 'Post Office' which was also a terraced house on the hillside. There was a big bush of lemon - scented Verbena beside the front door. In that last summer, before the outbreak of the Great War, there were two playful half-grown black kittens which belonged to the Post Office, but were never addressed as anything but 'Puss' indiscriminately. So Frank called them 'Pitch and Patch', the latter having a small white fleck on his chin.

Dolly, and her husband Arthur Machen who was a writer of some repute, were happily lodged at the house of Mr Jones, the stationmaster, with their one year old son Hilary. It was by no means a bleak ugly station, for Mr Jones took great pride in the flower-beds beside the railway line. In later years he was on one occasion to hold up the Fishguard - Paddington express, with heads poring from every window, when he picked one of his choicest roses to pin on the lapel of Joans school blazer. That was on her very last Penally holiday and she was never to see Mr Jones again.

That summer of 1913 was the last time her Father would be able to come, with the family, until the war had ended - but they did not know it then, for the outbreak of that fearful war was still a year ahead.

Unless it was a really wet day, they walked over the dunes threading their way through the juniper bushes which the children could seldom resist, although they knew perfectly well the berries would be unbearably sour.

Sometimes, if they came to a sandpit, Arthur would fling a handful of coins or toffees with a loud roar and watch the resultant scrimmage with sarcastic comments on the greed of the young human specimens. When at last they arrived at the beach, he detached himself from the children and went and settled himself on a small green hill at the edge of the dunes, known to all as Arthur's Mount. There no one would dream of disturbing him, and he would appear to be absorbed in a manuscript or note books.

Gerald would get out his sketching black and white colours, having first attended to the erection of one of two small tents for the convenience of the lady bathers.

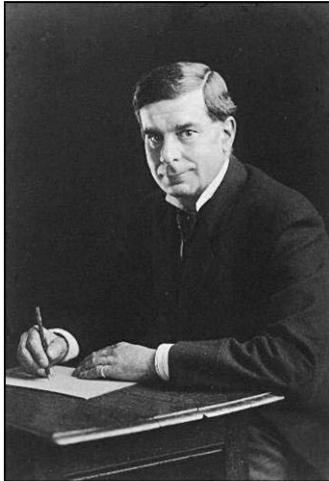
Looking back on far off summers, it's amazing how hard everyone worked and played, and with what genuine enthusiasm. Each child had to be responsible for his or her swimming wear, which included bathing caps and towels.

Gerald knew the names of most of the west-country shells, or ‘piddocks’, ‘turret shells’ and ‘razor shells’. Cowries the children especially treasured - the small flesh-covered cowries, with brown ‘moles’ on their backs and the strange resemblance to human skin. Aunt Win had found a brilliant yellow periwinkle, and had exclaimed in rapture, “Oh dear how beautiful,” and ever after that it was called, among the children, an ‘oh-my-dear-how-beautiful’ shell.

Treasured also, were the layers of mother o’ pearl, sometimes quite golden or even a silvery grey, but always iridescent.

Once Joan found a fragile white spearhead, the size of a small leaf, with a serrated edge. It was so very different from the bivalves, limpets and periwinkles, and even Uncle Gerald was completely mystified. It was not until after the war was nearly over, that someone noticed a sea-urchin which had lost all its spines, and pointed out that the underpart of the shell was exactly the shape of Joan's leaf-shell, and it was a wonder that it had disintegrated so slowly or the leaf had not got broken for a long time. Indeed its rarity and value demanded a small box and cotton wool, and how it had come to be broken she could not say.

CHAPTER 12



Gerald Pease C.B.E. Barrister-at-Law, Inner Temple
(1863 - 1928)



'Frank' Hudleston with Purefoy and Monica Pease *Photo: Joan Hudleston*

As far as Joan was concerned, her Uncle Gerald's word was utterly reliable. He knew all about plants and shells and the really interesting features of fossils and seashore life. Her father she regarded as someone unique and special, and infinitely promising and inventive. He was more like an elder brother, but he amazed her once when he was in charge of herself, and the two Pease girls, when walking along the railway line from Tenby to Penally. No train was due, but when the elder cousin refused to come off the line, he exploded with a wrath that was all the more effective for being so much unlike him.

“Damn you. Purefoy do as I tell you at **once!**” he roared, and startled all three of them so thoroughly that they never took undue liberties again. The rare expletive had the effect of a pistol-shot, and Joan was totally on her father's side as was also Monica. In fact it was probably at that moment that the lifelong alliance, for the pair, started.

It was the rule that each family should return to their several lodgings for lunch, and the afternoon was to be started by all with a rest, but no one slept. Later time was devoted to Giltar, the splendid limestone cliff which towered over Caldey Island with its beautiful red roofed monastery, unless an expedition further afield had been arranged. No sea was ever as beautiful again in later years, as the blue - green - purple of the sea below Giltar, and there was no excitement equal to the thrill of hearing the sea sucked up the blowholes, and the awareness of the dangerous power of the ocean pounding on the rocks. “Careful Kids! Watch your step,” the cries would go up, from time to time, but we were so confident and sure of ourselves it was as if the very spirit of the

place would guard us from harm, and so it always was, for nobody in our party ever came to grief.

Sometimes we picnicked, but more often returned to Giltar terrace for tea and sandwiches and what a relief that must have been for those long-suffering grownups! Nothing but a drink of hot tea and a cigarette wouldn't put right, however, all the aunts smoked, but it never occurred to us to do so, nor did we expect anything stronger than the delicious stone ginger beer, when we were thirsty, and called in at the Inn at Lydistep. No one whined to be allowed to dine with our elders, for it was much more fun to have a light supper, topped off by a banana and maybe a square of chocolate, as long as you didn't forget to clean your teeth, and the friendly smell of my father's pipe tobacco may have been a danger but was never a threat. And we slept - how peacefully and profoundly we slept!

CHAPTER 13

It must have been in the summer of 1913 that the holiday-makers climbed to the Ridgeway for the first time, and found the whole new world of honeysuckle and wild rose hedges flickering with butterflies, and even more empty of other human beings than the beach or dunes. Joan, and her cousins, felt that the Ridgeway, like Eternity, had neither beginning nor end but stretched out behind them for miles and miles around the coast, and ahead of them to Tenby and far, far beyond. It was in a glade along the Ridgeway, that Joan first became aware of the strange beauty of the early purple orchid, and was swept up into a frenzy of joy as she rushed like a mad bull from flower to flower, grabbing all she could see. No one checked her, not even Monica, and only at the end of the day when they were all trooping home, did she feel bitterly ashamed of herself and wished they were all safely back in the ground again.

Even in old age the memory of this vandalism among the wild flowers, stung her more sharply than that of any recollection of any acts of unkindness to a fellow human being.

The Machens, Peases and Frank Hudleston, were all Londoners. They were used to crowded pavements - the perpetual rumble of traffic, and the occasional 'pea-soup' fogs which blackened the nasal membranes which sullied thousands of snow-white handkerchief squares. To such as these the pure air of coastal Pembrokeshire was paradise.

They could only reap the benefit for a month because the school terms started about the middle of September, in those days, and the men were due back on duty in the Capitol. Gerald to the Law Courts; Arthur to Fleet Street and Frank to Whitehall. He had been transferred from the British Museum to the War Office Library in 1910, and was destined to remain there all his life, in the senior Civil Service position of Head Librarian, of which he served with distinction.

Of all the children, Purefoy was the least upset at having to go back to London. She loved the shops, and the West End theatres, and most of all she loved the Royal Family with a genuine devotion. In this respect she took after her Mother, Joan's Aunt Win. No two siblings were ever less alike, and less in sympathy, than Purefoy and Monica, who thought her sister frivolous and trivial minded. Joan, who loved pretty clothes and popular West End comedies, thoroughly enjoyed the visits to the theatre that were a great feature of childhood Christmas holidays spent in Hampstead with the Pease family, and their charming old Regency house in Dowenshire Hill, was the nearest thing to home that she ever knew.

In 1913 a comfortable flat, in Berners St, was rented by Marion and Eve but they preferred the Barnet house, chiefly for Tilda's sake and it was there that Joan returned to attend a day-school in Barnet, where she made no close friends of her age because the other girls felt there was something "odd" about her.



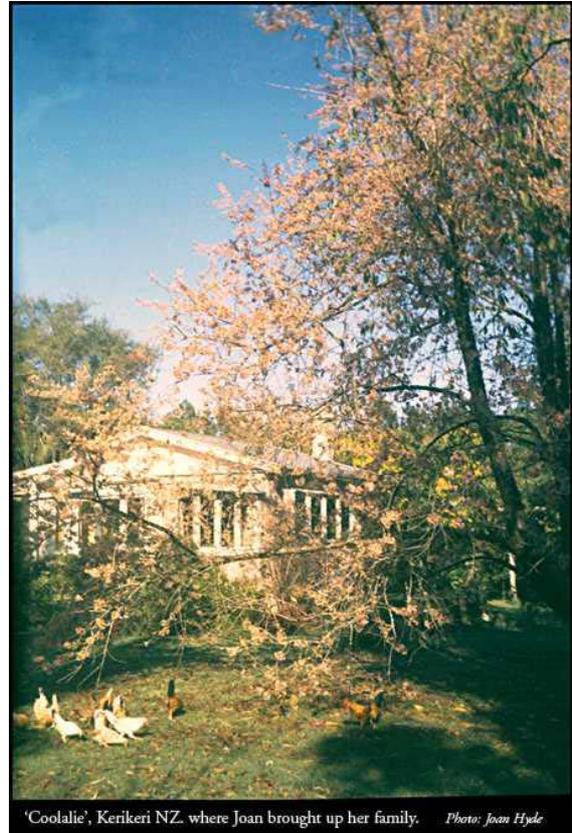
Photo: Joan Hudleston

However, she was lucky to find a sympathetic and efficient teacher of Art, who took an interest in some lively sketches of Tilda in Marion's garden, and when the end of term exams came up, Joan was given the highest marks in Art. There was a paragraph about her in the Barnet daily paper with one or two black and white reproductions of her drawings. Joan was only mildly excited by all this. Ever dissatisfied with her own work, she could not understand what all the fuss was about, still, she was glad Marion was pleased with her, and gratified by her mothers rare approval, but she knew beyond any doubt that there was nothing remarkable about her drawings and never would be. Round about this time she caught measles and was put to bed in a darkened room, fussed over by Marion who read aloud to her every day, so that she wouldn't strain her eyes.

Another of their suffrage friends, Helen Fischer, came to visit them and wrote a charming poem for Joan in which she referred to her 'genius'. "If only she knew," thought Joan, "If she only knew that there's nothing to be admired. I want to be LOVED." What she never realised was that a great many people loved her, and tried to make up to her for what they all perceived as her natural mother's inability to show affection in a demonstrative motherly way.

CHAPTER 14

Eve had the sense to realise that Marion was a tower of strength on whom both she and Joan could depend. She was in addition, naturally generous and never begrudged the money she spent on both of them. She had a hard time of it trying to cope with Eve's craving for alcohol and keep Joan from suspecting the truth. Joan, however, lived in a world of her own, and never dreamed anything was amiss. She was not to discover, for many years, the reason for mothers sudden changes of moods, so disconcerting and unreasonable from a child's point of view.



Meanwhile, life alternated between Barnet and the London flat, where Joan liked to make herself useful and help with the polishing of the silver and cutlery, in a special knife cleaning machine which involved the vigorous turning of a handle. Inanimate objects became almost like pets to Joan, even to the sponge and flannel she used in the bath.

The bogeyman of Europe was of course, the German Kaiser after August 1914, but Joan and hundreds of children all over the world, knew of him as Queen Victoria's grandson, but now learnt he was a monster with a spiked moustache under a spiked helmet, as portrayed in '*Punch*', cartoons by Bernard Partridge.

The pickelbaum of the Prussian army became, for Joan, a gruesome and terrifying symbol - not of the realities of war, of which she knew nothing, but simply because of its nightmarish shape.

Eve and Marion decided that they would both help the war effort by going into a munitions factory. Marion decided to consult her sister Nell about this move, and was rather surprised by Nell's enthusiasm for the plan. It never occurred to her that Nell was fully aware of the widening rift of the two once-passionate friends, and was quick to seize any chance to make life easier for her beloved sister.

Arthur had received a knighthood for his shipping interests, and was a highly valued contributor to the war effort. Anxious to do all he could to help his beloved wife, he put forward a plan which had been simmering in the back of his mind for quite a time. Keenly interested in educational experiments, he was keeping an eye on the progress of a new co-educational school called Bedales, which was having some success in Petersfield, down in Hampshire. The pupils came from the landed gentry, and professional classes, and were divided into a Senior and Junior School.

Arthur's plan was to find a 'guinea pig' to make a start on his or her education at this school, the costs of said education to be entirely in Arthur's hands.

THE END

After Joan had written this last section of an uncompleted preliminary draft, she had a series of strokes and died at the age of 85yrs.