

## MY EARLY YEARS IN ENGLAND

Vernon L. Dean

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[Memoirs of the George Homer Dean family settling in the Rama district \(1907 through 1917\)](#)

[My Early Years In England \(pdf\) \(doc\) \(htm\)](#)

[Our First Canadian Winter \(doc\) \(pdf\) \(htm\)](#)

[The Early Days in the Rama District \(doc\) \(pdf\) \(htm\)](#)

[George Homer Dean & Mary Stubbings family tree, pedigree chart \(4 generation\) \(pdf\) \(doc\) \(htm\)](#)

## INTRODUCTION

I was born in the year 1898 in London England. I was the fifth member in the Dean family of six children, We lived together in the same house on the same street until I was eight years of age, At this time the family immigrated to Canada.

It is now sixty five years since we left, the home-land and in the following pages I have endeavoured to describe as closely as my memory permits, all that I can recollect of my early years in England.

Vernon Dean

## MY EARLY YEARS IN ENGLAND

It seems natural that in ones very young years that their first impressions will be of their home, and so it was with me that I first remember our kitchen, and of course Mother, for in those years she is the key figure.

Mother was always there, but at times it seemed the place was terribly crowded by other members of the family, which of course is only natural when one is the youngest of a family of five as it was then.

Other things that I may recall were quite likely only in incidents that registered because they were out of the ordinary, such as a stranger coming in or being frightened by some accident as when my brother George tripped up on the stairs while carrying the lamp to another room, and the globe fell to the floor and rolled some distance, but fortunately did not break, nor did anything catch fire. The noise of Mother's sewing machine, or the excitement when Nell became smothered in flying ants while out in the garden and Mother dashed out with a towel and swiped them all off.

There was once too when we were at a rail-way station, I was being carried by some member of the family, and as the train came roaring into the station the engine safety valve released and blew off steam just as it came abreast of us. I was terrified of course and clung desperately to whoever it was carrying me

I have no idea how old I might have been when some of these things occurred, but I think quite young, and later on when I was able to get about more on my own, things fell more into a pattern so that I could tell which incident happened first and where and when.

It was possibly when I first started to school that things began to take shape, at this time I was about five I expect, as I recollect being in three different classes before getting into grade two in the boys school, I was then eight years old.

Perhaps I should first describe our family, our location in London England and our home there.

The family besides Mother and Dad consisted of George the eldest, John, Arthur, Nell, myself Vernon, and in that order.

Our address was #3 Ivanhoe Rd. Denmark Park, London S.E, Ivanhoe was not a long street and was slightly curved, and the number points out that our house was very near the end. Part way along there was a lamp-post, and at this point Grove Hill Rd. turned off right-angles up a long rise, Further along was the intersection of Avondale and Melfort roads with the familiar round red post-box at the corner, while across the road were several stores or shops as we called them over there.

On the opposite corner was a Public House which I remember smelled horribly of stale beer as one passed the door, This has put me off the stuff always.

The shops consisted of a dairy, bake shop, Sweet stuff shop, hardware or iron mongers shop as we called them, and a grocery.

This area was referred to always as (The Top.) Our end of the street was a dead end, with a high brick wall across, and it appeared there was an estate on the other side

Across the street in the corner of the wall was a big door and behind it a stable yard, and occasionally a horse and carriage came out. Against the wall on our side an alley led off at right angles, crossed a bridge over the railway and connected with the street below, At our end of the alley there was an iron post set into the cement to discourage any vehicle from trying to enter, George claimed that it was made from the barrel of an old cannon with the cannon ball set in the top to give it a finished appearance. This may have been just his notion.

High up on the wall at the centre of the street there was a street lamp, operated by gas as they all were at that time and lighted each evening by a lamp-lighter man. I used to watch him from an upstairs window as he made his rounds with his long stick which had some provision for holding a match and I was quite intrigued with the way he turned on the gas, struck the match on some part of the lamp and ignited the gas jet. I used to pretend to do this with one of the many walking sticks we had around, for walking sticks were the style then and many people used them both young and old.

The houses on this street were what I believe are referred to as row houses, They were built in a solid row, each house being connected to the following one, which meant the front and back yards could only be the width of the house and obviously were small and cramped. Each house had a cluster of chimneys for there were four fire-places and two stoves. The fronts had bay windows, and at the side-walks iron railings and gates.

They were split level houses as the terrain sloped down to a railway at the rear, and as it ran through a cut, there was a sharp slope down from the front of our garden to the tracks.

There were also iron railings at the foot of the garden to keep people off the right-of-way. One of these was loose at the bottom and we were able to lift it out to the side and sneak out when we thought no one was watching.

We still have a post-card picture of this street, but unfortunately our house doesn't show as we were too close to the end for the photographer to get it in.

Our front door was set back in a bit, so as to protect the man-hole for dumping the coal into the coal cellar from the rain, The door itself had two glass panels of different colors for some reason, and the usual iron knocker and letter slot,

It entered into a passage with the upstairs stair-way at the far end, and on the right hand was a door leading into the living room, This was a good sized room and was connected to another room by folding doors.

Four or five stairs led down from the end of the passage to the kitchen which was a big one, and we had all our meals there except on holidays and Sundays . The stove was built into the brick wall and burned coal. Above it was a mantel piece on which stood a clock, a square greenish tin which always held tea.

A similar tin stood opposite of a reddish color, but I can't recollect what was kept in it, It was not used much, but the tea caddy ( as it was called) had the paint completely worn off from continual use where Mother's thumb and fingers grasped it.

On the same wall were the shelves, counter, and cupboards that housed the crockery and many other things. Across from that was the food cupboard.

An opening led into what we called the scullery, and this was a general work area with counter and sink, but only one cold water tap. In the corner there was a built in water heater constructed of cement with a fire-place underneath. We called this the copper (why I don't know, unless the big round water container in the centre was made of copper. It was the only means of heating water (excepting by the tea-kettle) and was used on wash days or at any time a great amount of water was needed. Some years later when Dad had gas installed, the range was in this room too. A door opened to the back garden.

Then there was the booby hutch, Dad took advantage of a door leading from the kitchen to build a tiny room to house the mangel, I have never seen one since, but it consisted of a machine with two large wooden rollers, and cranked by hand for the purpose of smoothing such things as pillow cases and sheets in preference to ironing them.

The upstairs, or second story was also on two levels, and consisted of three good sized bedrooms and one smaller one, the room located directly above the kitchen was also equiped with a built in cook stove witch indicated that these houses could if necessary hold two tenants, and I can remember there were people living both up and down stairs in the house next to us, but our house was none too big for all of our family.

Most houses it appeared were rented, but Dad owned ours.

Our back yard and garden was obviously small (although as a child it appeared quite big to me),

The house being narrower at the rear allowed a strip of yard up beside it, and there was a fish-pond there, The whole yard was cemented or paved excepting for four foot strips on each side for gardening purposes and on the left hand side was a sicamore tree, It seemed a huge thing to me.

Dad had built a porch over the back door with a glass roof and upper sides so as to avoid darkening the kitchen window, and I can remember going down with Arthur to help carry back the panes of glass, How Dad entrusted us with such a precarious job I don't know, for there were many panes, I could carry only a few, but Arthur seemed to have a huge load, and it was only a miracle that we got home without coming to grief. Perhaps we were not supposed to bring so much in one trip.

So this was our home, and I expect it was typical of the average middle class home at that time.

It seemed Dad was quite vague in my memory for a long time, This was understandable as of course he went to work before I got up and arrived home after I had gone to bed, so that week-ends were the only opportunity I had of seeing him, and he seemed to me then to be somewhat over-powering, and interrupted the usual run of the household. For one thing on Sundays we always had our meals in the living room ( or as we called it ) the front room, and Mother made something special of Sunday dinner, Everyone was present, and it was usually roast beef and Yorkshire pudding with all the trimmings.

Dad always went to church on Sunday mornings, and may have taken some of the other members of the family, I don't remember but in the evening Mother went, and when I got older she used to take me, of course I couldn't understand a bit of it, but the idea was I suppose to keep me out of Dad's way so as he could have some peace and quiet.

Later on, as I grew older I got used to Dad, and he got used to me, and I found out he took us places on week-ends and holidays, and brought us presents when he came home after being away for a long time as happened frequently.

Dad worked for Maple & co, a firm who dealt in all kinds of house furnishings, He was termed a Carpet Planner, and his job was to go to the various places where the firm had gained contracts and measure the floor space, draw plans and send them back. In some cases where the orders were small, I believe he waited and helped lay the carpet, for he had tools for doing this work. In this way he traveled all over England and the continent of Europe and worked in many large hotels, theatres, casinoes, and large estates.

He was sometimes away for very long periods, and it was said that one of the boys ( I don't remember which one ) was some months old before he was able to see him. At other times when he was working close by in London he was home each day and brought his tools and plans with him. I can remember the thick heavy white paper he used.

The railway which ran below our garden caused a lowering of the horizon in that direction and there were no houses to block the view so that we had a good opportunity to see most of the Crystal Palace as it sparkled in the sun in the summer time, and at certain times there were fire-works displayed at night. At other times balloons were raised from there and many of them floated right above our house and were finally lost to view in the distance, I also saw my first air-ship at that time too, a big brown sausage shaped affair with the gondola hanging beneath and driven with a propeller and a very noisy engine.

I spent much of my time in the garden on summer days watching the trains go by, and remember that the goods trains (freights) were so much more noisy and clattery than the fast little commuter passenger train with their tiny engines.

There was the trolley too, used I suppose by the other boys many years before me, and constructed from an ordinary wooden box and cast-iron wheels, the front ones being on a swivelled axle and steered by a rope. There was a nice gradual slope to the garden so that one could coast nicely down and swish round at the bottom, but I could not get along with the trolley very well because I was not strong enough to steer, and the least little obstruction or depression in the cement would whip me around and send me flying. By the time I was strong enough to handle it I had lost interest and thought I was too big for such kids play.

Winter was different, I was confined to the indoors for most of the time and could just talk to Mother or play with my toys while the others were away at school, I must have liked trains, and I can remember wearing out or smashing up three of them of the same type, (Perhaps they were of a stock type) They consisted of an engine and tender, one gravel car, and a passenger coach. No track or propelling mechanism, those kind were considered too expensive. I can remember one instance when Mother and I were in the front room and apparently I was at a loose end to know what to do with myself. Mother said " Would you like a new train?" Of course I said I would, She walked across to a book-shelf, removed several books and brought out a parcel with a brand new train in it.

I was completely flabbergasted, I had no idea how she could have known it was there, and it remained a complete mystery to me, but I can remember at a later date when I thought I was alone, climbing on a chair and pulling out many books to see what I could find. A dead loss of course.

I was always intrigued with Mothers' sewing machine. She used it a lot in those days, for with all of us there must have been lots of use for it. But I think she enjoyed running it for she sang continually while using it and I can remember many of the songs she sung. It was of course a far cry from the present day modern machine, No dials or push buttons and was not even Drop head, but was covered with a box like lid. Treadle operated, for there were no small electric motors in those days, nor was there electricity in the houses to run them. However, there were several attachments for hemming and tucking and so forth, but with the time necessary to attach them they were not practical, and Mother was handy enough that she could do all these things quicker by hand.

The machine was strictly, Hands off, as far as I was concerned but I was allowed to work the treadle with the machine head disconnected, and I whiled away much time in doing just that.

I once asked her if she would give me the machine, and although I thought she was just using it to play with, She thought for a moment and then said, (Yes, you may have it when I am through with it) That was good enough for me, and I said no more, it did not occur to me to wonder when she would be finished with it, I finally did gain possession of it some fifteen years later.

Many of my recollections are just short flashes of memory in which I do not remember what age I might have been, or the sequence in which they occurred.

The time I and some others were looking at a cow that had its head close up to a gate, and just as I was becoming brave enough to reach out my hand to it. It gave a big Moo causing me to retreat quite quickly. A laugh for the others but not so funny to me.

I was once gazing longingly at a beautiful working model of a steam engine in a shop window while I was out with George and wanted him to buy it for me, He explained that it was far too expensive for him to buy, but this did not stop me in the least, Buy it George I said, It's only a sovereign, ( meaning a sovereign) George at this time was an office boy earning only a few shillings a week, so to him a sovereign represented a lot of money. It became a saying within the family when any-one got big ideas in money matters to remark "Yes only a sovereign".

Then there was the time when the three boys were indulging in a little horse play in the back yard, George had one of these little square weights with a ring in the top, used on balance scales, and was swinging it around on the end of a cord and letting it loose to strike something. I thought I would like to do that too, so dashed madly in to grab it from George, but in the mix-up the weight landed almost square in the middle of my forehead and knocked me to the ground. I immediately set up a howl and George picked me up and carried me into the house with me hanging on to my forehead. But when I drew my hand away and saw it smothered in red in blood I really kicked up a



fuss, for I was sure I was done for. But Mother soon cooled me down, as all mothers seem to be able to do with the young ones, and I came to the conclusion that I was going to live after all, In fact I became quite proud of myself in the next few days going around with my head bandaged up, especially when some-one told me I looked like a wounded soldier. The scar is still there, but now very very faint.

When I was very young, I had a comical notion concerning the tradesmen who worked on the streets, delivered the coal, picked up the garbage, and all such things, By necessity they wore working clothes, and in most cases became dirty at their job, especially the coal men. as coal was delivered in heavy sacks and poured down the coal shutes in front of each door. Consequently they were continually smothered in coal-dust and I couldn't think of them being in any other condition than just that, and thought how dirty they must make the bed sheets at night and how the floors must be in the homes of the men who worked in the streets.

And the engineer on the steam-roller, he surely must get the white table cloth awful dirty when he had his meals. But all these confusing things seem to get straightened out as one gets older and it was not long before I was going to have to go to school.

Going to school was something I dreaded before I ever saw it, I can't think why. Many children look forward to it at first even if they come to dislike it afterwards, but to me the thought of starting school was a black cloud on the horizon .

Perhaps I had listened to the elder members of the family speaking of the strict discipline in the school, and of pupils being chastised for misbehavior, so that I got to think that this kind of thing was the main procedure at school. However, I soon found that this was not the case, and all one had to do to avoid discomfort was to behave ones self.

Of course in those days there was very strict discipline, probably the other extreme of the present day mamby pamby wishy washy way of carrying on, where a teacher is afraid to correct children for fear of reprisal from doting parents, interfering P.T.A, or school officials pandering to the general public for fear of loosing their jobs.

Thinking back now, perhaps there was reason for very strict discipline, as teachers were expected to to teach very large classes, ( as many as sixty in a class,) so it was essential that things did not get out of control, or all would have been lost as far as the teacher was concerned.

I can well remember my first day. Mother took me to school with many misgivings on my part and into the head governess' office, Of course she appeared a regular battle axe to me, although she was not, but under such circumstances young ones will think the worst.

Having given all the particulars, Mother prepared to leave, and I think she must have anticipated a scene, for she turned abruptly and quickly left the room and did not look back.

I was immediately panic stricken, and started to run screaming after Mother, but Miss Oilman was too quick for me and grabbed my arm and held me, I can still remember how strong she appeared to be as she held me with no effort it seemed, I expect this shocked me into giving up, and after I had cooled down a bit she talked to me for awhile and then took me into Miss Christie's class, which of course was the babies class.

Here I was surprised to find that Miss Christie was a little quiet soft spoken woman who soon dispelled all my fears and put my mind at rest so that I began to feel that things were not going to be so bad after all.

The play-ground was my next shock, It appeared a complete mad-house, everyone dashing this way and that in wild confusion I got myself into a corner and breathlessly watched boys older than myself tearing after each other and tumbling and palling at each other until it seemed they would have no clothes left.

It was something I had never experienced before, and it all appeared terribly confusing, but I expect it was only a matter of time till I had become accustomed to everything and was carrying on in the same way.

Bellenden school, Situated on Bellenden Rd. was a fair sized school and the whole family of us attended It with the exception of Muriel who I have not yet mentioned as she was not born till 1904 and this completed the family.

It was brick construction as most buildings were then and was three stories high, Infants school on the ground floor, girls on the second and boys at the top, What the complete attendance was I don't know, but the boys school held 400.

I still have one of the box-wood rulers we used, with the familiar S.B.L. on It, School Board for London.

They were school property, but somehow one must have got in our home and was not returned.

It seemed to me that we didn't have many relations, George could faintly remember Grandad Dean, Dad's father, but none of the other elder ones knew him, although they talked of occasionally seeing some of the aunts, Dad's sisters, Eleanor and Emily, who Nell was named after, and there was uncle Jim, Mother's brother. None of these I knew, and they were just names to me.

I knew uncle Headly, (Dad's brother) and aunt Susan and their two girls Gladys and Bessie, We used to see them occasionally at Xmas. Also there was Mother's sister aunt Emma (Botell),

They had a family of four, Annie, Ted. Ernie, and Rose. We saw them quite often, as they lived not too far away, and these two families were the only relations I knew.

It seemed at Xmas each year we had one or the other of these two families visit us, although the Botells could not always all come, but these Xmas parties were really something from my point of view.

Uncle Headly seemed different to me in that he had a much lower voice than Dad, Perhaps I thought he should be exactly the same because they were brothers, Aunt Susey I remember as a little dark woman, Bessie, their eldest girl seemed somewhat delicate and very quiet, Gladys, the reverse, noisy and never seemed to be still. She got into my bad books by bumping into me and bashing my head against the marble mantel-piece and then trying to repair the damage by holding a cold ornament on the painful area, which I very much resented.

I cannot remember aunt Emma being any other way than with grey hair, and she told us later that she started to go grey when she was twenty two. They lived at Norwood, and I have no idea where that was, but not too far from us I think, although we always went by train. They lived at many places before, as Uncle could never hold a job in one place for very long, but Norwood I remember the most as I was getting older then.

Aunt Emma Botell was always just plain (Aunt) to all of us, for we saw so little of the other aunts that they didn't count, I had many pleasant trips to Aunt's place at Norwood, at first accompanied by either Mother, Nell or Arthur, and as I got older spent short holidays there. It seemed that the family were mostly always away at work with the exception of Ernie who was a postman and his delivery route was in the immediate district. He rode a bike to some extent in his work and always seemed to be repairing it during his spare time and this became very interesting to me, and no doubt I was much of a nuisance to him by getting in his way and asking endless questions.

Perhaps most of my interest was taken up with the tin box of animal biscuits Aunt always had up on the shelf, it always appeared to be full, and when I was very little I had the idea that it stayed that way by some mysterious way, and it never occurred to me that it had to be replenished.

Another interesting thing was Aunt's hot-water bottle. It was an earthenware thing, cylindrical shaped but flat on one side to keep it in position, with a filler cap on the upper side. On one end a knob to handle it by, This made a wonderful imaginary dog, and with a cord tied to the knob and a kindling stick and a piece of string to act as a whip, it could be dragged to every room in the house, and severely slashed with the

whip at every time it was inconsiderate enough to become entangled with a chair-leg or a door frame.

During world war two, when rubber became so hard to come by I saw some of these water-bottles in a drug-store window, and I wondered where they could possibly have dug them up from. That was in Nanaimo B.C. I wondered why they looked so small, but then it was me wasn't it? I had grown up.

I once went to Aunts with Arthur and Rollie Tomkins, (Rollie was a school chum of Arthurs) They had constructed a huge kite (at least it seemed huge to me as it towered above my head)

It was made of calico, and there had been much cutting and glueing going on in our Kitchen, so when the big day arrived they were to take it to Norwood because there was a suitable, field quite close to Aunts house. I didn't go to see the maiden flight, Perhaps the biscuit tin held too big a lure, so I stayed with Aunt, Some time later a little English bloke appeared at the door staggering under the ungainly kite which was now a delapidated broken and muddy mess. He said the boys had asked him to bring the kite back, That a half wit of vanda (or words to that effect) had hauled it down from the air and stamped on it and then ran away, so then as he put it "They had gawn orf to catch 'im and 'it 'im".

During one of my prolonged visits, Aunt took me to see Sanger Circus, It was I believe a small one, but it was my first so of course it was just wonderful to me to see the animals and the trapeze artists performing. There were two sailors, one balanced a pole( I thought it was a telegraph pole) while the other one clambered up and spun on his stomach at the top. There was the usual clown who led in a gray horse and blindfolded him, then produced a red handkerchief and a white one which he hid in two convenient boxes, removed the blind- fold and told the horse to go and get him the red one. He did it immediately of course, much to my surprise, and I was completely mystified as when (previously mentioned) Mother produced the train from the back of the book-shelf.

Muriel was born in 1904 and this completed the family, I just very faintly remember this event. There was someone strange in the house, (it may have been Aunt) and I was told that Mother was not well but I was not allowed- to go up to see her, I was sitting on the lower step of the stairs and watching the sun through the skylite above the front door.

Later I remember seeing Muriel and noticing that she had very dark hair. But she did not concern me much for some years.

It was possibly some time after this that I remember a very long stay at Aunts, Quite likely it was the school summer holidays, and we seemed to go lots of places and see lots of shops and things. Once when we were going some place Aunt wanted to clean

my shoes, I thought I was old enough to do this job myself so while she was cleaning one I got hold of the other and refused to let her have it. She didn't say much but went off and left me to it, but when I put my shoes on there was a definite contrast in the two cleaning jobs. Aunt coming into the room said, "Why you look like a pig with one ear" This didn't go down very good with me so I went out into the garden and endeavored to solve the problem by scuffing around in some rubbish with the shoe that Aunt had cleaned in an effort to remedy the situation. You may be sure the results were not very good.

It was that time too that Ernie got his bell fixed up, Ernie was quite a sleepy head and had difficulty in waking in the mornings, he could sleep right through the ringing of the alarm-clock, but being a postman it was vital that he be on time. So an ordinary good sized bell was hung in his room and with a contraption of cord and screweyes a line was led out across the hall to Aunt's room and as soon as the alarm went off she proceeded to pull the bell, creating enough noise to wake the dead. I don't know if any of the neighbors complained.

This extended holiday for me was in all probability arranged so as to keep me out from under Mother's feet for as long as possible during the time I was not at school, for she now had Muriel to contend with besides the supervision of the rest of the family as Dad was away for long periods at times and the load of bringing up the lot of us fell mostly on her shoulders.

It was not surprising then that I accumulated quite a stock of toys, picture books, and what not, and when the time came for me to return home I had a glorious time gathering up the spoils and packing them ready for the trip. Aunt had also bought me a new suit of clothes, Gray color, with knee pants, and coat with a wide white collar which had embroidery or some such stuff around the edge, and which was typical of what little boys wore at that time. I shall always remember the thrill of walking in the door at home and showing off my new suit and all the packages of this that and the other.

Time was going on, and I had graduated from the baby's class at school to Miss Morriss', She had been reported to me by other children as something of a terror, so I was not pleased.

However, I found I got along very well, and gained more confidence all the time, although I still disliked school and latched on to the flimsiest excuse to stay home which was not easy for almost immediately the truant officer would be around and the excuse had to be genuine.

I had got to the point where I could go unaccompanied to school and go up to the top for a half-penny of candy or some small purchase but mostly Nell or Arthur were along,

There were trips on Saturday nights when Dad was home when we would all go up to the city (excepting Geo, and John) and it seemed such a mad house to me. Crowds of people, street cars, (or trams as we called them) horse busses, hansom cabs and trades-mens barrows, I was hopelessly confused and hung on desperately to some other member of the family, I can remember Dad grabbing me up around the waist like a wheat sheaf and dashing maddly for a street car. Many parts of the city I can remember quite well, but I have no idea where they were or in what relation they were to each other.

Dad took Nell and I to Battersey one Sunday, but I don't remember it much only that we went on one of the small paddle steamers that plyed the Thames, and that we went under the Tower bridge.

I do not remember George and John other than going to work each day, but I remember Arthur perhaps in his last year at school, and then in the following year being lab. monitor in the chemical lab. in the boys school.

George worked in the offices of some importing and exporting firm, and John worked for Triketts who manufactured shoes.

Nell took piano lessons, and her piano had originally belonged to Aunt Ettie. I never knew her. Her music teacher was Miss Hennly, and the main thing I remember about her was that she had a nice Collie dog which she always brought with her.

The three elder boys had their friends who dropped in from time to time, most of them school chums I expect, and although they were of no interest to me or I to them, I remember them quite well. Friends of George's were Jimmy Feldwick, Titch Keeble, Sid. Dealer and Vigo Anderson, He also spoke of Mr. Chalk, and Miss Blackwell, they may have been some of the teachers at the evening classes he used to attend.

John had Chris Collet and Bill Greenwood, Bill was a beautiful piano player, and I can still recall him playing Chimeing Bells of long ago on our piano.

Arthur had Harry Cook and his sister Elsie, and Rollie Tomkins Harry Cook I think went to Australia.

Our family associated considerably with the Tomkins, I don't know just how this came about unless it was merely from Arthur and Rollie being chums. They were a big family, Phil, Stan, Rollie, Hoy, Grace and Vera, I can remember many little outings we had to parks and picnics, and I once went to their home with Arthur, and stayed there while he and Rollie went some place. Mrs. Tomkins and I had afternoon tea in the garden. Rollie was a life-long friend of our whole family.

It has just come to mind that there was also Cescil Carpenter among George's friends.

George was the only one who had a bicycle, Being the eldest I suppose entitled him to a little more than the rest, It was a Sunbeam, and it was equipped just as well as the present day machine with the exception that it had only one Speed or gear, Free wheeling, coaster brake, frontwheel brake, acetylene head lamp and warning bell. These models are still obtainable today but the most popular ones with youngsters today are fantastic idiotic and impractical types turned out to catch the eye and create sales.

This bike was later turned over to John, but he didn't use it much, as by this time he had become interested in a girl friend.

John liked to dress well in his young days, and was quite a dude with his bowler hat and walking stick, and always was more of a business man than the rest of us, His firm offered him a chance to go up to Manchester to look over either another branch or a factory of the company, ( I don't remember which) but I know he did a lot of talking and cadgeing to Dad to persuade him to allow him to have a new suit for the trip.

He might have done well if he had stayed with the firm, but young people take awhile to settle, and there was getting to be a lot of talk about immigration among his friends and George's, Some of them were going to Australia, and some to Canada, and George who was never very satisfied with his station in life began to think of leaving home, but it was not untill 1906 that he did so.

John once took me to Kensington Museum and I was quite thrilled with that, as the first thing we saw was the first two railroad engines. Puffing Billy add the Rocket, they seemed such huge dead looking things compared with ones I saw coming into railroad stations, but I took notice of the big squared timbers on the back which served as bumpers or buffers as I always liked to watch the buffers on the regular trains as they telescoped together when they were shunting.

In the same erea there were some working models under glass cases, and one only had to press a button and they would operate I had a glorious time going around them all;

The rest of the museum was rather dissapointing to me as nothing moved and I couldn't understand much of it.

I was with John one other time when we saw the changeing of the guard at Buckingham Palace, Perhaps I am wrong about this, it may have been somewhere else for my locations were always somewhat mixed up. I remember Buckingham Palace tho. with its palings along the front and the sentrys.

Sherlly Hills was another place we went for outings, quite often accompanied by Aunt and some of her family, and once we went on the trams to Croyden, at that time it was open country at the end of the car lines.

I shall never forget the holiday at Folkstone, and I always look back on it as the only real holiday I ever had.

This of course was because it was my first time at the seaside, and we were there for several days, Most of our family, and most of the Botell family, Everything was completely new to me, and at every turn there was something new and surprising, Besides that I was only six years old, and was wearing my first pair of suspenders of which I was very proud and wanted to show them to everyone.

Nell had previously taken me to someones home where they gave me a sand pail and shovell as their family had out grown them, so for a time there was plenty of sand work going on, and when that had worn thin there were many walks along the beach and also inland along country lanes.

Mother took me on the Switch back, or roller coaster as they are usually called, and it so scared the life out of me that I have never since had any inclination to ride on such things. There was a cable car too, which went up the cliff-side but I didn't go on that, maybe the switch back had been enough for me.

Arthur took me out in a row boat and we had difficulty in getting back, I think it was just from a sudden breeze or perhaps the tide or both. We were not far out, for George who was on the beach could call to us as he walked back and forth as we were blown this way and that, Arthur, who was pulling his arms off at the oars was getting mad and then scared, but we finally made it to shore, for some reason it didn't frighten me a bit, I guess I had complete confidence in Arthur.

Time was moveing on, I had now got into Miss Glanville's class at school, which would be the last one before getting into the boys school. I liked this class and also my teacher Perhaps it was mostly because I was gradually learning more all the time and therefore takeing more interest and gaining more confidence.

I was being allowed to go out on my own a little more now, and buy my own candles when ever I could persuade Mother to give me some money, I expect with six of us there had to be a pretty tight rein on the purse. Someone visiting us (a relation or a friend, I don't remember who) gave me a shilling, I was really thrilled as I immediately thought I was a millionaire, but Mother thought it best to relieve me of it in case I should go on too much of a spree with it and said I might ask her for some of it when needed, I can imagine I worried her for a ha'penny out of my shilling many times long after it was exhausted.

Mother once gave me permission to go and meet Arthur who was returning from Aunts with instructions not to go beyond a certain point. This was quite an adventure for me because I had not been allowed to go so far on my own before.



Haveing gone some distance I was joined by an elder boy who came out of a gateway of what must have been a private school for he had a badge on both cap and coat. He started to talk to me, for perhaps I looked quite young and he may have thought I was lost and asked me where I was going and where I lived,

After some distance he turned to a gate and said "This is where I live" and I remarked that he had pretty flowers in his garden, he said 'I'll get you one" and picked me a big red flower which may have been a peony or a dahlia and I went joyfully on my way, Later I was accosted by some tough looking boys which were sometimes seen looking for trouble on the streets and were refered to as Blags, They wanted my flower, so I handed it over to them and departed as quickly as possible, feeling angry and dissapointed that I should not be able to show it to Arthur, Looking furtively back I could see they were just ruthlessly tearing it apart and scattering it over the sidewalk.

I had reached my point of return, but no Arthur in sight, so after waiting and watching for a time I started back home rather disappointedly as Arthur would not see how far I had come on my own, Anyhow I returned home quite proudly, I doubt if I had been very far from home.

I guess I didn't hear or understand much about it, but there was talk now of George going to Canada, How he got this notion I of course do not know, but I believe there was a lot of talk at that time about immigration and many people were leaveing for Canada or Australia and it may have been a bit of a mania among the young people and considered the thing to do.

On the other hand it seemed George was never satisfied with his job or his home and always resented the fact that he had not been born rich and kept this feeling all through life. Perhaps being the first born Mother made too much of a fuss of him, It is a characteristic failing I think with parents that the mother spoils the oldest son and the father spoils the eldest daughter.

Even as a youngster I can remember George carrying on about haveing to go to work and that his clothes were shoddy looking and that he was always short of money.

In all probability he thought if he could only get away from home and the family he might get along better and eventurely make his fortune.

Advertisements talked of Canada as some sort of promised land, and that one could buy 160 acres of land for ten dollars which must have seemed like a real bonanza to people living in London where real estate was so much a foot. I think this was quite an attraction to many people. Little did they realize that the land was not worth even ten dollars until much time, money, and labor had been spent on it.

In course of time all preparations and arrangements were made to leave in the spring of 1906. A school friend of his, Harold Hart, was also going to Canada and they were

to travel- together. Dad made a very nice job of constructing a good sized box with lock and handles on for George to keep his belongings in, and stained and varnished it. George said it was not strong enough, Perhaps it wasn't, for everything had to be pretty rugged to stand the abuse on that kind of a trip. It did take a beating, but was repairable, and he had it many years, He may still have it.

Before he left George went out into the garden and built what he called a Grotto, A kind of monument to himself I guess, A square thing with stones and filled with earth and with stones at the centre, I remember him getting a paper bag full of cement and making a flat surface on which he printed his name.

I was very interested in the construction of it all. Of course many people gave him presents, and Mr. Chalk gave him a very nice smoking cabinet which he still has among his souvenirs. It was not exactly the best thing for a young fellow to take pioneering in Canada.

I don't remember him actually leaving, but it was rather a sad affair for me, for being the eldest he was one of the main figures in my life at that time, and perhaps for all the family.

But time eventually settles everything and we were back to normal again, Arthur had finished school and was going to work in the school chemical lab. and Nell was becoming a very good piano player. No other member of the family had any musical ability except John and he didn't follow it up.

Arthur, ,Nell, and I were sent for a holiday on our own that year, to a country place called Cuddem. I have no idea just where it was, We stayed with an old couple who were complete strangers to us. I don't remember much of this holiday except that I enjoyed it very much because I was in the country.

Of this holiday I can remember only two incidents, one when the couple we were staying with took us over to a neighbors who had apparently just moved into their cottage. The lady was complaining that the workmen had not connected the stove properly and I remember seeing the stove-pipes going up but not entering the chimney, I had not seen pipes before, as our stoves and fireplaces were connected by flues. Evidently the men had not the required parts to complete the job and were in all probability away trying to obtain them. They were the nitwits, for they had been stupid enough to start a fire in the stove and of course had smoked out the whole cottage.

On another occasion Arthur decided we should hitch a ride on one of the brakes that periodically passed by on the road, and I of course was game to try it but didn't reckon on my ability to do so, for there was over seven years difference in our ages.

The brakes were open vehicles with a canopy over top and entered at the rear, the two steps down with hand railing served as a good place to catch onto and ride on the top

step. They were horse drawn of course. We sat conveniently hidden on the side of the road and as it clipperty clopped past we dashed madly out to grab on, Arthur made it immediately but I was obliged to put on big burst of speed to get within a few feet of my goal, but in spite of Arthur urging me on, my speed and breath gave out and I gradually fell back and dropped out of the race and was obliged to sit by the roadside till Arthur came back some time later.

I finally made it into the boys school and into grade two.

This was going to be quite a change for me, I should have to enter the boys playground from a different entrance and mingle with all the boys right up to grade eight, Four hundred of them.

At school time all seven classes were lined up into two columns and marched systematically into school by one of the teachers, all teachers had whistles and took turns in doing this.

When there was fire drill, which occurred periodically, we dropped everything and dashed out into the hall to form our usual positions where each class in turn was marched down on the double, (smallest boys first) into the play ground where we formed our usual columns and positions. The head master would be standing there holding his pocket watch to tell us how long we had taken to get out and how it compared with the previous time, It was surpriseing how quickly the school could be evacuated. It was always a time of excitement for us younger boys, for it never occurred to us that it might be a real fire.

My teacher was Mr.Barter. He was a young man, and very smart looking, He was also very strict. He had to be, for he had sixty of us youngers in the class so he could not relax for a second. I got along fine with him, although at first he frightened me a bit, as he was a little hot headed and at times tore into us and called us thick-heads and chumps.

However, I soon found that his flare-ups didn' mean much and he got over them very quickly, so that there was no need for concern as long as one behaved himself but he cracked down quickly on those who were disobedient.

He had two aquariums in the room in which he raised dragon- flies and I was very much intrigued by their development as I could not conceive anything that flew in the air would at first form in water.

We started science lessons and I was very interested for a time, but don't think I would have been later. In other work I got on fairly well and perhaps was a good average, but I have never been top-notch or expert at anything.

Having got into the boys school I began to feel a little important and wanted Mother to let me have a school cap with the Maltese cross badge on it, (which she did) but I didn't get as far as the shirt and tie, as the elder boys had done.

At Easter each year the teachers took groups of the higher grade boys on trips to places of interest and on hiking trips to study nature of all kinds. These trips were systematically and economically arranged so that most boys could take them in if it appealed to them or if their parents approved and could afford it. The expence I believe was not too great as all the elder boys in our family had taken them in and had appreciated them very much.

It might be as well at this time to mention a few things as I remember them and as they were then. Lighting in London seemed to be principally by coal gas for street lighting and in buildings, although I expect in the city electricity was used to a great extent, and I remember seeing electric signs in many places, especially the Bovril sign which went on and off.

It seemed electricity was mostly used for power in street cars for there were sure lots of them. Mostly double deckers, but open on top, Later they enclosed the top deck on some lines but in many cases the bridges were too low and they could not be used. On lines close the power was taken from under- ground by use of the centre rail, but further out the over-head system was used, and I can remember on a line which ran far out into the country rideing on a tram drawn by a team of horses.

Evidently electricity was not used very widely at that time, as there were no electrical appliances and no small motors used in any way. There must have been telephones, but comparatively few used as I don't ever remember seeing one.

Horse drawn busses seemed to be as plentiful as trams, and they also had upper decks and were open, but at this time (about 1905) they were just starting to transfer to motor busses. Like many new things, they did not go over very big at first and were considered smelly and unreliable, as of course they were at first, for there were many flat tires and break-downs. Gasoline engines, and also gasoline, were then in their very early stages.

Automobiles were few and far between, for only very rich people could afford them, They were thoroughly built, and some of them quite elaborate, but like the motor busses were prone to trouble, and it was not uncommon to see one stalled on the roadside with a mechanic sprawled underneath, or with his head under the hood. This of course always drew a crowd of people or inquisitive boys like myself, Nell and I once got into the bad books by doing just that. We were to meet some of the Tomkins family to go on a picnic at a certain point, but we of course failed to turn up at the appointed time so Roy came to meet us, and eventurely found us very much absorbed in a stalled car, for it was very hard to break away before it had come to life and moved off.

They all had to be cranked, mostly at the front, but I remember one which cranked from the side, The headlites were acetylene and park and taillites were just coaloil lamps.

They sounded funny when they started, as though only one cylinder took hold for a few revolutions and then all suddenly came to life in a big roar.

The lighting in our home was from coaloil lamps, (paraffin as we called it then), In the kitchen we had what seemed to me a huge lamp with a big white globe, I don't suppose it was very big at all, it just seemed that way to me. But in the upstairs rooms we used candles, Candles were used to a great extent at that time in little portable holders with a handle at the side so as they could be carried from place to place.

It can be seen then that lighting was very poor in those days, both in streets and in the homes.

About 1905 Dad had gas installed, and this was a great improvement, but of course not as good as electricity.

Many of the fixtures were the bracket type comeing out from the wall or hanging from the ceiling and had jets with open flares, but in our front room there were mantles which improved the light conciderably, although we at first had plenty of trouble with them breaking, Perhaps they were not so good at that time or perhaps we were just not accustomed to them, and then again perhaps us kids did too much stamping around.

I remember too that our class rooms at school were lighted by gas, comeing down from the ceiling like inverted tees with jets at either ends and these were also open flares, not very good lighting I expect, but then they were only needed on winter evenings when hours of daylight were short, for there were big high windows reaching to the ceiling, but not almost to the floor as in many of our idiotic modem schools where pupils can look out and be distracted by passing cars andother vehicles, besides people, dogs, and birds.

In spite of advanced education and modern trends, it seems that many things known to be beneficial a hundred years ago have somehow been lost sight in the desire to just have things different or appear more modern.

Taxies were Hansom cabs then, although there were also some four wheeled cabs. Many vehicles were two wheeled as they were more convenient and maneuverable, even on road building and repair strong two wheeled carts were used to transport material of all kinds, In this way they could be more easily unloaded by tipping up the box, Heavey draft horses were used, mostly Clyde or Shires, Four wheeled drays were used for all heavey long distance hauling.

Milk was delivered by a two wheeled cart with a bulk tank and ladeled into small metal cans with a hinged lid and a bale handle and left by the door. All very unsanitary compared with present day proceedure, but no one got sick or died from it.

Much stuff was sold in the street by individuals at that time. It seemed there was always some-one calling out their wares, or ringing some sort of bell to attract attention, Muffins and crumpets, Fish, Oysters, Ice cream. Eggs, and garden produce,

I remember Andrew, who delivered the eggs, He had a unique vehicle which appeared to be a tricycle turned backwards, the square compartment containing the eggs was mounted between the two wheels and he sat facing it over the single wheel, the seat and handle bars being reversed so that he faced his load.

I have no idea as to wether it was a creation of his own, or wether it was a factory job, but I have never seen another one like it.

There were also musicians of sorts in the streets. The one man band which Mother called a Merry Andrew, and which to me seemed the most complicated and exciteing affair, The well known Italian barrel organ, complete with monkey and cup to hold the pennies, and in some cases Two men carried a little portable organ from place to place and set it up to play and sometimes sing.

These are a few of the things as they were at that time long before our present day discoveries that have enabled us to invent and perfect all our present day conveniences.

We heard periodicly from George, but I expect his letters were few and far between, although I doubt at that age I was able to realize much of what he wrote of, I remember Mother telling me he had to work hard with long hours, and that things generally seemed pretty rough. He had seen some sun-dogs and thought his eyes were playing tricks on him, Also that it was very cold in the winter and he had seen northern lights.

I can remember Mother packing some fancy biscuits to send him and saying he would not be able to get anything like that out there, but perhaps I was more interested in hoping there might be a few biscuits left over that I might be able to get.

Being so young, I expect George was beginning to fade from sight as youngsters do not pay much attention to either the past or the future, but only the present happenings which occur from day to day.

I didn't know about it untill it happened, but it must have been going on for some time among the other members of the family.

It seemed we were all going to Canada. I have wondered many times in later years why this came about, for it seemed we were going along quite well, Dad had a good job, The two elder boys had jobs, and we younger ones were getting our education. It seemed we were comfortably situated and as happy as most people in our class were in those days. However there must have been a reason, for there is a reason for everything, but I never got to know it, and in later years when I questioned the elder members of the family I only got an evasive or unsatisfactory answer.

So it was in the spring of 1907 things started to take shape for us to leave England on the ninth of May. Dad started on the long and tiresome job of packing and crateing all our belongings and I think we took almost everything we owned for we were naturally ignorant of what would be of value to us and what would not, so this was the best attitude to take as it was possible to transport large amounts of goods when shipped as settlers effects.

Nell and I would have to leave school, and this suited me just fine, for I was too young to realize what I was loosing, and only thought of the fun of going places and seeing things.

From that time on it was an interesting and exciteing experience for me to watch everything being packed and crated and the destination stenciled on all of it, besides many stickers and labels. One can never imagine the accumulation there is in a home of many years untill the time comes to gather it all up.

There were hundreds of books, many pictures, ornaments, and clocks, I think Dad was clock crazy, for he had gathered up many of them on his trips on the continent, (most of them would not run), but they were all packed with the exception of the big one in the corner of the hall. It was the grandfather type but without the cabinet, that hung on the wall like a cuckoo clock but had the usual pendulum with chain and weights to operate it in place of a main-spring.

I think the only things we didn't take were the chairs, tables and bedsteads.

Going also to Canada were Aunt and Uncle Botell and their daughter Rose, besides a young school-teacher Ethel Punter, who was going out marry Jack Hart, brother to Harold who went with George. The Hart boys probably became acquainted with our boys at school, for they lived in the next street to us, but I don't remember wether Jack emigrated before or after Harold.

The Dean family at Bromly had visited us at Xmas that year I think, and that was the last we saw of them, although Arthur visited them some years later when he was overseas during the first world war.

Just previous to our leaving for Canada, Mother went to visit the Somer-Smiths whom she had worked for before she was married, and took Nell and I with her.

I am told that when Mother was very young, she worked for the Raddclifs in some capacity, (probably as a maid of some sort ) and when their daughter married Vernon Somer-Smith she took Mother with her, and Mother worked there many years and tended the children as they grew up until she married Dad.

The Somer-Smiths were well off people, and lived on a large estate. There were four children in the family.

Mother thought a lot of Vernon Somer-Smith, and she later named me after him, so it was only natural that she wished to visit them and say "Goodbye" for the last time.

I can remember us entering their home, Two grown up girls dashed down the stairs and flung their arms around mother and said "Oh Polly it's so good to see you", I was both surprised and indignant and thought them a couple of disrespectful brats for I had never before heard anyone address Mother in any other way but as Mrs. Dean, excepting Aunt and Dad, I just couldn't realize that they had known Mother long long before my time when they were little babies and Mother was a young girl.

At this time we also visited the Burdocks, Mrs. Burdock had worked at the Somer-Smiths at the same time as Mother and they had become friends. Evidently she had married one of the employees there, as they then lived on the estate. We had a meal there before we returned home,

I don't remember what part of England this was, and these two instances are all I can remember of that trip, but some years later the Burdock's son (Gilbert) visited us in Canada,

His visit coincided with John's wedding, and as he had his camera with him he took some pictures. This is the only reason we still have a few pictures of this event as at that time there were no cameras in the district.

We were now almost ready to leave, and this is most of what I can remember of my early life in England, There were many other little things which come to my memory in just short flashes , George's model sailing yacht, and his upright steam engine. The magic lantern we had, a far cry from the present day slide projector, Chris, Collet bringing a gramophone for us to hear. It had cylindrical records and a horn, I thought it was an enormous thing when I saw it on the following day, for I did not hear it play as it was brought in the evening while I was asleep in bed.

I can remember many of the stations where we boarded trains, Victoria, Peckham, Dulich, Denmark Hill, and that Mother and Dad attended chapel at Nunhead, but I cannot think where any of these places were.

The way to school is the only thing I can remember quite well.



Now we were ready to leave for Canada, I believe John, Arthur, and Nell had left before-hand or perhaps had stayed ever night with friends, as I can remember only Mother, Dad, and I suppose Muriel going out and Dad locking the door, I looked back as we went through the gate onto the sidewalk and the house seemed terribly dark and black as it was late evening, and this was my last glimpse of #3 Ivanhoe Rd. We walked along to the lamp post and turned right up Grove Hill and further on boarded a tram at the top of Dog Kennel Hill, Later we transfered to a motor bus which in turn developed a flat tire and we had to transfered to another one. But eventurely it seemed we all arrived at Uston station (probably not spelled right) All of us, The Botells and Ethel Punter, besides many others to see us off.

Of all these I cannot remember who they were, excepting Mr. Hazlet (Arthur's school teacher) who gave me a box of chocolates, I guess it was the chocolates that made me remember him.

It was the first time I had seen or been on a corridor train, all local trains were side loaded and otherwise could not have been loaded quick enough, for local trains paused very briefly at stations.

I am pretty sure we left from Liverpool, and the ship was named the Southwark, (pronounced Suthark) but I remember the young boys running around selling post-cards called it the South-walk, A typical English name, for the English characteristically do things the hard way, and seem to delight in spelling words and names in one way, and then pronouncing them in another.

It seemed a huge ship to me, but no doubt it was quite small compared to present day. When we went on board Dad, John, Arthur and I immediatly explored the whole ship, Normally it was against the rules for passengers to leave the deck of their class, but on the day of departure it seemed both passengers and visitors alike could go anywhere at will.

I can remember noticeing that there was a decided difference in the accommodation between first and second class passengers.

We were even allowed a peek into the engine room, it seemed a massive place to me, full of boilers, valves and wheels, and a confuseing tangle of pipes and conduits as we looked down on it from a sort of mezzanine floor.

In late afternoon the visitors were ordered ashore and the whistle blew, The tugs eased us out from the docks and we were ready to take off, I can remember Mother saying to Aunt, "Well we can't turn back now".

A boat, with a band on board escorted us for some distance and finally played God be with you till we meet again, as they turned and fell behind and were soon out of sight.

So we were leaving the home-land, and we never saw it again, Arthur was the exception. He returned during the first world war.

We were starting out into the unknown, for we had little conception of what we were up against, and who could say if it was a good or a bad move. As I grew up I was inclined to think it was a mistake, but then I did not know the circumstances or the reason for the decision. But one thing is certain, had we stayed in England we should have suffered considerably or been lost completely in the two world wars that followed within the next forty years. As it has been we were allowed to live out our life span, although Mother and Dad were not so fortunate as the rest of the family. There is no use in one regretting what has happened in the past, for if only the slightest change had been made in another direction we are unable to tell what the outcome would have been, we cannot see into the future.

We had left England on the ninth of May, and we reached our destination (which was Hamiota Manitoba) on the twenty-sixth so one can see that travel was quite slow compared to the present day. Of the sea voyage, I think we all enjoyed it with the exception of Aunt who was plagued with sea-sickness for most of the time. The rest of us suffered on the first day but soon got over it. There were no violent storms, or any other serious trouble. We had fog on one occasion for all day and we nearly went crazy with the siren blowing every minute for the whole period, and we once had to change course to some extent to avoid an ice field.

For myself, what I remember most was that I seemed to be terribly hungry the whole time, and there was no provision to buy as much as a cup of coffee or a doughnut on board.

I suppose it was chiefly the fresh sea air, and the energy I built up in continually running around the deck.

In mid morning the lady passengers were served with beef-tea and I can remember cadging some of it from Mother and thinking how good it tasted. We were obliged to have two sittings at meal-times, and we were on the second, so that hour seemed to be the longest one of the whole day. The meals were very good.

At last we sighted land and proceeded up the St. Lawrence where things became more interesting when we could watch the shore. I thought I remembered seeing the beginning of the Quebec bridge on the shore, although this could be imagination, for I was only eight years old, and it is now beginning to seem a long long way back. I have almost forgotten the history of the Quebec bridge and don't know when it was started. I can only remember that it was started. Then stopped for quite some time, and that it collapsed twice during construction so that it was some years before it was completed.

Much later I can remember reading a serial story in the Family Herald newspaper, that was based on the Quebec bridge and it was coincidental that in the same week the episode of the collapse appeared in the serial, the Quebec bridge fell down for the second time.

The ship docked at Quebec City for a day to allow passengers and freight to be unloaded, All passengers were allowed ashore if they wished to do so, and I remember Dad takeing some of us for a sight-seeing tour around the city in a four wheeled cab, drawn by a horse of course, Three young fellows who had been quite popular among the most of the passengers during the voyage and especially so with the young girls, arrived back on board somewhat the worse for wear, as they had indulged in too much drink and were quite noisy, one of them becoming quite obnoxious and there was something of a scuffle when one of the officials endeavoured to calm him down which ended in him being contained for the night, and it somewhat clouded his popularity among the passengers,

I have forgotten to mention that during the voyage the captain came down on our deck each day with a large tin of candies and heaved handfuls down onto the lower deck (which was the third class) for the youngsters to scramble for, I think it caused as much fun for those watching as for the kids, I of course could not understand why he did not do the same thing on our deck, and thought it was a pretty poor deal as far as I could see.

The captain, (his name was Williams) every day invited a few into his cabin, for afternoon tea, Mother, Nell, and I were the lucky ones on one occasion, and as he handed a plate with several small squares of cake to me I was about to take the whole issue as I was not used to such affairs and thought it just about enough for me to handle nicely, He quietly said "Just take one of those pieces" Of course I thought it was a bit of a jip as I was used to Tea being a whole meal.

During the next day as we were approaching Montreal where we were to disembark, the lower deck was a hive of activity as the crew hoisted cargo from the hold to the deck in readiness to be taken ashore, The steam winch was up on our deck and I became quite interested in its operation. Later I gathered with the others at the rail to see if we could recognize any of our stuff which we finally did, and shortly saw another huge sling load come up which included our piano looking like a small box. It had seemed such a huge thing to me while Dad was making the case for it in our front room at home. .

By then we must have been ten or eleven days on board ship.

I can remember Mother saying we were four days coming up country from Montreal, but perhaps it was actually not so long for when we got to Brandon we were obliged to stay over a day because the train did not run on the Victoria day holiday, Of this part of

the trip I don't remember much, as I was train sick most of the time, Strangly this did not bother me at sea.

I suppose we were all somewhat excited by the anticipation of reaching our final destination and of once again seeing George, especially the elder members of the family, for they were all starting out on something new. It was different for us three younger ones, We were just being brought to Canada.

At last we had arrived in Hamiota, where we would stay for some time at least, The Botells and Ethel Punter must have got some sort of accommodation I suppose, but Dad, John, and Arthur walked out into the country some four miles north to where George was now working at the Laird farm just across the road from the Anguses where he first worked and where we were going to stay for the next few months. There were no telephones in the district at that time, although there may have been in the town.

George was able to get off work, and to get a team and wagon from Bill Angus to haul us and our luggage out to the farm. As I remember he took us first to the Lairds where we had supper and in the evening over to Anguses to spend our first night on the farm. I can still recollect the smell of the oat straw in the bed ticks where we slept.

So this was Canada, it was going to be vastly different from our previous life. The most notisable thing perhaps was that we had left England with the spring well on the way and the flowers blooming. Here it was still brown and bare, and as it happened to be an exceptionally late spring, the leaves were barely showing on the trees, I think Dad was effected mostly, it all seemed so rough and desolate to what he had been used to in England and when he was travelling in so many places over the continent, and the following years of the rough life we experienced didn't cause him to think any better of things, Everything was was completely strange and foreign to him and he was completely out of his element, I think I am quite safe in saying he didn't think much of Canada compared to England,

With Mother and the three elder boys it was the beginning of some new adventure. As far as I was concerned it was something interesting and I had not a care in the world and was too young to realize what it was going to mean to me.

Now I must stop, for I have previously written an account of what went on from this point to the end of the following winter. The title, Our first Canadian winter, and is of course a follow up of what I have put down here.