

# OXFORD STUDENT MEMORIES

Year three: 1962-3

Alan Macfarlane



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# 1962

## Winter Term 1962 - October

### EPHEMERA FOR WINTER TERM

Looking at the ephemera for this term, several changes are striking.

Firstly, the religious cards are absent. Where are all the OICCU and other cards of previous terms? It will be interesting to see what happens in the following two term.

Secondly, the amount of entertainment is much reduced – probably reflecting my intense concentration on work in my last year.

There is hardly any indication of sport, except for a note from a Hugh to the effect:

*Dear Alan,*

*Rugger v Hewell Dec 8th. What position would you like? Full back booked!*

This was a match against the Borstal boys whom we had visited in the summer. I do not remember playing.

There are only two play programmes: one for *Misalliance* by Bernard Shaw at the Playhouse for October and the other for a ballet on Saturday November 24th – *La Fille Mal Gardée*. There is also the film programme for the Scala cinema though I don't remember going to any in particular.

There is also programme for a concert in Worcester College Chapel on Sunday December 9th, which has a religious and Christmas carol feel about it.

There is also a card for the Oxford Union, though I have no recollection of going to any of them.

There is also a card for the folk and guitar society, the Heritage Society, and my International Student Identity Card for 1962-3

One other event is the Worcester College Christmas Dance on Friday 7 December. I have the Double ticket. It was the dance to which I took Penny. (On the back are noted a number of religious notes, perhaps to hymn numbers such as 'In my heart. Jesus, Jesus').

There are also two illustrated cards for my 21st Birthday [20th December 1962]. One is a humorous one from Robert & Angela (and Lucy and Emma. 'We'll bring our present up with us')

The other is a rather delightful hand drawn and painted one from Jane & Dusty [Jane Buckmaster]

The other change is that I started to keep scraps of paper with the cost of various foods and other items. This was probably largely prompted by the fact that, for

the first time, I was living in outside the College, in College digs. The fact that almost all are dated suggests that I was trying to preserve them either as a record or as an account. Since they give a rather different small insight into my humble life in digs, I shall insert them here.

Firstly there is a sheet headed

Stores - Winter '62 Oct. 10

Cornflakes 2 pkt; Salt 1 pkt; Sardines 2 tins; Coffee 1 large (Maxwell Hse), 1 small (Nescafe); Soup 2 tins (large) Heinz, 1 tin conc' Oxtail, 3 pkts knorr. [The oxtail soup is odd, as I thought I was a vegetarian at this time]; Baked beans 1 large tin; Tea 1 pkt; Sugar 2 ½ lbs; cheese 1 lb (4/-); Tomatoes ½ lb; Apples ½ lb; Carrots 2 lb [1/4]; Onions 2 lb [1/6]; Eggs ½ doz [1/9]; Potatoes 5 lb [2/3]; Milk (1 pt a day); Bread 1 small [10d]; Butter ½ lb; Marge; Bisc's 1 pk choc [1/7 ½ ], 1 ginger nuts; Beverage(!), 1 drinking choc & 1 milo; Ryvita 1 pkt; Beer 6x ½ Guinness [1/3 ½ each without bottle] ; Wine 1 sherry (16/-) & ½ wine (4/-); Ribena 1 btle (2/3); Dextrasol.

[On a separate bill on the same date are some of the items above with their prices. I have combined these in the above list, where available, in square brackets.]

This seems to have been my initial stock, which was replenished from time to time as follows.

18th October.

Ryvita 1s 2d; Biscuits (plain) 1s 3d; Chocolate 1/7 ½; Bournvita 3/-; ½ lb Marge 10 ½

26th October

Cheese, 2 guinness, Marge - 6/10 ½ ; Vegamin; Paper h'chiefs; Asprin; Friar's balsam; Vitamin C tab; Cod liver oil; Beecham's powder. [Clearly I had a bad cold, which my mother alludes to in a letter.] There is also written at the bottom in a red crayon 'Refugees'. There are two sums of money in pencil at the bottom 5/- and £1/5/10 - which items they refer to is not certain.]

28 October. 1 pkt ryvita 1s 2d; 2 fish & chips 1/9; 1 Guinness 1/3 ½; ¼ lb cheese 11d.

29 October

4/ ½ guinness; 1 lb sugar; 1 pkt soup - 7/8 ½

8/11/62

Ankle Support [suggesting I was still playing football]; Butter ½ lb; Ryvita 1 pkt; Sardines 2 tins' Sugar 2 lbs; 3 x ½ beer: total 10/10 ½

13/11/62 Bournvita, crumpets etc 5/-

14/11/62 2 lbs carrots; 2 lbs onions; 2 lbs apples - 6/4. Stamps 2/6

[Note: my Guinness regime had clearly started - and there is no meat and not much protein - Ryvita is an important part of my diet]

24/11 Books 4/10; Pills etc 12/-; 4 beer; ½ lb butter; Ryvita; 1 pkt choc bisc's; 10 senior service 2/3 [I am sure I did not smoke – must have been for friends]; 1 bournvita 3/-; Brook Bond tea 1/9

28/11/62

Butter; Crumpets x 2; Cake 2.6; Biscuits 1 choc; Beer 4; Shrimp paste 1/6 – 13/11 ½

Probably overlapping with the above, is another list of about the same date.

Cheque (ticked); Crumpets; Cake; Air-mail forms, Stamps etc 4/- ; Ordinance survey maps x2; History Maps; ; Shampoo; Box file; Coldrex 3/- ; Sugar; Ball; Ryvita; Eggs, Sardines; Beer; Typing paper 10/-; File 16/8; Maps 24/- & 9/-;

[Note, stationary was expensive...]

As regards going out for meals, I kept a note of the following:

16/10/62 3/4 dinner, 2/6 play

18/10/62 Film (paid for Eric) 4.6

27/10/62 2 meals 9/-

7/11/62 Supper & Lunch – Tuesday 6/-

12/11/62 1 meal 8/6

13/11/62 2 meals (lunch and supper) 6/-

18/11.62 Lunch 3/6

25/11/62 2 meals 7/-

[Going out for meals was quite expensive. Otherwise I seem to have lived simply. What is not certain here is how much I eat in College, which was only five minutes away.]

(Undated)

Dick – 4/3d (drinks)

War on want 4/-

Graph paper 1/-

One other indication of my costs is to be found in my cheque stubs, which indicated the following for this period (the bare sums are for cash for myself).

10 Oct £6

15 Oct £6

26 Oct £3

27 Oct Battels £6

28 Oct Dr Bruno Faust £7-7-0

28 Oct Gamages tapes £5-12-6

29 Oct £5

29 Oct Winter Ball £2-2-0

29 Oct Father Borelli £1

30 Oct Digs (Miss Norridge) £21-5-0

2 Nov £5

9 Nov For Refugees (J. Munks) £2-12-6

13 Nov Blackwell's £2-2-0  
14 Nov £5  
23 Nov Paperback Book Shop £2-6-0  
26 Nov £5  
30 Nov £5

7 Dec £5  
14 Dec £7  
(three stubs without any details)

\*

Towards the end of the summer vacation I met a girl called Heather at a party. She may have lived at Carnforth and was going on to Bristol University. She wrote to me in a letter post-marked 7th October. She wrote asking for help, and I include this small correspondence because the letter I wrote in reply is quite revealing.

Sunday [7th October]

*My dear Alan,*

*Forgive me for writing, but somehow I feel sure you won't mind. How are you? How's Oxford? I'm feeling intensely miserable. Why can't people be as open as you are? T. & I have, as you might say parted on bad terms... Alan you seem to be the only person upon whom I can't rely. You're so tolerant, & kind to me I feel a heel, but somehow I had to write to you. Why oh why didn't you ask me to dance at that first party of the holidays? ...Please drop me a line & tell me you don't hate me. It seems everyone else does... [gives phone nos] ... Please keep this letter, & the fact that I've written private. I mean, it's not exactly done for a girl to write first, but somehow Alan, you're the only person I can turn to with the confidence of knowing that I don't have to "act" in front of you, & that I won't be mocked or laughed at.*

*Take care of yourself - you're a very precious person.*

*Please write & say you forgive me for encroaching upon your kindness.*

*My love always, Heather*

There is a carbon copy of my reply, written a few days later. For some reason I wanted to keep my advice.

Wednesday [10th October] Worcester College

*Dearest Heather,*

*Please forgive this paper, I can't stand being cramped! Thank you very much for your letter, it was very sweet of you to write and even sweeter that you were so complimentary - it's lucky you don't know the real me! Your letter was especially welcome as it helped me to forget the bitterness of parting with my parents who have just returned to India for another 20 months.*

*I'm so sorry to hear about you and Tom - what advice can I give.... Oh Heather, life can be terrible, and of all the horrors it holds loneliness is one of the most bitter. The only ways to combat it are either to i) fight it ii) escape. The former means analysing yourself, remembering all one's advantages, putting temporary unhappiness into perspective against lasting joys or against the much greater suffering of the world & others. Escapism means - well you will know - the rushing from one occupation to another a constant stream of books, films, people, conversations, clatter, noise and turmoil so that one giddily forgets oneself - this is what most people do - and it is perhaps the easiest way out. But even in writing all this I am committing a big mistake - for an elementary lesson of life is never to take any, but a very few*

things (God, other's joy etc) seriously – especially never oneself. I'm not advocating that you wander round Bristol with an inane grin on your face! – but that you realise that Tom will probably soon make it up...

*I don't want to sound grandfatherly (I'm afraid I probably have already!) but T. is so young...*

*I myself have sometimes felt bitter at my girl-friend for no conscious reason & felt even angrier & more unkind because I knew I was being cruel. For instance when Penny (my London girl-friend) was up staying after 2 days I grew increasingly moody & jealous for no apparent reason. In the end I would hardly talk to her & then as we were climbing silently up a nearby hill she burst into tears and all the savage bitterness that was poisoning me vanished and we made it all up and I tried to explain why I had been so restrained. I'm not advocating tears... Love is, I suppose 9/10 subconscious & impulsive & we often don't know what we are doing. Just be happy and do all those things that you want to. Read some good books – watch the leaves turning to flame and then to ash – go down to the docks and watch the sea “keeping eternal whispering round desolate shores” – drink in the liquid beauties of smoky evenings as the lamps are lit, or the last golden days of autumn.*

*I don't know Heather – is this all wash? Can I communicate to you? Its desperately difficult to make real contact with anyone. We lock ourselves up in our dead, coffin-like, existences & hate intruders. Therefore all I can say is that I do sympathise and do like you & tho' I will be very busy in the year ahead if you ever want to let out pent-up thoughts or emotions please write – and I will do the same to you if I get too miserable. If only we could share each other's loads – but only One person can share the agony and the joys – and most people have not even Him.*

*Please forgive this letter – but I'm a sentimentalist. Look after yourself also Heather (if you write please tell me about Bristol University – esp about why you think people are unhappy at University on the whole). You are very precious, be careful,  
My love as always, Alan*

Heather replied on Monday October 22nd

*My dear Alan,*

*Thank you so much for your letter. I am very grateful to you for all your kindness, consideration and help. Things seem to be so-so.... You're a good friend, and I hope everything is all right between you and Penny; you deserve some stable happiness, especially now your parents are away for such a time.... [description of cycle rides etc.] ... We usually only meet at parties and dances, so next time get David to show you where I live, or perhaps you can remember? Anyway – do call, please.... Thanks again for everything you're a honey. My love always, Heather.*

[There are two further letters from Heather, one thanking me very much for hosting her and two friends in Oxford on a visit, the other stating that the relationship with T (at Cambridge) was definitely over.]

\*

The following account will integrate the correspondence between myself and Penny, which before had been treated separately for two chapters. During the Winter and the Christmas holidays, before Penny visited the Lake District again at the start of January, there are 24 letters from me and 19 from Penny. In terms of length, mine are a somewhat longer on average in this period – Penny was doing University entrance preparations and exams. In terms of words, my letters constitute perhaps two thirds of the total of more than twenty-five thousand words in our correspondence for this period.

I have included extracts from most of my letters. I have, however, switched the emphasis to what they show about my life and thoughts in Oxford. So I omit the greeting phrase, often something like ‘elf child’, and my salutations, endearments and

kisses at the end. I have also omitted the extracts from poetry and prose which formed a considerable part of the correspondence, just indicating what I included to show what I found moving or interesting.

With Penny's letters I have included most of the longer ones, but again tended to include only the parts which either discuss matters or reflect something about our relationship.

\*

The first letter from Penny I have dated as 5th October, although it only states Friday Morning.

*I regret the length of this letter - I am up to my eyes in work at the moment, and will not have time to pour out my wrath against the present Abortion Laws before you go back to Oxford. These laws together with those on Homos, and also the Penal system have incensed me for a long time.*

*Tell your friend, shall we call him Septuagint - never to become embittered on my account. I may be outwardly wayward, but inwardly ... Send all my very best love to your Mamma & Pappa, before they go back to India. Tell them I hope they are able to smuggle in some Toilet Rolls.*

The next letter from Penny is on Wednesday [October 10th]

*Is Oxford very beautiful now? I envy your being there in Autumn, but I must postpone my visit to that 'fair towered city' in the descending season of the year to next year. The descriptions of girl-friend of mine only increased my longing. Of course, I would love to come up and see you BUT ...*

*How are you, honey? Are your ankle & bleeding nose better? I hope you've had your hair cut, and have sat in the bath for 2 hrs wearing your jeans to shrink them. I'll make you a spivvy Ted-boy yet. Then you can infiltrate into Liverpool gangs, and establish a cell from which you shall infuse morality into today's youth. But I'm not so sure that it wouldn't be better to go as you are. If you bring yourself down to their level you will be corrupted yourself.*

*This is just the problem that is facing the Church today - how to be on a level to which people can approach, without lowering its spiritual standards, and consequently failing to influence. Anyway don't become corrupted - I haven't either authority or spirit to purify vice.*

*We have been moving furniture into the flat, recently, and it has all been fun... [description of] ... Life is difficult for girls trying university. We are all wishing that we had been left alone and not educated up to this standard. The educational authorities have "tampered" with our intelligence - I would have been quite happy to leave school at 15, unaware of my latent potentiality, but fully aware of my potency, have worked in a factory, and then married a green grocer. I think a Green grocer could have been very Romantic. We could have toured the streets in his horse & cart, and I could have rung a bell, for everyone to hear. Now this pleasure is denied to me. Think of the limitless hours of the 'Telly' & the 'mass media'.*

*As you can see from the article I enclose, there are at least 40,000 abortions every year. This number reveals, amongst other things, how widely practised abortion is, & that any law to revise the present situation would not be revolutionary. As K. Whitehorn says 'we do accept abortion in this country, legal or not'. Yet because it is illegal, 40,000 risk mutilating themselves for life, because they are unable to have it done openly & properly in hospital, and in spite of the fact that they will not be prosecuted. ... [several more pages to this effect].*

*Once the act is passed, however, one must continue to perfect contraceptives. It reveals irresponsibility in throwing aside the means of prevent conception, because one could resort to abortion.*

*One fear has always haunted me: as the risks of bearing children are gradually eliminated, today's youth who already are experienced, enough, will make intercourse a general practice, as*



a conclusion to petting, but being quite unaware of its essential meaning. It is well known that in primitive societies the emphasis on sex hinders the development of the intellect. The anaesthesia of sex, drink, and today tobacco, is a means of alleviating one's miseries. Unfortunately it is negative, in that one abandons rather than eliminates troubles. There are surely so many better & more productive ways of solving the problem. Nearly all our letters have ended up worrying about the Masses. Ugh!

I apologise if the past couple of pages have seemed Woman's-Ownish - but at 12.30 am my mind and style aren't ticking in the normal way. Also I have not stated properly what would be the causes to the Act.

Alan, if you could send me your address, I will send your file direct to there, instead of to the College, where it may get mislaid in transit. Do you think that you could send me your obituary of Tawney from which to take notes. Apparently we are very likely to have a question on either Trevelyan or Tawney, since both have died within the year. I have innumerable articles about Trev., but only 'Tawney's 'Religion & the Rise' & 'The Acquisitive Society'.

Is your Landlady nice? I hope she is looking after you well.

There are no letters from me for the first two weeks of October, perhaps I was busy moving back to Oxford and, for the first time, into digs. The first letter from me is as follows.

Sunday Evening [14th October] Worcester College

I hope you are happy and well and your work goes satisfactorily. Thank you for your long letter - I will answer some of the points you mention first. Don't bother about my dig's address - I am only a few yards from college and come in every morning [presumably for breakfast] so will be able to collect my file from there - Would you still like me to send my European History file? And if you w'd, would it be too late if I sent it in 2 weeks time? In answer to your plea for me to shrink my jeans - I already have bought a new pair which are very tight. (I couldn't get into them at first!) so you should like them - but my hair continues to grow. My digs and landlady are both delightful - tho' the latter almost over kind. No doubt you will see them both before I go. I am very sad you won't be able to come down this term - perhaps it is for the best, for though I, and therefore you, (for I expect I will be working longer hours) could both manage 2 days off it might have longer-term, unbalancing, effects.

I was very interested in both the article & your remarks on abortion. After exams I might go into it. But somehow I feel, from everything I have read so far, it is all too simple, too black & white; there must be some fairly strong (non-spiritual) arguments against it, or else reforms would have been achieved long since. As you point out, if one can have easy, painless, abortions and practically foolproof contraception we will be one step nearer the 'Brave New World' society where the animal pleasure of sex is totally divorced from all spiritual and mental considerations. It is true that fear (of the consequences) is not a sound basis for morality, and it would be ludicrous to argue for the retention of V.D on the grounds that it discouraged prostitution; but I am certain the problem is not as simple as many reformers see it. This does not mean, of course, that I would oppose reforms - for I hate and despise the present bestial laws as much as anyone - but the reform of the law would have to be done with full realization of the possible consequences. (Just to get my own back on your pointing out my various mistakes - I was interested in a certain word in the following phrase "the man is obligated to marry her" - aren't I petty!)

I enclose all I have on Tawney - I'm afraid it won't be much use.

I will refrain from launching another tirade against the masses (at least in this letter). Instead I will indulge in another of my favourite topics - myself! Bear with me, sweetie, for if you don't no-one will.

Tomorrow I start work in earnest - up to 60 hours a week, so I will be pretty exhausted. I feel as if I am just about to dive under a large ice-block and don't know when or where I will come up again. I have reached the C19 in English history which is fascinating, especially the industrial, religious and intellectual side. I have just finished Florence Nightingale by Cecil

Woodham Smith – an absolutely fantastic person. I will send you my copy if you have time to read it.

I went for a long walk across the parks to Old Marston Church this afternoon. It was unbelievably beautiful, tranquil – the chrystal [sic] essence of all the warmth and colour of the summer smoothed by the breezes of spring. Autumn is very late here, and many of the trees have not begun to turn yet – the willow-waterfalls still veil the river and the silver-birches quiver their million tiny leaves in the breeze – but the river was covered with sere leaves and boys were searching for conquers [sic] amidst rustling piles of chestnut leaves

Margarèt are you grieving  
Over Goldengrove unleaving?  
Leave, like the things of man, you  
With your fresh thoughts care for, can you?  
...  
It is Margaret you mourn for.'  
(Hopkins)

And the holly trees were aflame. And all above and around streams of bird song frothed like little waves on the inverted ocean of the sky. The Church was cool, grey, tiny and ancient, and we examined a C15 chalice (the oldest in use in England) – but everything merges into something else and now I am in the college chapel in the evening and the candles glow on the crucifix and the glory flares upwards borne on the ecstasies of 'Jesu, Joy of man's desireing' which is sung by the choir. And then again this merges off into last night when I returned through the enchanted night from a film and my heart was filled with praise, and then suddenly wrenched down into lust.

I hope this doesn't sound merely melodramatic or self-pitying, but am being torn apart. Half of me sees the world in a haze of glory – the other half aches at the cruelty and misery which lies all around; half of me again, also, is disembodied spirit, seeking God – while half is ravening beast lusting and prying. Penelope, I hope this isn't putting too much of a burden on you telling you all this – I don't want sympathy particularly as I will probably be fine by tomorrow – it is just that on occasions my sexuality reached a crisis and comes into bitter conflict with my ideals and the outcome is – self-disgust (and some poetry as well – of which I send a specimen which may give you a rough idea of what I am trying to explain.)

You talk of sex, tobacco & drink being anaesthesia, and hoping that a better solution can be found. But where? As you know I am shut off from refuge in all of them – except in a perverted form. There is, I know in my deepest self, only one other escape – that epitomised in my other passage of poetry – which I quote at length because it is so delightfully written. I hope you love the Psalms.

Look after yourself my sweet one, I think of you often. Don't overwork or get depressed – and don't take the above too seriously.

Enclosed: Psalm 91

1. He that dwelleth in the secret place of the most High shall abide under the shadow of the Almighty...

My next letter is on Thursday evening [25th October] Worcester College

Just a short note I'm afraid – and on business.

- a) Could you send my history file as soon as possible (& write also) – and if you have sent it and it has gone astray let me know.
- b) Would you like to come to the Christmas Ball – December 7th (Friday) evening? I should imagine your exams will be over by then – and perhaps they would let you away at 5.0ish on Friday & you could spend the week-end down here. Anyhow, even if you

*can't come it's nice being asked! But I hope you can manage it. Please let me have an answer by Wednesday as ticket priority closes then.*

*I am just getting another of my miserable colds – but otherwise work etc go quite well.*

*I have a nice poem of Swinburne's to send you, but do not have it on me.*

*Would you like me to send my European History file?*

The first surviving letter from my mother after her return to India is dated Thursday 25th October, from Assam. This was five days after the Chinese launched their attack in the disputed area of North East India.

*My dear Alan,*

*I'm sitting on the verandah sipping fresh orange juice with the sun blazing down, lawn mower rattling, ferns rustling in a soft breeze and the bathroom being painted – so you can see am feeling less miserable and frustrated than the last time I wrote. This in spite of the fact that the Chinese are breathing down our necks and the Russians are steaming towards Cuba. Living permanently on the edge of a crisis certainly makes one live more aware, looking ones last on all things lovely literally every hour. I don't know what the Chinese are up to but you needn't worry about us, as we can always slip up into the Naga hills and be in Burma in a few days. We haven't had a word from you since we left, but I think the mails are probably being confused by the state of emergency and likely to be held up.*

*You will have heard about the fiasco to the Kendal fraternity, [my sister Anne and Felicity] I was very fed up about but on second thoughts decided that perhaps they were too young after all to cope with living on their own. I don't know what Anne is up to now, Fiona has made contact with Rupert and Alan Barnes, don't know that I'm thrilled about the latter but she is too busy with work and coffee bars to have much time for gadding anyway.*

*Life here has settled down into a very busy nothingness, I'm quite unwound and potter round in a tranquil daze doing a million unimportant things like fleaing dogs, digging, shouting at malis, Shorthand and drawing.... I'm going to start working a bit in the school and hospital next week... I'm going to write to Robert Shaw for his books on the Moguls too to make a study of them but whether I shall write anything about them I don't know. I find it such a relief not writing, and want to hand my enthusiasm and ambitions on to you. Perhaps that's just the effect of all this sleepy sunshine, an interesting subject for a book or thesis would be the effect of climate on religion and philosophy, though I'm sure it must have been done already. ....*

*I often think of you in your room, eating your calories (I hope) and living in the past. I hope the work is going well & not too many depressing moods bothering you – also that Penny is passing her exams, can't quite remember when they are. Hope the grant comes through too, let us know. Much love from us both, Mummy*

The one letter from Penny which I shall include here has no date, but was written on Saturday October 27th.

*Thank you for your business letter. I shall deal immediately with the matters raised (There's some jargon back for you).*

*I would love to come on December 7th [Worcester College Winter Dance]. What a sweet idea. I shall have finished my exams by November 29th and would be spending the next week preparing for interviews which will or will not come. It will be ideal to escape to Alan's arms after my long Lesbian affair with Clio.*

*I am very sorry about not sending off your history-file. I have been meaning to for ages, but I never finally got around to it. I have sent it off separately from this letter since you wanted to know about the ball as soon as possible... The file has been exceptionally useful – I have modified my views about Pym, though I am not less sympathetic towards Charles. ... I recognised a joy and exuberance in your essay on the Growth of Puritanism. It is very easy to find essays which you have enjoyed writing. Also I found useful your essay on the "Opposition to the Henrician Reformation".*

*Remembering your remark that you were tackling your work as if you were diving beneath a block of ice, how are you faring in the crystal caverns of the icy deep? Are you finding Truth amongst the blue still waters, or have you abandoned the invigorating [sic] air of pleasure for the murky depths of work? I hope you will not drown or lose your soul to someone else like the "Young Fisherman". I would hate to see you floating with your long hair streaming behind you, beneath the surface of the water, unable to rise, and too far away for anyone to save you.*

*A new Cromwellian museum has just opened....*

*I went with Janet to the American Embassy, the day after the American blockade of Cuba. It was very inspiring, for I have never been amongst so many people – there were in fact about 4,000 – who were actively protesting against the dangers to world peace. Unfortunately after a while the sentiments of the crowd became diverse, and many were yelling insults at the Americans, which was not the aim of the C.N.D. meeting. [Description of events.]... I have decided some time in the indefinite future, of the relationship between religion and art. [Discussion of ideas on this in some detail several pages] ... As for historical studies, I would like to research into the relationship between the new Industrial capitalists of C17 and the government. ... This long epistle is to make up for the letters which I have written but not sent. During this week I have been wretchedly unhappy, and "J'ai senti passer sur moi le vent delaile (??) de l'imbécilité." I planned innumerable ways of escaping from all my work and my present existence; I was even going to dash up to Oxford to see you. Finally, however, Mummy took me along to my Doctor, who gave much advice on tackling my academic work, and how to deal with essays; and ... He was marvellous, tho' I do not know if the tablets he has given me are quite so effective.*

*But this letter, too, full of a great deal of nonsense – a reaction to academic work – and perhaps just a little sense must suffice you for quite a time. Cambridge exams start in about 2 weeks time, and once they are over, I shall write to tell you about them. Pray hard for me, Tumnus. I feel very despondent at times.*

*Thank you for giving me access to the Macfarlane poetry anthology. Your poem brilliantly unified sentiment and poetic imagery. Descriptions like:*

*'silver dawn ...  
Powdering old buildings with rose & gold,  
Wiping the shadows from her face,  
And filling each heart w[ith] peace'*

*Or  
'I saw this sad torn city  
....stand crowned  
Amidst its velvet fields as night  
Drifted like the river mist'*

[These are from a poem I wrote on October 12th – see elsewhere]

*are exquisitely evocative. 'Love and lust walk hand and [sic] hand' in every man; no-one can separate earthly from spiritual pleasures or desires, and I feel it is wrong to suppress one in order to further the other. Both have meaning; yet I believe if a man has neither wanted to, nor been able to participate in sexual intercourse, he can come into very communion with God, since all his interests are focused to this end. Yet I suppose that I should remember people like St Augustine. But St Augustine did not suppress his sexual desires (how dreadful this sounds – but he was quite a rake) so much as was satiated by it. He was a genius and having reached a situation from which he could not progress, he turned naturally to a source of unlimited love, which is never sufficient. That of god. I think frustration, because one has suppressed a desire unwillingly, is more destructive and negative, than a thorough participation, even up to "saturation-point". There is often, at least, some way out*

*of the latter, if it applies to earthly pleasures. Sometimes it results in boredom, but this is usually because the participant lacks in imagination and intellect.*

*Now must part – Love to you, dearest heart. I miss you very much. I hope you recover from your cold, and do not drown in your work. Please don't send me any more business letters, unless they contain such interesting business as today's did*

There is a letter from my mother to my grandmother related to the crisis, dated Wednesday 31st October from Assam.

*Dear Mummy,*

*The post seems to have been opened again after several days of being beleaguered so I hope this will get through. Everything quite chaotic here as you can imagine... ... Talking of money, Mac has sent £15 and some more is following. Unless you have already done so, please don't pay the bills after all, I've told the bank to put the £15 into your account and I'd be grateful if you would send £8 to Pat for the Speedwriting course and something to Anne for pocket money, its difficult to know what she needs as I don't know whether she has job or not. ... haven't heard from Alan at all which seems odd but with the present state of affairs not surprising. ... I hope Beryl isn't too depressed with the nurse leaving and Jane away and probably hating Holland knowing Jane, I wonder how Martins continental tour went off, don't suppose anyone has the faintest idea.... Much love to you both – Iris*

## WINTER TERM 1962: NOVEMBER

My next letter to Penny is on Friday [2nd November]

*Thank you sweetie for your long letter, the file, and your second letter. I'm so sorry about your cold - I fully sympathise as I have just go over one (it came on last Thursday, but I took heaps of tablets - Vitamin C, Veganin, Coldrex, etc & gargled with T.C.P & used Friar's Balsam & within 24 hrs all the worst symptoms had disappeared - which is very unusual for me - so I suggest you get the above if you do not have them already.) I hope this C. Robin excerpt may cheer you up a little & also this book - which is a get well present (on second thoughts I will send the book separately as I want this letter to get to you on Saturday.) I also include a few notes on Rousseau - he is indeed a fascinating man, torn apart by sex and idealism etc. I am longing to read his 'Confessions'! The essay, as you will see, is a flippant introduction to a study of him - but no-one really understands him.*

*You ask for news of my activities - fairly dull I'm afraid. On Sunday however I went for a long walk up to Islip - which is a little old riverside village. The autumn, red-clay, countryside looked just like a Constable painting - very serene and filled with a golden richness & purity. The whole scene was charged with the last liquidfulness [sic] of Autumn - full of inexpressible sadness and beauty, every leaf and blade of grass very precious in its last moments. And now it is grey and thundery and the streets run gutters of soggy leaves and winter drizzle.*

*Over the last few days an extraordinary number of coincidences have all occurred forcing me towards an increased awareness of my vocation - which as I have known for long is in some social work - but now I think it may be concerned with the population problem. Among other factors has been my contact with two great social workers (one of whom I went to hear on Monday) - they are Father Pire & Father Borrelli. Do you know anything of either of them? The second, who I heard speaking, was a fantastic person (he spent a year living in the gutters of Naples - literally) - shining with purity, charity and joy. But I must not get too involved in such dreams - a good degree is the first step to whatever I want to do...*

*As for the outside world it goes from crisis to crisis - I only hear of it indirectly and such a mirror of real tensions I saw last night in a film "Advise & Consent" - the 'lid off the American Senate' - very good indeed.*

*I am very tired so will close now - but will write again with the book.*

Enclosed: A typed version of A.A. Milne's 'Sneezles'

My next letter to Penny was written on a Sunday [4 November] Worcester

*Are you very miserable, ma chérie? I hope not - tho' all this work tends to make one depressed - I was very mopy last night, but, fortunately, had a friend on whose shoulder I could pour it out.*

*I am just about to go off on a long walk over Shotover hill & will come back exhilarated and happy I expect. It is a lovely day and the city of dreaming spires amid its royal sash of autumn woods and mist-wrapped rivers should look very lovely. I may even sink to the depths (as my cynical friends would put it) and write some poetry.*

*Last night I started my exploration into the underworld of Oxford. As a preparation I bought some fish & chips and ate them from the newspaper as I walked along the streets - a performance which always gives me a glow, as if I was doing something naughty and unconventional (!) then I dived down the drabest, dirtiest side-steet and found a very slovenly looking pub. But to my disappointment it was very snug and middle-class inside with old ladies sipping their beers and a few old gaffers chatting over the bar. All my visions of malevolent teddy-boys, sleek homosexuals etc were shattered. But perhaps more luck next week-end (!) I am convinced that such a survey will both give me a deeper insight into the varied life outside*

the ivory castle of university life, and, perhaps, I may be able to help even one lonely or maladjusted person. But I'm not sure my approach is right.

Swinburne this time – it is an exquisite picture of trackless nothingness, a vaporous emptiness conjured up by the use of vague, indistinct, terms – as T.S. Elliot has said of Swinburne “the diffuseness is essential ... it is one of his glories .... What he gives is not images & ideas – and music, it is one thing with a curious mixture of suggestions of all three ... in Swinburne there is no pure beauty – no pure beauty of sound, or of image, or of idea ... in Swinburne the meaning and the sound are one ... he uses the most general word, because his emotion is never particular, never in direct line of vision, never focused; it is emotion, not by intensification, but by expansion ... it is, in fact, the word that gives him the thrill, not the object ... his poetry is not merely “music” it is effective because it appears to be a tremendous statement, like statements made in our dreams ...”

As you will find, the ‘Lord of the Rings’ has much of this dream-like quality and the same haunting rhythm.

Enclosed:

Studies in Song: By the North Sea Swinburne (an extract)

Penny wrote to me on Monday [5th November]

*What a delightful book. The illustrations are exquisite... If this book is a token of your affections, then I esteem them highly. This is only another way of saying ‘Je t’aime beaucoup’. Aimer is more mysterious than its rather mundane English equivalent, which, as you say, because of its frequent usage, is almost devoid of true significance. How sentimental I become sometimes!*

*I suppose I have written this unwittingly to prepare you for ‘un petit contretemps’. For, however much I would like to see you on Saturday, I realise that your presence would disturb me emotionally, and I am sure I would not be able to recover by Tuesday. Even now I think of you too often for practical purposes. I wish I was a ‘hard-hearted woman’ who did not suffer the joys and agonies of emotions... Please honey, don’t even ring me up. I am at the moment in such a vague mood that anything or anyone may easily distract me. What a goose I am. ... Thank you for your essay on Rousseau. It was interesting, though too detailed for my specific needs. Sabine is my bible. Whenever I choose to open it.*

*I am glad you have found your vocation. I sometimes feel guilty that I am less socially conscious than you and some of my other friends; for I want to buy a large house in Bucks or preferably in Cambridgeshire, far away from the bonds of modern civilisation, yet near enough to lie a civilised existence. .... I think I see myself as a female Trevelyan... Unfortunately I do not have sufficient money to live independently, and yet I know few men who would be willing to support this type of woman. ... My present sympathies lie with Raleigh, who, according to T-Roper, was one of the first victims of the rivalry between the court & country parties... Thus I shall send you some of his poetry ... Now I must creep back to Eliz’s glorious presence. Perhaps I shall meet you there. If you are looking for the sordid and wretched life of Oxford, we can go and visit, when I come up in December, a undergraduate at Trinity; he is philanthropic and seems to spend his time comforting unhappy people. ...*

*Will you really come up post-haste if I summon you. What a spontaneous relationship ours is. So long as the one does not suddenly stop being fond of the Other, it is quite idyllic.*

The next letter from my mother is dated Cherideo Nov. 6th

*My dear Alan,*

*Two letters from you, thank you very much, as I thought they were obviously being collected in heaps and have been pouring in for the last couple of days. Sorry to hear of your cold and struggles with your landlady [I do not remember this, but from other evidence it appears that*

she was not happy with my eating in my room], *perhaps it would be better to try and find somewhere else next term? Doesn't she expect you to eat or what? Fiona loved her day in Oxford and I can imagine how ravishing it must have looked during that wonderful weather, it was nice to hear she was looking well as Granny said she was "desperately tired" and doing far too much - she probably is but will organise her life gradually and is obviously loving exhausting herself.*

*We have had our ups and downs here as you can imagine, there were a few days of chaos with no papers, no news (our wireless broke down) and wild rumours flying that they were almost on us - I packed a little bag and looked up the route to the nearest Naga village but things are a little better now... Whatever does [happen], please don't worry about us, even if you hear nothing we shall be all right. In the (unlikely) event of us not being able to contact you, the company can always be approached for funds; their address is 5, Laurence Pountney Hill, London E.C.4. Like you we have been far more worried about Cuba but one is getting used to these crises and taking a terribly fatalistic view I find.*

*In spite of listening for rumble of guns, life has been very peaceful and the weather is perfect, we lighted our first fire on Daddy's birthday and had letters from you all and a whisky peg to make us feel life really worth living, Daddy was very touched by your letter, we keep telling each other what wonderful children we have and think ourselves terribly lucky in spite of no money, binoculars, telephone, lenses etc!...*

*John Lampitt... Like you he is obsessed with the population problem but as an agriculturalist thinks of it in terms of how to produce more food. I asked Tom Poole if I could start some family planning work in the hospital and he said the Board were against it... I have ordered a copy of the "Bhagavad Gita" for you to be sent home, I don't think it'll be very wonderful but the best they have.*

*I'm still not doing anything very constructive I'm afraid. I've been working at my shorthand in case I have to get a job in Calcutta! I wake to the sound of hornbills & my days are threaded through with a pattern of birds, very beautiful & busy & punctual in all their comings & goings:*

*"I have learnt to live each day  
Minute by breathing minute,  
Birds that lightly begin it  
Shadows muting its end."*

*I'm thinking of Penny & keeping my fingers crossed for her. Anne sounds quite happy now, only Granny is cross as she can be & fighting with everyone! Much love - Mummy*

My next letter to Penny was on a Sunday [11th November] Worcester

*How are you poussiquette? Not too oppressed or nervous I hope. Don't worry I know you'll do very well and despite the attempts of our bureaucratic society there are still a few sacred places among the morning stars, places where the feet of the golden morning tread the mountains of peace, which can be attained by other methods than competitive examination! All the very best Penelope sweetie, but I will feel the same towards you however you get on, needless to say.*

*Thanks for your long letter. You say somewhere that you 'sometimes feel guilty' that you do not seem to be as 'socially sensitive' as me or some of your other friends. In fact I think this shows that you are healthier and more mature than us. As you will see from my Lawrence extract there is a tremendous danger in abstract 'philanthropy'. It is often a result of externalising an inner conflict, attempting to sort out the world when one has failed to sort out oneself - one must always remember the advice of Descartes "Conquer yourself rather than the world". But I'm afraid my inner schism is too deeply seated for me to overcome it - so I think I will land up in some social work. If I had enough strength and conviction I'd become a monk - for to drag a woman, however willing, through the brambles and barbed-wire I am hoping (in*



my masochistic way!) to go through in my fight against evil – would be selfish and cruel. Instead I will marry and my ideals will die away & I will become a fairly good teacher in a secondary school or something! But enough of that.

I have enclosed some Elizabethan melodies. I love Raleigh's 'Pilgrim', and as you say it is an important transition link between Elizabethan & Metaphysical poetry. I am beginning to have a fairly good idea of the inner conflict and the tense resolution of paradox and opposites which composes the attraction of Metaphysical poetry to our age which once again is making a desperate attempt to fit science and religion into one pattern.

But what are the especial characteristics of Elizabethan poetry? Perhaps you know something on the subject – I know little. But would hazard that its two dominant and most characteristic are its sincerity and its humour. When an Elizabethan was writing of anything love, God or anything else the whole of his mind could believe in that thing – love might be “a prick... a sting” but it was something more than sex, something more than enlightened self-interest – it was an absolute, an ideal and this confidence allowed them to be flippant, obscene or mocking. For one only dares to make fun of something in which one has unshakeable confidence. Nowadays if we talk of the ‘importance of love’ it must be in an entirely serious tone without that shimmering air of mockery and slight fantasy which lights up the delicate swiftness of their lyrics. “Vicisti Scienti.. (I'm not sure of the ending!) “and the world has grown grey at thy touch”. I am very much in sympathy with the arch romantic rebels Wordsworth & Lawrence at the moment who are trying to re-introduce life and spontaneity into this mechanical universe.

Sorry for rambling – but I suppose I'm tired. Once again my sweetie good luck & don't worry. How long do the exams go on? – as I might send you some verses to keep you sane if it goes on long.

Enclosed (Anonymous)

Sleep, wayward thoughts and rest you with my love:  
Let not my Love be with my love displeased...

My next letter to Penny is on a Monday [12th November]

Thank you for your note. This is all I can find directly on the subjects you mention – an essay by Lawrence on Democracy (probably pretty muddling) & two extracts from my political philosophy notes. The passage by Berlin is very good & worth thinking about as the distinction between the freedom to do & the freedom from is fundamental. Anyhow poppet don't worry too much about such subjects. I knew nothing about socialism etc when I took my entrance & still know very little!

Bitterly cold here at the moment but watery sunlight dribbling onto the crackling gold trees. Today is my 12 hrs work day so much rush. Be happy precious & think of me occasionally, neither too little or too much.

“Now it is autumn and the falling fruit  
and the long journey towards oblivion

...

And it is time to go, to bid farewell ...  
(Lawrence: Ship of Death)

There is an undated letter from me to Penny with just ‘Sunday’, Worcester College. From the reference to hospital visits etc. it is probably in November 1962, so have put it in here without a specific date

*I seem to have been very gay over the last few days. I went to 'Black Orpheus' on Friday evening, to a party last night, to a breakfast party at Joanna's this morning; to drinks at a friend at 12.0 (Champagne etc) and have just been for a walk with Carry & Sally Broadbent. The last of these - i.e. Carry & Sally, were rather exhausted after a 2-day visit from Pam during which they had had an unending stream of visitors. I am now about to rush off to my hospital [I used to play my guitar in children's wards in the local hospital, as part of a Christian-inspired mission]. Next week I have to read over 50 books & articles, go to 4 lectures, & write 3 essays. I will be more than ready to collapse into your arms when you come down! This is all terribly dull, and it shouldn't be on an exquisite day like today. After-effects of champagne I expect.*

Penny wrote again on Sunday [18th November].

*Thank you for all your sweet letters - elles me portorient [?] si beaucoup de plaisir. Now the Cambridge ordeal is over and's still to come - in a week's time. .. The papers were interesting - I would send them to you, except that I need to go over them with my subject-mistresses. [description of papers - a long account]...*

*Enough of my long-winded moan. Alan, dearest, please do not be depressed about your work. Is there anything I can do to help you? Next term, having left school, I shall come up and see you a great deal. Isn't Angus (?) a jovial youth? You must go to some parties, and to some lectures, for although you think they are a waste of time, some are wonderfully 'invigorating' and it would be good for you to get away from your books. At some time will you take Janet and I to the churches outside Oxford? The older the better. Together, we shall lead you a dance. 'Oxford beware' of the Misses Gaster & Marcus. Shall I come and mother you? I think you need it. Send me the telephone no. of your lodgings, then I can ring you at some time.*

*I was distressed that you described the snow and Oxford as sludgy. Janet and I had a romantic concept of snow feathering the towers and spires, and J was coming up especially to see the snow (and her boy-friend). [Description of snow, films etc.] ...*

*Will you come down to London, after your term is over? You could stay with us, except the flat is just not large enough, but Robert would put you up wouldn't he? It would love to see you for a couple of days before Christmas.*

*I am sending you a poem by Lodge on 'Fair Rosalind'; the metaphors are exquisite, though conveying the traditional sentiments.... [Poem enclosed, along with several others copied out].*

My next letter to Penny is on Sunday 18th November.

*... The last week seems to have been one despairing effort a) to keep warm in this bleak, snowy weather b) to keep up to my prescribed work-syllabus. I have my termly essay for my Special Subject - O. Cromwell's economic and financial problems and policy' & this is so absorbing a topic - raising such questions as - why did Cromwell fail? (if he did) was the 'Revolution' the victory of a new bourgeoisie and the repression of the working classes etc - that I have had to read about 30 books on it apart from 1,000 odd page of set texts (last vac') as a result much compression will be needed to settle all this into a 40 min essay for Tuesday.*

*Simultaneously I am writing an essay on Peel which encompasses the years 1820-1846 and includes such huge topics as Radicalism, Chartism, the Anti-Corn Law League, the structure of the Conservative Party, the character of Peel etc. I have already, in four days, covered over 50 sides of typed notes and am now deeply involved in one of my pet subjects C19 reformers. After reading 'Florence Nightingale' by Woodham Smith I have become fascinated in what makes a reformer and what are the common features which such characters as Schweitzer, Wilberforce, Nightingale, Danilo Dolci, Cobden, Chadwick etc share.*

*Quite simply, using the Hegelian dialectic - that is thesis, antithesis and synthesis, or diagrammatically:*

*Thesis -> Antithesis -> Thesis*

(applied by Marx and meaning to him – thesis, capitalist society; antithesis, the revolt of the workers; synthesis – communism) – anyhow using this dialectic the thesis of such great figures was an emotional urge to action, often sexual, as in the cases of Ghandi, St Augustine and, perhaps, St Francis – this was in turn checked by an antithesis, their powerful will, which turned their energies in the direction of social reform, increasing the energy by damming & channelling it – like some great dam used for hydro electric power. The synthesis is obvious.

Now this is obviously oversimplified – and this is always the danger of using a systematization like the dialectic. For one thing it does not answer the problem – why should their energies be turned to helping others? As Lawrence points out in the quote I sent you last week often it is for selfish & base motives, tho' this may not, as far as these aided are concerned, detract from the value of their work. But why are some people sensitive to suffering & others not? Are we all sensitive at heart, tho' some of us shut ourselves up, compromise, refuse to give ourselves and thus become dead, perhaps through fear, perhaps through other motives? Or are we all basically self-seeking and such sympathy, in the best sense (Greek 'feel with') of the word, is a conscious effort; for a while at least. How difficult it all is – but I won't go on for you will not want to hear me drivel before you go to your exams (also this is a one-track subject of mine)

How much longer do they last my poppet? Also you have never told me what you are intending to do after the end of this term (also when does it end?) will you be staying on, or getting a job or even going abroad?

I enclose a sentimental but austere beautiful de la Mare which is especially appealing in this 'sodden towards sundown' month. Oh for the soft summer again! – but winter has its clean, functional grandness and I am longing to see my mountains again with their patches of rock and snow and dead bracken, their stunted thorn-trees, old stone walls wet with winter mist and the becks in brown spate and everywhere the clear, wet bog-scented smell of damp heather. (Goodness!)

P.S. I am sickening even myself with all this idealistic tripe – so what you must feel I don't know!

Enclosed: Walter de la Mare, The Scarecrow

The next letter to Penny is on Tuesday Nov. 20th. Worcester College

Two letters to thank you for – you are a poppet. They came just at the right time – giving me added vigour in my wearying struggle with Cromwell's financial and commercial policy. And now it is all over, and, like you after your Cambridge exams, I feel elated tho' I have another essay for Thursday morning. The actual reading of the essay was rather an anti-climax for with the aid of numerous plans and graphs I showed how all the traditional theories of Ashley and others were nonsense. And after having stormed for  $\frac{3}{4}$  hr I found that my tutor and the rest of the class were not prepared to put up any resistance at all and did not bother to defend the conventional views at all. I felt I had bulldozed a shadow. Still it was fun writing it and making 'Trevor-Roper like' criticisms of the accepted authorities.

Penelope it is very sweet of you to worry about me. I love you all the more for it. We seem to spend our time comforting each other, and one of us is always ending up "try to be happier my dearest". The trouble is that we are both essentially very serious minded and grave people and take each other's moans too seriously. I am sorry if my letters have been miserable lately – this is largely because I have been getting rather tired recently (approaching end of term) and this tends to make me selfish – and yours is the shoulder I naturally turn to. All the longings and sorrows (if any) of my soul poured onto you – for here my relations with my friends are necessarily very fragmentary. Anyhow please don't worry. I am essentially happy and have frequent moments of ecstasy which more than compensate for periods of gloom.

Such a moment of joyous wonder occurred, for instance, this evening when I was walking back from my 'tute'. My heart was relieved anyhow and then I looked up, letting the soap-sud snowflakes fall like sweet cold kisses on my face. For a few seconds the whole world was lifted

up in beauty. The glistening patterns of the naked trees against the sky, the slender Church spire probing up into the cotton-wool clouds, the lights flickering off the puddles and the wisps of snow on the walls shimmered and danced forming patterns and dreams; in my mind I could hear the medieval bells tolling and the crackling of Christmas fires. Oh, I can't convey the wonder of it my sweetie, but the clanging joy and peace, the dark and light blended into a hymn of beauty.

All this sounds trite because I am too lazy to analyse my vision and to carefully select words to fit it – but such moments happen quite often. But there are dark threads also in the pattern – and I am glad it is not always a selfish sorrow I feel. For instance when returning from a bus three days ago I was accosted by a woman who was obviously drunk. She had just been jeered at by a group of 'teds' and I happened to catch her eye. There was enough sorrow in her face, in the hollow eyes, the flabby broken lips, the grimy, lined cheeks to fill a Dostoevsky novel. And I couldn't do anything for her. She wanted drink and I was too afraid and too selfishly prudish to help her.

I know self-condemnation won't help. "But you know what I mean". But as I said, on the whole, I am happy so don't worry. I partly wrote mournfully because I wanted you to write to me and give me reassurance – because I miss you. I wonder – do you think we are building up our fondness too much in our letters? Really we hardly know each other, yet we seem very alike, perhaps dangerously alike. We are really are "two dreamers" – my friends all think me terribly sentimental as far as I can make out!

Now some practical plans. When does your Oxford exam end/begin? When does your term end? I would love to come to London and hope that you will come up to 'Field Head'; the Lakes are austere beautiful in the winter. But we can plan things when you come up. Needless to say I will have to work somewhat next vac, but had planned to take a week off somewhere.

Thank you for all the poetry – some new, some I already like. Isn't it wonderful we both like this 'sloppy stuff'? I hope we will neither 'grow out of it' (if that is possible). I esp like Dowland setting.

I have been reading chunks of Blake (how well do you know him?) recently. I find him very challenging when I am feeling complacent – as I once wrote "he is that most terrifying of all men a realistic idealist" – his honesty and perception is shattering and his clear spiritual vision allows him to see all the sordid hypocrisies of this world against a blazing backcloth of golden truth. His 'Proverbs of Hell' are a storehouse of wisdom – (and a good fund for debate subjects etc incidentally!) and a battle programme for any teenage rebel – listen to a few –

"Prisons are built with stones of Law, Brothels with bricks of Religion."

"He who desires but acts not, breeds pestilence".

"Drive your cart and your plow over the bones of the dead".

"Sooner murder an infant in its cradle than nurse unacted desires"

"Prudence is a rich ugly old maid courted by Incapacity"

–then again there are prophetic intuitions.

"One thought fills immensity"

"Exuberance is Beauty"

"A fool sees not the same tree that a wise man sees"

"The cut worm forgives the plow"

"The nakedness of woman is the work of God."

That is enough be meditating on for now I expect!

My next letter is on Sunday 18th November.

... The last week seems to have been one despairing effort a) to keep warm in this bleak, snowy weather b) to keep up to my prescribed work-syllabus. I have my termly essay for my

*Special Subject – O. Cromwell's economic and financial problems and policy' & this is so absorbing a topic – raising such questions as – why did Cromwell fail? (if he did) was the 'Revolution' the victory of a new bourgeoisie and the repression of the working classes etc – that I have had to read about 30 books on it apart from 1,000 odd page of set texts (last vac') as a result much compression will be needed to settle all this into a 40 min essay for Tuesday.*

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*Quite simply, using the Hegelian dialectic – that is thesis, antithesis and synthesis, or diagrammatically:*

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*(applied by Marx and meaning to him – thesis, capitalist society; antithesis, the revolt of the workers; synthesis – communism) – anyhow using this dialectic the thesis of such great figures was an emotional urge to action, often sexual, as in the cases of Ghandi, St Augustine and, perhaps, St Francis – this was in turn checked by an antithesis, their powerful will, which turned their energies in the direction of social reform, increasing the energy by damming & channelling it – like some great dam used for hydro electric power. The synthesis is obvious.*

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*I enclose a sentimental but austere beautiful de la Mare which is especially appealing in this 'sodden towards sundown' month. Oh for the soft summer again! – but winter has its clean, functional grandness and I am longing to see my mountains again with their patches of rock and snow and dead bracken, their stunted thorn-trees, old stone walls wet with winter mist and the becks in brown spate and everywhere the clear, wet bog-scented smell of damp heather. (Goodness!)*

*P.S. I am sickening even myself with all this idealistic tripe – so what you must feel I don't know!*

Enclosed: Walter de la Mare, The Scarecrow

There is another undated letter to Penny, probably on 19 November.

*I am enclosing two newspaper articles on Chinese invasions of Assam, which I am sure you would want to see. I hope your parents are alright. [I refer to these articles in a letter to my mother]. How dreadful for them to lose their home and all their belongings in India. If you hear from them soon, will you tell them how very sorry I am.*

*At the moment I am reading Edith Sitwell's 'The Queen and the Hive' on Eliz. I.... [just a para of description]*

Another, undated, letter is written about this time, in similar style, paper etc.  
Dated Sunday Evening, London.

*I am anxious for your sake. Although I sometimes sink into the depths of despondency, yet I am never there for long. But I feel your work has depressed you for rather a long time. Yet other than by writing to you often, and seeing you occasionally, and loving you always, I can offer no practical help. I would say that you must not work so hard or worry so much, but you evidently have to study for a First. So long as you never reach the state, at which would decide that your work serves no need. But I know that I need not fear for you on that account. Why am I so useless? And why can I not offer any good advice. Anyway I shall see you in a few weeks time – each comforting the other by his or her presence, for I am sure that my present jovial spirit will not last till then.*

*I have been reading Eliza Love Poetry, this afternoon and evening. Although their ‘sincerity’ in love is framed in such joyous or heart-rending language, I began to yearn for the subtle cynicism of the Jacobean poets.... [further comments and quotes] ...*

*Have you read ‘Pepita’ by Vita Sackville-West? It the fascinating account of Vita S-W’s grandmother, who is a Spanish dancer and who lives with [sic] in France...*

*P.S. Thanks for your Sunday Letter. Of course I like to receive your letters and they are never boring, as some of mine must be. ...*

*P.P.s. Read Hill on Crom’s ‘Foreign Policy’, v. controversial – damn Hill – he upset all my ideas about success/failure of Crom’s F.P. – not good, just before an exam.*

My next letter to Penny is on Tuesday Nov. 20th. Worcester College

*Two letters to thank you for – you are a poppet. They came just at the right time – giving me added vigour in my wearying struggle with Cromwell’s financial and commercial policy. And now it is all over, and, like you after your Cambridge exams, I feel elated tho’ I have another essay for Thursday morning. The actual reading of the essay was rather an anti-climax for with the aid of numerous plans and graphs I showed how all the traditional theories of Ashley and others were nonsense. And after having stormed for ¾ hr I found that my tutor and the rest of the class were not prepared to put up any resistance at all and did not bother to defend the conventional views at all. I felt I had bulldozed a shadow. Still it was fun writing it and making ‘Trevor-Roper like’ criticisms of the accepted authorities.*

*Penelope it is very sweet of you to worry about me. I love you all the more for it. We seem to spend our time comforting each other, and one of us is always ending up “try to be happier my dearest”. The trouble is that we are both essentially very serious minded and grave people and take each other’s moans too seriously. I am sorry if my letters have been miserable lately – this is largely because I have been getting rather tired recently (approaching end of term) and this tends to make me selfish – and yours is the shoulder I naturally turn to. All the longings and sorrows (if any) of my soul poured onto you – for here my relations with my friends are necessarily very fragmentary. Anyhow please don’t worry. I am essentially happy and have frequent moments of ecstasy which more than compensate for periods of gloom.*

*Such a moment of joyous wonder occurred, for instance, this evening when I was walking back from my ‘tute’. My heart was relieved anyhow and then I looked up, letting the soap-sud snowflakes fall like sweet cold kisses on my face. For a few seconds the whole world was lifted up in beauty. The glistening patterns of the naked trees against the sky, the slender Church spire probing up into the cotton-wool clouds, the lights flickering off the puddles and the wisps of snow on the walls shimmered and danced forming patterns and dreams; in my mind I could hear the medieval bells tolling and the crackling of Christmas fires. Oh, I can’t convey the wonder of it my sweetie, but the clanging joy and peace, the dark and light blended into a hymn of beauty.*

*All this sounds trite because I am too lazy to analyse my vision and to carefully select words to fit it – but such moments happen quite often. But there are dark threads also in the pattern – and I am glad it is not always a selfish sorrow I feel. For instance when returning from a bus three days ago I was accosted by a woman who was obviously drunk. She had just been jeered at by a group of ‘teds’ and I happened to catch her eye. There was enough sorrow in her face, in the hollow eyes, the flabby broken lips, the grimy, lined cheeks to fill a Dostoevsky novel. And I couldn’t do anything for her. She wanted drink and I was too afraid and too selfishly prudish to help her.*

*I know self-condemnation won’t help. “But you know what I mean”. But as I said, on the whole, I am happy so don’t worry. I partly wrote mournfully because I wanted you to write to me and give me reassurance – because I miss you. I wonder – do you think we are building up our fondness too much in our letters? Really we hardly know each other, yet we seem very alike, perhaps dangerously alike. We are really are “two dreamers” – my friends all think me terribly sentimental as far as I can make out!*

*Now some practical plans. When does your Oxford exam end/begin? When does your term end? I would love to come to London and hope that you will come up to ‘Field Head’; the Lakes are austere beautiful in the winter. But we can plan things when you come up. Needless to say I will have to work somewhat next vac’, but had planned to take a week off somewhere.*

*Thank you for all the poetry – some new, some I already like. Isn’t it wonderful we both like this ‘sloppy stuff’? I hope we will neither ‘grow out of it’ (if that is possible). I esp like Dowland setting.*

*I have been reading chunks of Blake (how well do you know him?) recently. I find him very challenging when I am feeling complacent – as I once wrote “he is that most terrifying of all men a realistic idealist” – his honesty and perception is shattering and his clear spiritual vision allows him to see all the sordid hypocrisies of this world against a blazing backcloth of golden truth. His ‘Proverbs of Hell’ are a storehouse of wisdom – (and a good fund for debate subjects etc incidentally!) and a battle programme for any teenage rebel – listen to a few –*

*“Prisons are built with stones of Law, Brothels with bricks of Religion.”*

*“He who desires but acts not, breeds pestilence”.*

*“Drive your cart and your plow over the bones of the dead”.*

*“Sooner murder an infant in its cradle than nurse unacted desires”*

*“Prudence is a rich ugly old maid courted by Incapacity”*

*–then again there are prophetic intuitions.*

*“One thought fills immensity”*

*“Exuberance is Beauty”*

*“A fool sees not the same tree that a wise man sees”*

*“The cut worm forgives the plow”*

*“The nakedness of woman is the work of God.”*

*That is enough be meditating on for now I expect!*

*My next letter is on Thursday [22nd November]*

*I am writing on this civilized paper because I am in Eric’s room, supposedly listening to classical music and comforting him with my presence for the loss of a friend in an accident. He is working at the moment and I am letting Beethoven float round me.*

*Thank you Penelope for sending the newspaper cuttings – it looks as if the worst is past. For a while I was half-expecting to get a telegramme [sic] saying my mother was back in England.*

*How are you sweetie? Not too worried about the Oxford exams I hope. Have you heard any result from Cambridge yet? Presumably in answering your questions you start by spending 10 minutes planning roughly four questions – and writing out the times by which each question*

must be finished. The former means that your brain is working subconsciously while you are answering the earlier questions and it will also throw up a [blank] & facts which emerge in answering these questions can often be used in modified form later. It obviously requires self-discipline not to rush straight into scribbling frantically when you see everyone else doing it, but it is worth it. You must, obviously, make an organized effort to finish the number of questions set – and if you limit yourself strictly by writing down the time at which each question must be finished & dropping the question at that time you should manage.

At the moment I don't feel like doing any work for a little while as I wrote another essay this morning – getting up at 6.0 to do it. But now for my final essay I have been set the absorbing topic 'Victorianism' which includes a study of Victorian literature (including reading 'Middlemarch' which my tutor thinks the best novel in English literature) Victorian art & architecture & Victorian morality & religion – fascinating. But at the moment all I want to do is get to sleep. Thus I will end this very short letter by saying that I will write much more fully on Sunday when I should have recovered.

During my tutorial today I discussed my future with my tutor & he approved in principle with my reading a B.Litt. or D.Phil. if I got a good enough degree. If, as I don't really expect, I found myself able to do so I would like to take a year off in between doing something more practical. This would mean that I would be 25 before I finished my final degree – and you would have left university – what a thought! 'Procrastination is the thief of time' and 'idealism' is likewise.

The next letter from Penny is dated by me as 22 November, London Thursday

Thank you for your letter. I am glad all goes well with you. I am passing through one of my dreamy vacuous states (I adored being called 'a dream rabbit') at the moment which is somewhat unfortunate for my history revision. ... I enjoy, like you, I am sure, being sentimental and dreamy; as for your friends accusing you of sentimentality, Basil, certainly, is not living in reality, and David surely has an 'Achilles heel'. I shall come and find it, if he denies its existence. Beastly child I am braking down the walls and barriers people set up to protect themselves. I did not, however, destroy yours. You did that for me, when one evening you revealed all your good and bad traits to me (There are no bad ones).

My Oxford exams start, indeed, on Monday and end by Thursday. We break up on the 20th December. For about a week or two, after the exams I shall be involved in further work, and (god help me) interviews: I should love to come up to field Head sometime. Perhaps after Christmas? But we can arrange that later. I went to an interesting lecture today on the Commonwealth.... You will have to endure a lot of culture while you are in London.

Do let me know how your parents are. I assume you had heard of the invasion of Assam, before I sent you the cuttings.

P.P.S. We are related to the Courtaulds, but in such way that both sides hush the matter up. I regret, therefore, I cannot offer you the Chairmanship. Perhaps Robert may find you a place in Parliament. ....

The final letter to Penny in this first part of the winter period was written on Sunday [25th November] Worcester College, Oxford

P.P.S. In my selfish prattling I nearly forgot to tell you. My mother has been flown to Calcutta, but I don't know as yet if she will be coming on home.

This should arrive just before you start your Oxford exams. All my best wishes, love & prayers are with you, as you know; do well as you can my sweetest and enjoy it if you can. You should be getting quite blasé about exams by now – one can't go on getting worked up about these things time after time. A friend (girl) of mine here is also taking them – she has been at Oxford 3 years already (at St Clare's) and was a great friend of Julie's – she's not too worried



about the exams as her aim is to fail (she quite rightly believes that 6 yrs at Oxford would be too much of a good thing).

Thank you for all your letters my poppet – though they only make me long more to see you. I can see it is going to be very difficult to draw a ‘happy mean’ between my work and seeing you as both are vital.

I went for a walk this afternoon through Wytham Woods – North of Oxford. It was misty and the further trees looked like elfin figures, slim and immense in the distance. Nearly all the trees were leafless and their splaying branches and the silver lichen moss made patterns of interweaving grey against the darker trunks. I walked down long cathedral avenues with massive beech and chestnut columns [sic] supporting the grey dome, their tracery woodwork hung with silver rain drops. I could feel the strength of their roots beneath the ground pushing the heavy wood upwards and then letting the branches bend under their weight. The ground was rich with quilted leaves, forming a coat on the thick loamy clay-soil which clung to my shoes. The wood sung and chattered with birds, the quarrelling of starlings, the liquid siftings of thrushes and the frequent whirr of woodpigeons, and the squelch of my footsteps drowned the moments of intense quiet when suddenly everything stopped and all the trees seemed to be listening to my intruding clumping. The ‘earth-smell’ was in the air, and the damp smell of a thousand mouldering leaves and wet moss. For a while I was absolutely at peace. Has this conveyed anything? As Elliot says, writing is a constant struggle with obstinate words and always the right expressions ‘eel’ their way through one’s fingers.

I am just about to embark on ‘Victorianism’ (after another 3 days on Cromwell) and already my mind has been filling with preconceptions which will distort my findings. I am convinced that the only binding element in ‘Victorianism’ was fear. What else binds Arnold and Swinburne, Newman and Kingsley, Carlyle and Peel, Victoria and Browning and of course Tennyson & Geo Elliot, with their seriousness, their strict morality (even Swinburne & that post Victorian D.H. Lawrence had this), their energy & love of work, and their ornateness? It was a fear of chaos – the spiritual chaos which was left by the findings of science (which turned man into an evolved animal) and the material chaos produced by the industrial revolution. The constant stress on morality and hard work and the anguished search for God, by men like Newman and women like Elliot was the response. But more of that when I have read something about the period.

I have just, since writing the above, been to a talk on the University Christian Mission which is being held in the 4th week of next term & being led by Trevor Huddleston. Our college representative is chaplain of Christ Church Cambs & got a Theology 1st at Worcester 2 years ago. He gave a marvellous talk, well larded with quotations one of which I enclose. His sensitiveness and honesty shone forth and he had a charity which took one’s breath away. I hope you will be able to come down during the mission next term (3rd week Feb) & meet him.

*P.P.S. [on a card]*

I have just received your two letters this morning so enclose the Cromwell essay. (Thank you very much for letters). I’m sorry it is so messy – I was allowing myself the luxury of scribbling since I thought no one would see it. As you see it deals almost exclusively with Cromwell’s financial problems & how this affected his foreign policy & may be too detailed for your purposes. I hope you can understand the graphs (don’t worry about the navy as this is an aside)

On reading through my letter of last night I winced several times at its lush sentimentality. Please don’t take it too seriously.

I am just on the point of starting “Middlemarch” & my next letters will probably be full of it.

Enclosed: [copied out neatly on two cards]

Aldous Huxley: ‘Human Potentialities’.  
(Symposium at San Francisco. pp. 60-3)

'I would like to begin with a question, a very simple & seemingly absurd question: What are people for?...'

The following day I made a note in relation to my reading of the time.

Knowledge - thoughts while reading Coleridge (Basil Willey) 23/11/62

True knowledge is to know a fact emotionally - to "feel it in the blood" and to let it change one's personality. Our receptivity is largely in proportion to a) our experiential maturity & b) our previous 'knowledge'. Thus experience - which is outside events modifying our character (the most obvious channels for such action are extremes such as suffering & love) has a direct relation to our ability to understand abstract ideas. The ability of ideas in themselves to modify and increase our experience is much less powerful. Thus over-long academic study is wasteful for until we have matured our personalities much of our study cannot be absorbed.

Like a sponge however - once the initial dryness has been overcome the absorbing power increases more rapidly [sic - rapidly] - till saturation point is reached.

Thinking about this fifty years later it all seems true. It explains why my academic achievements at Oxford, despite very hard work, were limited - I was immature and had experienced few of the things, particularly political life, about which I was expected to write.

\*

We need now to go back a little way to a series of letters from my mother which need to be read together. The first is dated Nov. 17th and is from Assam.

*My dear Alan,*

*News from the front! A very peaceful front here with only the barking of the dogs to disturb it and the scent of brushes in the drain as the malis clean them. The real front must be a nightmare, so cold and hilly with Chinese peering down and flourishing arms that the Indian troops have none of, or perhaps they have now. ... We have only started to feel a slight pinch in that things like eggs and chickens are getting hard to buy and expensive...*

*I have been given the all clear to start my family planning campaign so am putting out some propaganda and hope the candidates come rolling in...*

*I do hope Penny is getting on all right with her exams, I was wondering if you would like to make your Christmas Ball into your birthday treat, perhaps Fiona and Rupert come for it and we could pay for the tickets? There isn't anyone really very exciting in the Lake District to make a party with, but you might want to have Penny to yourself or have made other arrangements. If you do think it's a good idea get the tickets and let me know what they cost.*

*You will have heard about Nicky I expect, poor Pat she is having a trying time with her family, Anne and Felicity seem to be having landlady trouble too, Anne very indignant because she has wiped the floor with F's face flannel! ... Anne can't now get into Manchester till 1964 so we shall have to do some more reorganising.*

*I was wondering if you couldn't write to Victor Gollanz and see if he could find you something useful to do within the scope of your talents which are obviously literary or does that sound a dotty idea? I wish we could have another talk, already I'm beginning to feel out of touch with you & your work, these silly little forms are useless. My reading is still "The Golden Bough" its surprising how little I do too, its always a mystery to me where time goes out here...*

*Hope your food problems are solved, I constantly wonder what the 3 of you are eating, Leek soup I suppose?! Much love, Mummy*

My mother wrote again four days later, as the political situation worsened.

Cherideo Nov. 21st [It is date stamped 23rd November and addressed ARRIVED IN CALCUTTA]

*My dear Alan,*

*I don't know whether this letter will get to you but I'm hoping it may just. I'm afraid this is It and there is no holding the Chinese now, it is all terribly tragic and senseless, the casualties on both sides are phenomenal and one is riven with pity for poor Assam and what it is going to mean in terms of starving children. I think that by the time this gets to you (if it does) we shall be out, probably in which case I'll send you a wire from Calcutta or Singapore or wherever we land up. In any event don't worry because even wires will probably not arrive. I have a suitcase packed but of course we may not even be able to take that much, in which case have some woolly vests ready for me! It is very peculiar sitting on a peaceful sunny verandah eating breakfast and listening to the news telling one about oneself, it all seems quite unreal...*

*We got a letter from you and Anne this week, but nothing from Fiona... Don't forget to go to the Board for money if you need it as you will during the holidays, if I go to Calcutta I shall be able to send you some from there...*

*Don't let any of this divert you from your work which is the only important thing and your worrying about us won't make an atom of difference except to yourself. I want to write to the girls now, we will stop, love to Penny, do hope the exam is safely over. I expect we shall be seeing you all for Christmas, that would be a lovely thought. When does your term end? Much love from us both - Mummy*

The following letter is hand-written from c/o Kilburn, Calcutta, and probably written at the end of November.

*My dear Alan,*

*I hope my series of wires and letters have got through to you & you weren't too worried about us. It all happened so suddenly that we had no time to do anything but throw a few unlikely needs into a case and set off. We (the women & children) had planned to go to Calcutta by road, but when we got to Jorhat we were told that 2 R.A.F. planes were coming to pick us up. The disorganisation was utterly British, we were all penned into one building for 24 hours waiting for the planes which were variously described as Brittanias, Constellations, Dakotas, & helicopters & turned out to be Hastings - it was lucky the Chinese decided to call a halt as otherwise we should have been nicely trapped! It was a very painful business having to leave our husbands & possessions) the latter didn't bother me a bit actually) but we hope that some way will be found out of the muddle & we'll be able to go back.... [further account... - see 'Diary of a Displaced person as well]... I don't want to leave India until Daddy does so shall try & get a job here if I find we're not allowed back within a couple of weeks. ... I've sent £75 for December, I shall have it put into your account & will let you know more about the money side in another letter. Much love, keep working -Mummy*

There is a second letter from my mother to my grand-mother, written from Calcutta, probably on 27 November:

*Dear Mummy,*

*What a debacle! It all seems like a bad dream and the air of unreality helped us through a rather grisly experience. .... [description of events] ...I shall stay in Calcutta for a month, by then we should have a clearer idea of the situation. £75 is coming home at the beginning of December which I will have transferred to Alans account & he'll have to organise the holiday expenses. I'm afraid it'll have to be an austerity Christmas without presents or parties, but I*

*know they'll understand, I don't want to have to cancel Anne's course if I can help it but at the moment can't say what the arrangements are for paying husbands, £75 a month is the maximum we are ever allowed to send under the new rules so shall have to see how much A. is going to cost. Much love to you both, Iris.*

There is a cyclostyled letter dated 28th November 1962 from The Assam Company, Limited, London.

*Dear Mr Macfarlane,*

*All the men are remaining in Assam: all the women and children of the Managerial Staff, both European and Indian have been evacuated to Calcutta.*

*Here in Calcutta the company's Agents Messrs. Kilburn & Co. Ltd., have made excellent arrangements and the women and children are well housed and well looked after... The General Manager's wife is with them and has the brood under wing. ...*

*To sum up, everything seems to be under control and let us hope that nationally the same is true.*

*I have offered to go out immediately the Agents and General Manager think I can get to Assam and be of any use,*

*P Remnant, Chairman*

\*

I wrote to Penny again on Sunday [25th November] from Worcester College, Oxford

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*This should arrive just before you start your Oxford exams. All my best wishes, love & prayers are with you, as you know; do well as you can my sweetest and enjoy it if you can. You should be getting quite blasé about exams by now – one can't go on getting worked up about these things time after time. A friend (girl) of mine here is also taking them – she has been at Oxford 3 years already (at St Clare's) and was a great friend of Julie's – she's not too worried about the exams as her aim is to fail (she quite rightly believes that 6 yrs at Oxford would be too much of a good thing).*

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(Symposium at San Francisco. pp. 60-3)

'I would like to begin with a question, a very simple & seemingly absurd question: What are people for?...

My next letter to Penny was on Tuesday evening [27th November] from the Bodleian Library, Oxford

*Just to take up one point which you made. Can you guess what? I will speak more of this before I see you. But re. this question - i.e. our physical relationship a few thoughts cross my mind. There is no need for me to stress the difficulties for both of us. You already know something of the measure of my sensuality & you can imagine that I'm not any the better for living my present eremitical life. Therefore, my sweetest, you will have to help me and use your greatest tact, for as you know, I have little self-confidence & if you withdraw too much or in the wrong way I will be hurt & go into another huff. But, darling, as you know I still attempt to live up to certain ideals as a Christian and apart from this if all my protestations of affection are not vain I will restrain myself if that is what you want. I don't regret last holidays - except that I would have gone much slower if I'd known how unspoilt you really were - and I know that we were still quite a way from intercourse, but I agree that if we are going to see each other fairly often for a longish period we will have to keep a beastly but necessary check on ourselves - despite what all my heroes like Blake, Lawrence, Freud etc say on the evils of suppressed desire! To conclude, my poppet, if you help me (and I help you) we must try not burn too fiercely. But enough of that serious topic.*

*Today I include a strange mixture of quotes – firstly a wonderful prayer of St Francis, simple, comprehensive and ardent. Secondly a piece of Dryden’s Satire which I have just read (again) in Wedgwood’s ‘Poetry & Politics under the Stuarts’. I’m afraid one has to be bitter about something to write satire – but otherwise I would love to be a great satirist; as Knox said, it is the strongest weapon against ignorance, bigotry, pomposity, intolerance etc. Laughter is the one weapon which even dictators fear.*

Enclosed:

Prayer of St Francis.

Lord, make me an instrument of Thy Peace. Where there is hatred, let me sow love; ...

Dryden: puts into the mouth of the dying poet Flechnoe, bequeathing to Shadwell his supremacy over the realms of nonsense, the following lines:

“Shadwell alone my perfect image bears,  
Mature in dullness from his tender years; ...

The same day Penny wrote to me. Tuesday [27th November].

*It was marvellous talking to you yesterday. I thought you said that you were incapable of holding telephone calls – you seemed to be fairly confident. I am sorry if I seemed depressed – it was a little frustrating to speak to you, without seeing you. However, do you think I could [come] up this weekend? I would not disturb you, if I came on Friday afternoon, because I could go on a Grand European Tour of all my friends. In the evening you could take me around to see your acquaintances. Saturday I could spend in the Ashmolean, while you worked – I spend hours by myself in museums. In the evening, you might take me to this party at which you are singing. On Sunday, we could ‘do’ churches, or ‘the walks’ which you have praised so much. You see, I have planned it all. However, do say if it would be inconvenient. I think the plan would be better than your coming up just for Friday evening. I don’t like treats in small doses. Could you also find me somewhere to stay? Would you write back as soon as possible to confirm it, even if you have not found anywhere – just to assure my mother in writing that I have a bed for the night – and not yours either. Sorry about the deceitful practices, but if you wait until you have actually found a bed, I might not have written confirmation until Friday at last. If this all seems rather short notice, can you afford to ring me again on Wednesday night, at about the same time. I promise I won’t talk for long. BUT if you prefer I don’t come up, don’t hesitate to let me know.*

*I feel much more confident about the special History paper today. ... Apparently some of the questions were set by Mrs Prestwich whom you ‘dismembered’ in your essay on Cromwell. [further discussion of work] ... Love to you, my dearest heart. After my exams my mind is completely vacuous, so I can offer you no profound thoughts, if they were every intellectual. However I shall write out a poem for you to consider. [Poem enclosed: Song ‘That women are but men’s shadows’]*

I wrote again the next day [28th], on Wednesday evening, to wish Penny happy birthday.

*You know you have my love and thoughts especially today. I hope you manage to have a wonderful day despite exams. Do you feel any older? I never do.*

*... As you will have gathered from the above I would love you to come down on Friday. I have, as you asked in your letter, found you some digs for Friday & Saturday night & though I will, as you have realised, have to do some work, it will be easy to follow your ‘programme’. Please give me details of when you arrive etc – tho’ I expect if I meet you when you arrive I won’t be very anxious to go on working while you do a tour of your other Oxford boy-friends!*

*There is a Brecht play on on Friday evening which we could go to if you like - tho' it would perhaps be a pity to spend our short time together in this way.*

*Since I last wrote I have done nothing of interest - except having a tea-party - all my friends - or rather some of them - this afternoon. When you arrive you will probably hardly recognize the gaunt, haggard, stooping figure who comes to meet you!? In the last three days I have done over 33 hrs work and as you may gather from this letter's vagueness it is beginning to tell. You will have to mother me, as you suggested, & calm my 'fevered brow', rocking me gently to sleep etc.*

*Could you bring a needle & thread with you as my jeans, being so tight, are growingly indecent and need mending? (I will then find out how unpractical you are.) ...*

Enclosed:

The Oblation. Swinburne.

Ask nothing more of me, sweet;

All I can give you I give....

## WINTER 1962: DECEMBER

The next letter after Penny's visit was written at five past four, on Sunday 2nd December.

*Having had that conversation about when I should write it seems strange writing now, as you are still on the bus. No doubt we are both thinking of each other and generally looking moony! I hope the 'poetry and jazz' was enjoyable & that you managed to sleep well last night. It seems so useless writing - so artificial after two days together - so I won't write much at the moment. Anyhow I am still in rather a daze as you will see from the state of my writing. I will have to purge myself with this 'Victorianism' essay & I will use it as a distraction by pretending that I am writing it for you (I will type out & dedicate it to you if it is any good) & I will thus distract my energies. And how will you fare my poppy? Don't think about me too much - I'm not worth it apart from anything else...*

Enclosed:

I was walking along the street ... I was stopped by a decrepit old beggar.  
Bloodshot, tearful eyes, blue lips, coarse rags, festering wounds ...  
(Turganov (quoted "Year of Grace"))

### Song.

When, Dearest, I but think on thee,  
Methinks all things that lovely be  
Are present, and my soul delighted:  
...  
(Owen Felltham (1661))

I wrote again the next day, Monday 3rd,

*"Out of the night that covers me, black as the pit, from pole to pole'... I write to you. (The "night" is my work in which I am drowning all my loneliness etc). This is just to give you one more re-assurance of my ....? Already, it will only be three days until we see each other (when you receive this). Come up when you like on Friday for although I will have to do some work & go to my "collection", I am sure the organisers of the Dance would appreciate your assistance. What colour will your dress be sweetheart? - so I can be gallant and pluck forth a rose (or something) for you to wear.*

*My study of 'Victorianism' is more & more exciting. The enclosed poem - or rather a portion - you will know already. With one's normal conception of 'Victorianism' it is difficult to see how such ideas could have been so popular. I suppose people liked the escape into a rich, colourful, hedonistic world, where the grey and grimy industrial towns, the repressive morality, the stark faces of threatening new classes, the earnestness of the temperance movement etc could be forgotten. Every hidden desire of the Victorians could herein be realised vicariously - with no commitments. They revelled in the joy of playing with fire, of being naughty. It is an adolescent paradise in which they could shed Pilgrim's heavy pack of 'responsibility' and 'seriousness' amidst the languors and raptures of the lotus east where the lily dreams in the pool and the nightingale lets its liquid siftings fall' in the dim, spicy woods.*

Enclosed:  
'Omar'



Come, fill the Cup, and in the fire of Spring  
Your Winter-garment of Repentance fling.  
The Bird of time has but a little way  
To flutter - and the Bird is on the Wing.  
...

That same day I wrote to my parents [Monday 3rd December], from Worcester College. [It is addressed to Cherideo, and stamped Sibsagar 10th December]

*Dear Mummy and Daddy,*

*I don't know how this will find you, if it reaches you at all. [reference to the Chinese invasion, fleeing of my mother etc.] There is nothing I can really say about how sorry I am about this disaster - words don't mean much, and if I laid it on too thick I would be lying because I have been so immersed in my work that I have not had much time to worry about the outside world - which is perhaps a good thing. Anyhow you know that apart or together you always have my love and prayers and I know that whatever Mummy decides to do will be right ie staying out in India. As I never read newspapers I didn't hear about the disaster until a day or two after it happened, when Penny sent me some cuttings (which shows my ostrich 'head in the sand' state). By now, from the gradual news that drifts into my snug room, I gather things are improving. I got a carbon letter from Remnant or whoever is the 'Head'; it was sickening, full of patronising clichés about the General Manager's wife "having the brood under her wing" in Calcutta and saying how zealous he was to rush out to Assam if there was anything for him to do, with an odd aside dismissing Nehru as "intransigent" etc. Ugh! By the way I have had two letters from Mummy so the mail is getting through this way. The flight sounds typically 'British' & unprepared. How are you Daddy, perhaps this will reach you by yourself at Cherideo? If so, all my especial affection, while Mummy is away.*

*As for my own doings, two things seem to fill the whole horizon - my work & Penny. I am enjoying both immensely (if that doesn't sound odd??). At the moment I am writing an essay on a fascinating subject 'Victorianism' which means reading all my favourite writers like Tennyson, Hopkins etc. While I am talking of work - I asked my tutor casually if he thought it worth my while provisionally applying for a 'State Studentship' (that is a scholarship which should make me self-sufficient if I wanted to do some further study before I left University). He seemed to think it a good idea though of course it would depend on my degree. I don't think there is much possibility of getting good enough marks - but if I did I might spend a year abroad - and then come back & read a B.Litt (2 yrs) or D.Phil (3 yrs). This would mean I would be 24 or 25 before I finished - but pretty highly qualified & more certain of what I want to do. Do you think it a bad idea? Anyhow I don't expect the problem will come up.*

*Penny has been up for a couple of days this weekend & is coming up on the 7th for the dance. I have also invited her up to the Lakes (Granny suggested this!) for a few days after new year. As you may guess from this she is weaving a strong net round me & I will be ensnared before long - but we would neither want to get married for 5 years - so have plenty to [sic] time to cool our heads. We went for an idyllic walk through the frost-fields of Port-Meadow to the Perch & then on to the wishing-well at Binsey Church. Her exams are over - but she is not too optimistic re. the results.*

*My fondest love to you both, look after yourself; Penny sends her love also, Alan*

Penny wrote on Monday [3rd December].

*It was wonderful seeing you over the weekend. I had wanted to see you for such a long time, but when the occasion arose, it passed too quickly. Yet it seems strange that in four days time I shall be seeing you again.*

*You must plan some pleasant walks for this weekend. Despite my moans about my feet and toes, I found the scenery idyllically beautiful. It was fascinating to watch the amber leaves*

drifting down onto the road. Of course, I have told you how much I like autumnal colours and smells and I was secretly miserable that I might not experience Autumn in Oxford where it is said to be beautiful. ~~Although I missed the~~

Thank you for the books – I was thrilled to receive ‘Le Petit Prince’ – and I am looking forward to start reading ‘Lords of the Ring’ in a week’s time. Dearest heart, you have given me some delightful books. Will you take me to your Children’s Book Shop. I am fascinated to see it. There are few if any bookshops in London selling only children’s books. I’ll bring the Listener’s and Times Lit Supp’s extra supplements on children’s books, which contain some articles on the material for and the presentation of such books. ... [more on children’s books].

I spent the coach journey studying the drawings of ‘Le Petit Prince’. But it was so cold in the coach, that I fell asleep dreaming sweetly of xxxxx. [Account of a performance of jazz and poetry, including Christopher Logue and Adrian Mitchell.] ... I am sorry, dearest heart if I was grumbling yesterday afternoon about the clothes I possess. I am not really interested in clothes, though I am concerned about colour combination. ... In fact, all my money goes on books ... If I need any clothes my mother buys them for me. ... I had a wonderful weekend and thank you for that and all my presents. I am looking forward to seeing you. I shall try to find some Victoriana for you at the V & A. Please, sweetheart, dedicate your essay to me. I should be complimented by your action. Don’t however, both to type it out especially for me – I can read it when I come down.

PS Alan, darling, I am not trying to stultify your social conscience. That remark was unfair on your part. I am merely trying to direct your interest to S. America. Ho Ho.

The next day she wrote again: December 4th London [Tuesday]

Thank you for your letter, in order to write which you emerged from your black pit. It cannot, however, be too black, because you write later ‘My study of ‘Victorianism’ is more & more exciting’. I am glad you are enjoying it, and to further your interest I have bought a couple of booklets on ‘Victorian Paintings’ and on ‘William Morris’. I shall bring them with me on Friday. [We were going to the Worcester Winter Dance on 10th].

I shall try to catch the same coach on Friday, as I did before. It may, however, because of this accursed fog – it is horribly thick and oppressive, and there is also a bitter frost (what a combination) – be cancelled, or delayed. Thus if I have not arrived by 2.00, do not bother to meet succeeding coaches, since I may well come instead by a later coach or by train. If this happens I shall come straight to your room. ... At the moment I am listening on the wireless to B. Britten’s Variation and Fugue on a theme of Purcell...

I shall, I am afraid, be unable to hinder the organisers of the dance, or rearrange it according to my tastes. I wrote to Jane at LMH, inviting myself to tea on Friday. Also a friend arranged for me to see here sister, who is studying History at LMH. It will be useful to know about the History Tutor before I am interviewed by her (My God, I hope I am – if only as a justification for all the work I have been doing this week).

Alan, honey, I picked up John Fielden’s files today. I rang up on Monday evening, and suggested that since he lived in Islington, and since I was not sure if I could meet him at lunchtime, we met in the evening. Poor fellow stuttered out that he was married – it was amusing... He gave me a long explanation about the arrangement of his files – he certainly worked very hard, and suggested you went to some lectures by Habbuk (?), since they are not usually published later in printed form. He has apparently disproved Nef’s thesis that there was a serious Industrial Revolution between 1540 and 1640. Because I told him that Hill believes that further study should be made into the relationship between the Crown and Industrialists during the seventeenth, John has selected some essays which he says show his own thesis. So Alan, darling, I am sure [you] won’t mind me reading some of his essays over the weekend. ... [further talk of essays]

Now I must return to my own black pit – it will be nice to share yours on Friday. I won’t write again before then, Sweetie, since the post is thoroughly disorganised, and even this letter might not reach you till Friday.

I wrote again to Penny on Wednesday [5th December] from Worcester.

*I will see you tomorrow! Strange – I thought these four days would never pass, but the agonies and delights of giving birth to my shapeless essay has distracted my thoughts. How are you sweetheart? Happy, I hope, and – oh, all this writing seems so trite after reading the Arnold poem which I quote. You must know it already, but its melancholy beauty, arising from Arnold's spiritual loneliness seems to capture that emptiness and sadness which filled the latter half of the C19th. Beneath the brash optimism, the vulgarity and the belief in progress; men were staring into the void and going sick with fear. The great minds of the later Victorian age were pessimists – George Eliot, Tennyson, Arnold, Darwin. And we still live in their shadow. As you will realise when you see my essay, I have externalised much of my own doubt into it, and for me as for Arnold the last stanza (of the poem) is especially true.*

*Whatever you may think of my religion – and I cannot hope or attempt to deceive you – I need your spiritual support as you need mine (?) Sweetheart I must believe, but what? Don't try and answer this, but be aware that I am searching, and have not found. You can help by turning me away from myself to you, but also realise that I am reaching for the stars. Much of my obsessions are self-pitying etc, but I still believe that something in me seeks – (whatever you like – Truth, God, Permanence). And you my darling? Do you also search? I think so. Sorry to be so grave – its this essay. Let me know when you are coming on Friday – tho' I have a lot to do till 7.0. I have found, as you asked, somewhere for you to stay.*

Enclosed:

Dover Beach

The sea of faith  
Was once, too, at the full, and round earth's shore  
Lay like the folds of a bright girdle furl'd.

There is then an undated letter from my mother, obviously written around the end of the first week of December, from Calcutta

*Will be home as soon as this – arriving next week!*

*My dear Alan,*

*Daddy forwarded your letter, & it was very comforting thinking of you sitting by your fire writing essays on Cromwell with the snow falling & the tape recorder turning. My life seems to have suddenly up-ended but as long as the three of you can carry on with yours uninterrupted I shant mind too much. Calcutta is a terribly depressing place.... [account of suffering etc] [what will happen etc?] I've decided that if nothing definite happens, I shall come home by boat, in January... [description of life] ... Tomorrow I shall go to the Park St Cemetery which is very interesting..*

*I feel so sad your birthday & Christmas should pass like this, but I'll get you a proper present & we'll celebrate properly when this nightmare is over. How is the grant going? Much love, & to Penny – Mummy*

An undated letter, c. 10th December, from Calcutta

*My dear Alan,*

*What a strange way to be writing you a birthday letter, sitting by myself by the open window of a strangers house in Calcutta with the delicious evening Indian smells of wood-smoke & spice drifting in – and a sadness in my heart that I shant after all be with you to celebrate. We had news to-day that we're to be allowed back, and I'm going up to-morrow. I know you'll understand that that is where I must be, apart from Daddy needing me, this crisis has made me realise how attached I am to this hopeless, tragic, ridiculous country and how much I regretted leaving at a time like this.*

*You know, though, that our thoughts will be with you, I wish we could have given you a more memorable present, maybe the book wont even arrive in time. I shall get you something really nice on my way home next year, so that'll give you a year to think about it. If you are pleased with us as parents I can assure you it nothing to our pleasure in you, it seems the most fortunate thing on earth to have children one really truly enjoys, as people quite apart from family. This last couple of weeks have shown me (what I knew to be true with my mind, but sometimes lost sight of) that nothing in life in the way of material possessions matters at all – that one is rich without them, as rich as we are with all that we haven't got. Horrible generalisations, much to be despised by Oxbridge – but I feel full of emotion & thankfulness to-night that Assam is to be spared the horrors that we thought were inevitable as we sped out of it. I have been praying consciously for the first time for years (to the God of the Gurkhas & Sikhs & Chinese too) but can't say whether this has helped...*

*I decided after all to put £50 into Fiona's account for the holidays as hers is in Ambleside, I leave it to you how to deal with it but as money is so hard to get home these days I know you'll go slow on expensive Christmas presents! Anne is staying in Edinburgh she says, wisely I think though Granny will be hurt.*

*I hope you'll manage to celebrate your birthday somehow. We shall be drinking your health and planning your future – wrongly I daresay.*

*With very much love and birthday blessings – Mummy*

Although not dated, there is one fragment of my Grandparent's reactions to the Chinese invasion. There is a formal invitation to a party from Mr & Mrs Edmund Cropper:

At Home For the Coming-of Age of their daughter Valerie Ann on January 5th, 1963, at The Old England Hotel, Bowness-on-Windermere, 6.30 for 7 pm. Dinner-Dancing. [I went with Penny]

My grandmother sent me on this invitation, and wrote on the back:

*I've taken Fiona's card out as I must write to her – the Assam news is grim & I'm expecting to have a cable or even Mummie arriving in England – perhaps Daddy too. M: was threatening to stay in Calcutta & take a job, but I sincerely hope she will come straight home – I will let you know immediately. Many thanks for letter. Much love Granny*

Penny came down for the Christmas dance on Saturday 8th and I wrote again the day after, Sunday 9th

*As instructed – I write. I don't really need to say how marvellous it was seeing you (we will run out of superlatives soon!) – if possible, even more wonderful than the weekend before. My quotations from Keats, tho' not to be taken too seriously reflect my present mood. Did you have an easy journey back to London poppet? As I write you should be just be getting home. I*

*am thinking of you (see Keats!) – but will have to make a strong effort to get down to work tomorrow.*

*When I arrived back here, feeling fairly miserable, I found A/Angus/Alastair packing and John Munks in with him so I joined them for a while and played my guitar. But now I am alone again. John & Alistair go down tomorrow – Ralph & Mark (the one who helped design the dance & sat on the sofa with us) will alone be left up. Still, this horrible vacuum situated somewhere near my stomach & not caused by hunger (or normal hunger anyhow!) should fade somewhat tomorrow, in the 'light of common day'.*

*I don't feel like writing anything more – except that I miss you and hope to see you soon. Sorry for such a feeble letter, but you'll understand I know.*

### Keats

With every morn their love grew tenderer,  
With every eve deeper and tenderer still; ...  
(Isabelle)

Then glut thy sorrow on a morning rose,  
Or on the rainbow of the salt sea-wave, ...  
(From Ode on 'Melancholy')

Awaiting me in the Porter's Lodge at Worcester the next day was a 'Telephone Message for Mr Macfarlane 10-12-62 from Miss Marcus'

*'Will you send on notes on what men thought had been happ[en]ing have been more often the cause of change of whats happened. Please send by tomorrow.'*

I wrote in reply to this message the same day, namely Monday evening

*In answer to your command I write – but if you really wanted help on the question about people's thoughts I'm afraid I have little to offer. Looking up that passage which I thought might be of value I find it almost completely irrelevant – but it is interesting so you will find it overleaf. If it is of any value here are some random thoughts on the subject. (if I remember rightly you took the years leading up to the Civil War).*

- (1) *Oxford historians don't like historical theories. Break it down; apply it to a specific period and admit that there were many exceptions – that such a statement can be reversed (e.g. economic, subconscious movements, determining events) – so that it only has a limited value as an explanation. The truth in it is*
  - (a) *The Revolution, to a certain extent, arose out of misunderstanding and fear & tho' this had a real basis, doubtless, as Hill says in "Economic Problems..." "to the heightened Puritan imagination it seemed as if all over Europe the Counter-Reformation was winning back not only souls but land."*
- *here we have the crux of the matter. In a society in which society was an indivisible compound, in which religion, politics, economic factors etc were inseperable any attempts at change or reform in one sphere could be interpreted as an attack on some interest. E.G. James I wanted peace with Spain on economic & other grounds – but he was fiercely attacked by Puritans for betraying Prot'm. Often the Puritan & other fears had some justification – e.g. when they suspected Laud of attempting to subvert property rights by reclaiming impropriated tithes – but such fears were nearly always exaggerated. E.g. ship-money was spent on the fleet, and not just on the king. Again any attempts of Jas at toleration – e.g. in 1603 to R.Cs – was suspect. More & more men read sinister meanings into all the Crown's activities – and this made the crucial financial and administrative reforms impossible without a revolution. Upon a basis of fact – the genuine attempt to reshape the Crown's power even if it meant using prerogative courts,*

*extra-parliamentary taxes etc under Charles – the opposition to the Stuarts built a superstructure of myths & fears.*

- *But I'm not sure the above is at all helpful as you will know it all already – and I don't feel very bright. Anyhow the General Paper isn't terribly important. The quote from G.M. Young is "... the real, central theme of History is not what happened, but what people felt about it when it was happening: in Philip Sidney's phrase, "the affects, the whisperings, the motions of the people"; in Maitland's, "men's common thoughts of common things"; in mine, "the conversation of the people who counted"...*

Eliot: 4 Quartets

Whisper of running streams, and winter lightning.  
The wild thyme unseen and the wild strawberry...

Unusually, there is a letter from my father at this time – from Cherideo on 13 December.

*My dear Alan,*

*I owe you for two letters and of course its your birthday, 21st. All the very best and I only wish we could be with you as well we might have been! This last three weeks have been of chaos, anguish, partings and reunions. All I know now is that Mummy is back in Cherideo, and we refuse to part again, even if all the Chinese descend on us. You will have had news in detail from Mummy, she had some wonderful tales, some amusing and some sad. I have kept her letters and will show them to you one day. I spent two days in Calcutta with Mummy the idea being that she was off to the U.K., so I thought I might as well see her off from Calcutta. This fortunately proved a waste of money as the ban for the return of European ladies was lifted, literally just hours before the Assam Co lot were due to go. Incidentally Mummy was one of the first to return to Assam and she is only Memsahib for miles round. Apart from this life has been quite normal...*

*Typical of Rennant to write that piffle to you all... Glad you have been seeing Penny lately, she's a very nice girl and you are lucky.*

*Please give her my regards next time you see her or you write to her...*

*Lots of love, Daddy*

There is a typed letter from my mother to all three of us the following day.

*Cherideo December 14th*

*Darlings,*

*This is a Christmas letter for Fiona and Alan, I presume Anne is sticking to her plan and spending it up north. I just can't get the faintest feeling of the festive season what with all this coming and going, but it will be a very happy one for me, even though I'm sad I shant be with you after all. I have done nothing about presents except that I want you three to have five pounds each to spend on clothes or tapes and not on toothpaste! If this arrives in time would you get Granny and Granpa something out of my money too, I don't know what, gloves or slippers perhaps. Could you send the money to Anne please?*

*I hope you will have a very happy day darlings, not too concentrated round the Aga and the Telly, and will get a few presents. When you go to church you can say a big prayer of thanks from us, it seems miraculous that I'm sitting on my verandah again looking out onto the Naga hills with the lovely familiar shapes of the trees and shadows and the background of birds that I never thought I would see again. ...[account of return etc.] ... Give my love to Beryl, I'll be*

*writing to her in a day or two, I gather Tansy [pet dog] now lives with us, I didn't think Granny would be able to hold out against her for long.*

*God bless you both, have a very happy time and I hope Pennys, Ruperts etc will be able to pop in and see you at intervals. All our love, Mummy*

There are also a set of ten, often amusing letters, undated, from Iris to Mac from Calcutta when she was a refugee. [I may later transcribe them.] For the moment there is nothing very relevant to our lives at home, apart from a note that my mother couldn't bear the thought of sharing a house with Granny for long.

The next letter from Penny is dated Sunday afternoon [16 December]

*It was marvellous seeing you during the last few days. I needed people and things to distract me from worrying about the LMH interview. The visit has been like a conic, for I certainly feel better than when I came down on Thursday. [Penny came down again to Oxford].*

*I hope you caught your train safely and did not leave anything vital behind. Let me know if you have, & perhaps we can pick it up on the way to Westmorland (You're being organised, man!)*

*The morning air in Oxford was pure and fresh, and I would have longed to have gone for a long walk. Perhaps next time I'm in Oxford, we could walk over to Binsey Church to attend the 11 o'clock service there, and afterwards go to the Trout (?) or even to the other pub by the river, for lunch. A capital idea!*

*My journey home passed off without event - it usually does unfortunately. I was enthralled by "A Little Princess" [sic]. I have decided to adopt it as my bible, from which I might learn to emulate Sara's ways. Sara is the paragon of virtue, charity, and dignity, yet she is never priggish or smug. A delightful child. ... Such are the complexities and intricacies of a woman's mind. Oh dear, I'm not a woman!! You told me, dearest, to remind you continually that I am still a nineteen year old schoolgirl.*

*The poem by Herbert comes from 'Altar and Pew' which you have given me... It reveals Herbert's strong belief in God's power, strength and eternity, despite all its spiritual conflicts.*

*Tumnus, will you send my best wishes to your grandparents, and thank them very much for inviting me up in January.*

[appended George Herbert's 'The Altar']

\*

I seem to have gone home later this year, arriving in the Lakes just a week before Christmas. There is a letter date stamped 17 December, Monday and headed Martin's Coffee Bar, Ambleside, (on my way home from London).

*P/S. The errors of this letter are explained by my tiredness.*

*It is only a few hours since I left you amidst the sunshine of Oxford but the gulf which there seems to be between us in time/distance is represented by the changed surroundings I am in. Instead of the sunlight and grace of Oxford, when even Gloucester Green seemed purified and clean, I am sitting in this stale coffee-bar, with half-empty coffee cups and soggy cigarettes and the smell of cheap perfume. But I don't feel too bad - tho' I miss you poppet. It was marvellous seeing you, as ever, and despite 'violets' etc I hope you enjoyed it. I will see you in two weeks today!*

*I had a long talk with a young assistant lecturer I met on the train. He is editing a C15 text for a D.Phil and is an assistant tutor at Merton – mediaeval philology. He was able to give me some valuable information about postgraduate research etc. he also knows Tolkein a little and we had a fascinating conversation about literature, Lawrence, education, prisons, the Grail legend etc. Strangely (?) he was a heavy smoker & drinker & tells me Tolkein drinks large quantities of gin. If only I do well enough in my finals I will certainly do research – but perhaps this is the road to ruin (i.e. death of my ‘philanthropic’ urge) & a wise providence may supply me with a poor second or third so that I have to do something practical (the last idea can be used as an excuse anyhow!)*

*– but I am still in a fair muddle over the whole thing. This tutor was – according to himself – a ‘militant atheist’ – but we avoided any argument. But I got a lift back from Kendal with an ex-Indian army colonel, who started slanging Nehru in the most abusive terms, liberally laced with swear-words (despite the girl in the car) and I found it difficult not to get annoyed. I got the lift through meeting – quite by accident – an old girl-friend on the train. [Vivien]*

*I went out with her for about 2 weeks 2 years ago – then she went off with a friend. This is the first time she has been back for 2 years – and I am afraid she will find it rather quiet, as she loves being gay. I have already told her about you – you must meet her when you come up. She is rather over-blown (like a rose) but very sweet – and must be a good singer as she is going to Vienna to study.*

*Have you started Tolkein? I was talking to this Merton man about York University & he thought it was well-worth going to – apparently it is going to be run on Oxbridge lines.*

*Look after yourself my darling – I am very fond of you – and even wrote a poem to you on the train today. [Probably the poem ‘I stood naked before the fire of God...]*

The next letter from Penny is just dated Monday Evening, probably 17th December.

*By the time you will have received this letter, you will be submerged beneath the iceblock of work. Don’t exhaust yourself too much, and go out for several long walks, otherwise your going home will hardly be worthwhile.*

*Is Westmorland looking beautiful? Is there snow? Is frost dusted among the leaves and grasses? Do write back and tell me about it, but don’t use the words “dribble”, “flabby” or “you know what...”*

*I slouched into school today, and was slightly relieved to find out that one of my friends who took the English exams at Newnham & St Hilda’s had also not had an interview at either. She deserved to get in, much more than I did, for she is much more competent and reliable than I am. [more about entrance etc] ...*

*The passage from ‘Dialogues of Mortality’ is the introduction to Rose Macaulay’s Towers of Trebizond, in which she describes her spiritual conflict, her attempt to enter the Anglican Church. ... [further elaboration and quotation of a paragraph about Trebizond...]*

*I am not sure that the Anglican church does in fact exercise ‘a strange wild power’. Rather one of calm and tranquillity, surrounded by a wilver or a rose-gold light. Oh dear, again a romantic vision of Christ’s abode.*

*Now, dearest, now, I must finish. All my love to you, and please don’t get too tired. I am feeling quite happy (!!!) now – and have found lots of CULTURE to indulge in. Annaily sends all her love – Penny-Poppy.*

[A page of quotation from ‘Dialogues of Morality’ is included]

The next letter from Penny is dated 18th (crossed out) 20th [December 1962] from London.

*Thank you very much for my Christmas present. Of course, I opened it – you could not expect me to restrain myself for FOUR days. I have been longing to read “The Human*



comedy” and of course Possum’s *Book of Cats* is quite delightful. You are a sweetie. We also liked your card – I had not seen this particular Botticelli before – it rather beautiful.

I am afraid this is going to be a rather gushy letter – though utterly sincere. I am enthralled by Tolkien, and I have just finished ‘*Fellowship of the Ring*’. It’s superb – I have been unable to get away from Tolkien during the last few days, except to go to necessary engagements. To think that I might not have read it, had it not been for meeting you, for I had been told so often during the last few years to read ‘*Lord of the Rings*’ that I inwardly rebelled and loathed the book. It was not until I had actually started reading it that I willingly wanted to do so. And now beasts, fierce animals or even wild men, like ADJM [Alan Macfarlane] could not drag me away from ‘*Lord of the Ring*’, though I am sure ADJM would favour my alliance with Tolkien.

I went to a marvellous party last night. ...

Alan, darling – can you tell me your uncle’s arrangements for taking Fiona & me up on the 1st Jan. A friend who lives just round the corner from Robert at 95 Drayton Gardens wants me to spend New Year’s Eve and the night with her. Frightfully “Les”!!! [Lesbian]. Is Fiona staying with Robert? If she is, I could drop round there to meet her first thing on the morning of Jan 1st. [other discussion of possible arrangements for meeting] ... Now Tumnus, have a marvellous Christmas and don’t work. Send all my love to your family, and especially, dearest heart, to you – I am sorry for such an untidy letter,

The following was an unusually long letter, written on my 21st birthday as a kind of summing up of many aspects of my life and trying to chart out the future relationship with Penny. Its importance to me as a letter is shown also by the fact that I unusually kept a carbon copy of it, the only such copy of my correspondence with Penny.

Thank you for your letter – I hope this is not delayed too much by the Xmas post: if it isn’t and arrives before the 25th, once more my love and best wishes.

My sweetie, forgive me if this is a serious or tedious letter. I have long planned to celebrate my 21st birthday by writing down some stray thoughts – an attempt to clear my mind before entering the battle of integrity v compromise, the absolute v the relative, life and death even. (for the explanation of these abstractions see later). Although I have been thinking about certain fundamental problems over the last few days, and especially today, while listening to the ‘4 Quartets’, I have left the writing-down until, literally, the 11th hour and thought you might not mind a vision of my naked soul, my hopes and fears, ‘at this still point of my turning life’. Doesn’t all this sound grand? Anyhow, here goes.

I have been reading D.H. Lawrence’s letters for the last few days (introduction by Aldous Huxley) and found in them an emotional and intellectual release and source of energy. Lawrence is so honest, so patently struggling to clear away the artificialities that cover life, and seems to face and partially resolve many of my own deepest problems. Much of my letter will be about the two crucial problems of my relationship to others – esp. re. marriage, and my relationship to God, esp re. my vocation in life. So I will start with a quotation – which Lawrence claims to be his central message – in a letter to T.D.D he wrote –

“One must learn to love, and go through a good deal of suffering to get to it, like any knight of the grail, and the journey is always towards the other soul, not away from it. Do you think love is an accomplished thing, the day it is recognized? It isn’t. To love, you have to learn to understand the other, more than she understands herself, and to submit to her understanding of you ... You musn’t think that your desire or your fundamental need is to make a good career, or to fill your life with activity, or even to provide for your family materially. It isn’t. Your most vital necessity in this life is that you shall love your wife completely and implicitly and in entire nakedness of body and spirit. Then you will have peace & inner security, no matter how many things go wrong. And this peace and security will leave you free to act & to produce your own work, a ‘real independent workman’.”

Do you think Donne and Lawrence would have liked each other?

*“like any knight of the grail” – I like the image. Did I tell you I wrote a story about one of Arthur’s knights searching for the grail – symbolising my search for beauty and certainty, for someone to love and an ultimate good to believe in? Just before the end Sir Tristan had to fight a monster, obscene and lecherous, which represented my struggle for purity and innocence despite sexuality. And now the story has come true. For we must both face the fact that action must be taken concerning our physical relationship. We are both too young to know if we are in love or merely infatuated. We both retain something innocent and uncorrupt; and we both know that physical love is not wicked or anything like that. I enjoy your wonderful body, and I hope you enjoy being loved. But over the last few days I have become increasingly aware that I am betraying both of us in allowing myself to indulge in the runaway delights of the body. For me it is alright. I find organic release, but for you, my darling, there is no consummation, only an increasing frustrations. Is this true? I have been talking to Beryl [Buckmaster, next-door-neighbour] on the subject – she had a 5 yr engagement – and from the way she talks I gather that petting without intercourse made her frigid before marriage. As she put it, ‘I grew accustomed to frustration’. Therefore sweetheart you will have to help me and together we will have to come to terms with this problem. On a long walk while you are up here we will have to sort things out – it would be impossible on paper. Please write back about this subject if you have any particular views on the matter.*

*Lawrence and a change of scenery has awoken my sense of perspective and relaxed my over-tired nerves. I was growing worried that my creative faculties seemed to have become achingly paralysed – but even before I arrived, on the train, I had written two poems and I have been thinking more clearly all the time. My exams no longer seem at all important. No ‘swotting’ will get me anywhere. The examiners are presumably acute enough to see through to my real intelligence and integrity and thus no use wasting my real intelligence and integrity and thus no use wasting long hours. I will still work – but spend more time on general reading, and not worry. I say all the above to persuade myself; for I am caught in my own soft-spun web of fear and organization. But I haven’t worked much since I came up here.*

*All my twitterings on the edge of the past seems dustily irrelevant when I walk up to Juniper hill and watch the clouds and mountains mixing and swirling in the brooding winter winds. The bracken was red and sodden after the rain – with the yellow stalks showing through. The juniper bushes wipe gleaming sky-drops onto my sleeve as I walk up the hill and the soft mosses squelch and trickle at my every foot-step. From the hill-top I can see the clouds hanging in the valleys like smoke, or swirling past rocky crags. The tarn just below me is calm and reflects the bare trees and the sky. Above the huge bulk of Coniston the cloud breaks for a moment to let the sun pour down and against the brightness a swarm of sea-gulls swoop and screech. A warm wet wind, fern and moss smelling blows softly, and the world is clean and bare. God seems very close, as close as the single sea-gull which strays on taut wings above my head – swinging in a sweet curve down the streaming sunlight, its warm heart beating and its friendly eyes closely watching. My soul feels solemn and the whole days urge – to pray – seems more important than ever.*

*My darling, if my search for a God of love seems self-deluding, if it seems escapist, if it seems irrelevant, if it seems fruitless – it may be all these. But I must search, for without God my light is darkness and I cannot live in darkness. Unless I can find meaning and purpose, fixed principles and eternal truths, my whole life will be utterly valueless. Without God my love for you would be lust, my sensitivity to suffering, enlightened self-interest, my desire for beauty and joy, mere hedonism. Sweetheart, please help me. Help me out of my selfishness, seriousness etc, and I will try to help you. Above all we must be increasingly sensitive to each other’s moods and feelings, increasingly tolerant of each other’s weaknesses and conscious of our own. So easy to preach about – but, oh, how sanctimonious it sounds, and how difficult to practice.*

*I have, with my relaxing from ‘workitis’, gone through a slight reaction v my ‘philanthropy’ urge of last term. I still want to help those enduring terrible misery but have swung back more to a consciousness of the importance lying in what we are rather than what we do “the only wisdom is the wisdom of humility, humility is endless”. To be spontaneously kind*

*and humble. To love God and man deeply and almost thoughtlessly would be both a terrible and wonderful experience. For me and perhaps you there is merely the constant losing of the way, and then the rediscovery of the almost over-grown path. Fear is always around us – at this time, remembering Eliot once more ‘in our beginning is our end’, I am more than usually conscious of death “dark, dark, dark, we all go into the dark” – and what light will we have to guide us? “Yea, tho’ I walk through the valley of the shadow of death I will fear no evil...” I quite by chance, came on a wonderful verse from Isaiah this morning. “Fear thou not for I am with thee, be not dismayed for I am thy God, I will help thee, I will comfort thee, I will uphold thee with the right hand of my righteousness.”*

*And I would like to be a writer – a novelist or poet – and go to live by the Mediterranean. Lawrence’s letter make me yearn for the warmth and richness and colour of the Grecian isles. Probably my temperament is cold and stubborn and Northern – but for the moment “oh for a beaker full of the warm South ... with beaded bubble winking at the brim...”*

*It is late. I had meant to write much more. But enough. Don’t take any of the above too seriously; tho’ I think most of it roughly corresponds to my present mood.*

*If Fiona comes down, (to return to earth with a jolt) on the 28th. Could she stay for a few nights? I will understand if it is too much of a bother. I will write & confirm it (or not) when I hear from you.*

The same day I wrote for myself:

The last lights linger – squeezing incredible gradations of colour, from the red blush of the sun through emblazoned gold, chrystal emerald, like the squeezed essence of young green corn, or the incredible green of some bird of paradise – then deepening, enriched to the rich amethyst of ripe (plums). Every feathery wand of bracken, every rock, every twig on every tree is outlined, and a halo of light seems to stream along the heights.

As we turn from this peacock fan and gaze at the dark heights of the East a new miracle arises. Majestic the moon, full and gold, maker of madness, magnet for man, eye of the Gods, sails clear of the harbouring hills, and stately galleon of the night rides clear.

Along the lengths of the level lake it glimmers, like a sash of honour on the ice. Through the pines, it watches – casting spells of ancient magic on the worshipping trees and kneeling hills. It walks in silence, and all is still, so still that the drop of a fragment of ice in the far copse rustles right down the lake. (Skating) down the glistening lake like a phantom skater and breaking on the ear – numb and aching with the coldness of loneliness.

It is freezing the sap of the trees – ice forms on one’s boots. And one can feel the Light echoing away into the darkness and leaving ... night.

Exactly between my birthday and Christmas, on the 23rd December, I wrote another reflective piece.

### Christmas (an essay in self-mocking!)

“There were shepherds abiding in the fields...” in such prosaic words begins the account of the most momentous event in the history of the world. And why so outstanding? There is a desperate need in these days when all sincere convictions and emotions are hidden by a layer of sickly-sweet sentimentality and mean materialism by a gross and unhealthy growth which is partly induced by those who use all feelings, however, pure, to bring about our downfall, partly growing out of the insecurity and desperate searching of a rudderless world. What is that simple message? Why has it lost its force? What does it mean to us now? How can we recapture our sense of mystery, our child-like innocence, the awe and joy which moved deep in us when with child-face lifted we heard carols chime, or saw a lighted crib?

The first and self-evident fact is that Christmas can only mean something personal, something beyond an excuse for “jollity” when set in a wider context. In other words if it is celebrated as the birthday of a sort of “pre-Gandhi”, or “pseudo-Plato” or even the “greatest

philosopher” who ever lived – not as the birth of the Saviour of the World, the God who arose glorious from the tentacles of death and now lives for ever, it is not “special” – it has no great meaning for us now. The problem of letting Christianity strike down all the barriers which the World, the Devil & the Flesh erect against Christ I leave to others. What however should we seek to give and take from Christmas as Christmas?

“Joy, kindness, happiness, presents, – thus would run an enlightened answer. What else however? Thoughtfulness, unselfishness in fact ‘Charity’ in the sense St. Paul used it... “Charity suffereth long, is meek, is not puffed up ... believeth all, beareth all, hopeth all, endureth all.... “ Of all times Christmas is the time for making a special effort in this direction. For not only are there more opportunities than any other times of the year – but it is in many ways far more difficult to practice when the rush & hurl of festivities make one live more in the present, more spontaneously than usual. Prayer, care and watchfulness are needed Love for “our neighbours” is of necessity a sacrifice – and if offered with a broken and contrite spirit it is the best offering we can lay at the feet of the young babe in his manger. The details of such an effort are unpredictable. All we can do is ask for strength continually and keep our eyes and hearts open.

But a “charitable heart” is not the only gift pleasing to God. Praise and thanksgiving are acceptable in his sight. A sacrifice of time & thought, both in preparing & attending communion and services – the more splendid the more difficult – are the least we can offer Once again it is a unique opportunity both in its problems and in the many possibilities.

Finally it is a suitable time at which to recollect the events of the last year. An occasion in which we must tinge the spontaneous joys & blessing with a deeper consideration of past gifts and past sadness, of past triumphs and past failings. A time of clearing accounts, before we make out the books for the New Year. Out of the overstuffed drawers, out of the bricker-brack, from the w.p.b. [waste paper basket] of time we can save a few scraps and we can set the targets for the next year.

And in all this we must never forget to remember the shadow of God and of the cross brooding over the crib. Of the hound of the Heavens watching (and laughing!) with us.

My last letter was written on Christmas-day, 1962 [Tuesday]

*P.S. Excuse the (slushy?) tone of this letter.*

*Oh most beautiful daughter of the evening, greetings. May your eyes for ever shine with the mysteries of the northern skies, bright and pure and gentle as the moorland breezes. May your limbs forever run free as the mountain streams etc. Gosh, what a start! But I mean it. I am feeling very sentimental, for obvious seasonal reasons and missing you especially much. I hope you are well, my poppet, and have had a wonderful Christmas – this will probably arrive long after the day. I sent you a telegram this evening – was it clear? If you can manage Drayton Gardens it would be very convenient as Richard is staying at 174 Old Brompton Road, for the night of the 31st & if you could give the bell a ring at 9 a.m. it will be most convenient. If arrangements have been changed and you are at home with luggage etc you could ring him up after 10 p.m. Monday and tell him how to get to your place. I hope somehow you will make contact. Oh, sweetie, it will be marvellous seeing you on Tuesday: having stopped working I am now afflicted with an increasing awareness of suffering and by graver religious doubts...*

*Jummie, next door, is almost blind and covered in terrible, petrefying [sic], bed-sores ... but enough for now. It is Christmas day and it has been a wonderful one, with much to be thankful for.*

*Thank you very much Poppy for the chinese poetry, as you can see I have selected two pieces to include with my letter. As you say all the poetry is like their painting – delicate and in a minor scale. Over much of it there is a brooding sadness and transience [sic]. It is obviously produced by a country that has known much suffering, where death and starvation was always very close and the small things therefore seemed infinitely precious. When one is tired of the vulgarity and profuseness of much western & especially Victorian poetry it is refreshing to turn*

to them – like turning from a large overblown ‘Wagnerian’ orchestra to Elizabethan lute music. I don’t suppose I would have got round to reading it without your active help – thank you again.

I had many lovely presents – with a definite preponderance of book tokens (over £7 worth!) and money with which to buy tapes (about £10) also a suitcase and brief case (from Richard). I would like to rush out to spend all these presents, but I suppose it would be best to wait till Oxford.

Can you skate poppet? Although it will probably have thawed by the time you come up, today there was skating on Tarn Hows. We have some skates here, but rather odd sizes. The tarns, as you can imagine, are very beautiful. I went up for a walk there with Richard. There was a clear sunset, blushing the frosted mountains and sliding down the partly frozen lake, making each gaunt tree stand out in perfect detail. This morning when I got up for early communion it was even more lovely. The whole sky was rose and pink, and over the sleeping valley there was one bright star. There were no others in the sky – how easily it could have been Bethlehem. There was slight mist over the lake – but every field was adazzle with frost and seemed very close. The bare brown trees and criss-crossed fields were just like one of those Dutch ‘skating’ paintings. And tonight it has snowed so it may be even more lovely. I do hope it is as transcendently beautiful when you are up – but bring plenty of socks as I don’t want you moaning about your toes. I’m longing to see you solemnly plodding along in wellingtons (!) – but if it is this cold you will be unable to wear them. Is it very bitter in London? I have had several letters from my parents – including one from my father (very unusual) in which he sends his special best wishes to you & tells me how lucky I am knowing you, extraordinary how even the most level-headed can be deceived! Did I tell you I wrote another semi-love poem, but very incoherent? [Perhaps the poem ‘When will I see the flaming Xmas stars...’]

If you can also manage to bring up the 2nd volume of the ‘Lord’ as Fiona wants to read it... When do you have to go down? We might be able to get a lift with my uncle on the 10th if you don’t have to leave to go before and if I manage to get enough work done while you are here...

Mark will be up in a few days – but perhaps he may delay in this weather.

Enclosed:

Chang Hua. Yearnings. V.

My eyes stray beyond the four corners of the wilderness;  
At ease I tarry alone...

Wang Yen-Hung Brief partings, III

I clutch at his war-coat, and our tear-stained cheeks touch:  
The sails must needs be set for the urgent evening breeze.  
Who says ‘For a brief parting grieve not?’  
This poor life of mine, how many brief partings can it endure?

Penny then wrote again on Thursday 27th December, between Christmas and her visit to our family in the Lakes at the start of 1963.

*It is snowing!! Last night the snow-petals were falling like the blossom from ma-trees in spring, but today they are dancing before the wind, as if they were autumn-leaves.... [further description] Is beauty eternal? Having viewed something wondrous, must we content ourselves for not seeing it again, by knowing that other forms of beauty exist elsewhere, to be found and contemplated? [further reflections on beauty etc.] ... Enough of this obtruse waffle. I don’t think that the above reflects my mood. I am now feeling fatted and contented, and slightly drowsy. I am tired of turkey, and all other Christmas fare. We went to a series of lunch and*

dinner parties between Sunday and Wednesday at which only turkey seems to have been served. I think I enjoyed the trout best of all, which I had as part of Tuesday's lunch. *FOOD IS A BORE.* Despite all the Fxxd, I enjoyed myself very much, I hope you did too. I felt frustrated on Tuesday morning [Christmas day] because I was unable to find a small country church to which I could go. I have not been to a Christmas service and sung 'Hark the Herald' for ages. Aesthetically it is such a wonderful time of the year. Would you like to be a chaplain or a dean?

I am going to see you in five days time - whoopee. Don't work too hard, while I am up, though I shall probably bring dozens of book[s] with me. I hope you are looking after the third volume of *Lord of the Rings* for me, for the first two tomes are already very precious to me. I take one of them with me, wherever I go. I even read it yesterday, while waiting for a bus at sunset in the falling snow. ...

Darling Alan, it was marvellous talking to you just now - I hung up the telephone receiver and continued the letter. I am sorry that I had to hang up - it was mean of me to practise telephone economy on you, but this new system, *STD (?)* is *SO* expensive that, even though they are not on it, local calls are ruinous. I rang up Annaily this afternoon, and the call must have cost about 5/-. I am sorry if I was curt with Fiona, and your Grannie - I was a little bewildered by getting thro' to you so quickly, and then talking to so many voices in so few minutes. Please apologise to them, and send my love to your grandparents, and to Fiona and Anne, and whoever else may be in the Macfarlane abode. ... [More about Annaily - ] She wants us to go to have a meal with them when we come down from Westmorland (You'll have to come to London). She probably also coming down to Oxford with Stefan late in January for a couple of days, when there will be another grand rendez-vous....

I have been concocting plans for what I do when I leave school at the end of Jan. They are quite involved and I hope they will be resolved. Their resolutions depends partly upon you - Aren't I mysterious?!?

Now I must end my chatter. 'Hold thy tongue woman, and let us ....."

Attached are two verses from 'The Seasons' - Winter - by James Thomson

## Spring Term 1963: January and February

### EPHEMERA

Perhaps not surprisingly, there is almost nothing for this term, either in terms of cards or other ephemera. I was obviously a hermit. There are not even society cards, religious calendars, U.N. or Oxford Union cards.

A programme and ticket for 'Noye's Fludde' at the University Church of St Mary the Virgin on Thursday January 24th (price 2/-) with all profits to Oxfam. And a programme for 'The Voyage by Georges Schéhade', and 'A Man for All Seasons' by Robert Bolt. Both were at the end of January at the Oxford Playhouse.

Nor are there the miscellaneous writings, poems, observations of this and that, which are scattered through previous years. The only exception is a poem in the style of e.e.cummings which is appended at the end of this chapter. In so far as I did have energy for non-work writing, it seems to have gone into a few letters to my parents and numerous letters to Penny.

The only other trace of my life during this period is in the cheque stubs for the term which indicate some of my expenditure.

22 Jan Battells Worcester College £10-8-0 [Battells were the standard charge for meals in College, so I was clearly eating my main meals there.]

27 Jan R.Martin (Boat Club) £1-10-0

15 Feb Exam fees £8

16 Feb £5

21 Feb Miss Norridge [rent] £12-10-0

1 March £2-10-0

20 March Self (26/- jeans) £7-0-0

1 April £10-0-0

9 April £10

21 April For Lodgings in Burford - Mrs Weir £5

22 April £10

\*

Again the letters between Penny and I were numerous, though now that Penny, after obtaining entry at York and working at Harvey Nichols, was somewhat less busy, and I was even busier coming up to my final exams, the ratio of our writing changed. During the nearly four months of the Spring term and vacation, I wrote twenty-four letters and two post cards. Penny wrote some 34 letters. Mine tended to be longer, so probably the total words was roughly equal. I have pruned my letters considerably, mainly including only more general topics as the romantic aspects of the relationship have been amply covered before. I have omitted the numerous pieces of prose and

poetry which were appended to each letter. I have also only selected some of Penny's letters.

Penny, uncle Richard and I drove down from the Lakes on January 10th, after a visit of a week by Penny. Penny went to London and I to Oxford.

The first letter from Penny was on January 11th [Friday]

*Have you settled back into your Oxford rut? I have slipped back into my own through with less distress than the last time that I went up to Westmorland. Perhaps the darkness last night disguised the 'agony' of this turbulent city. Today it is bitterly cold, and the wind sucks at one's life blood. If only you were here to keep me warm - I miss you very much, and shall do so even more when I realise fully that I shall not be seeing you for a long time. Oh Tumnus, why do we have to work academically so hard? Why is this type of study the mainspring of progress nowadays?*

*You left the 'Gita' in the car yesterday, so I have sent it off today. It should reach you tomorrow or on Monday.*

*Richard and I reached London about 9.30 pm. R had drinks with us, before going on to R & A's. He seemed to size the flat and my mother up quite quickly - it was amusing to watch him. I don't think he liked being organised by mother, when she tried to persuade him to telephone R & A, to tell them he was on the way there. He is witness to the fact that she does not stutter.*

*I went round to Anne's today with the guitar. I banged, crashed & walloped on the outer front-door for 10 mins but in vain. Nobody came. I shall have to write to Anne, and arrange to meet her somewhere. By the way, her postal address is S.W.5, not S.W.8 as you told me. Do change it in your address book, as letters otherwise take twice as long, as they wander around London.*

*I am sending the 'Towers of Trebizond' as a token of my affection, and as a means of having a part of me with you, if only intellectually and spiritually. The days to come will be grey, without you, although I shall be comforted by my dreams of Peru.*

*Send my love to Erik, Mark & Ralph.*

*I am sorry if this letter is not very inspiring - I shall write a nicer letter on Sunday.*

*Love to you, my dearest heart, and look after yourself. Don't exhaust yourself by work, and do eat proper meals. I have been working out a food-hamper for you - not very exciting, but nourishing. I shall concoct an exciting meal when I come down to see you. (Ha-has, I expect on that weekend you will be able to find some money to take us out to meals).*

I wrote to Penny on Sunday 13th January

*Thank you very much darling for the "Towers...." "I will read it at the earliest opportunity. After grave meditation I have decided that you are ... an absolute poppet (the more so for sending on the 'Gita'). I have sent Richard 'Archie & Mehitabel' as a birthday present. I dipped into it before I sent it and it seemed delightful, I must buy another copy. So far I have spent £4-10 of the book token. Among the books I have bought are - an anthology of 'Rhadakrishnan' (editor of the Bhagavadgita & a foremost Philosopher), Axel's Castle; 'The Once & Future King'; Zorba the Greek; 'Doors of Perception & Heaven & Hell' - Huxley; 'Individualism Reconsidered & other essays' - Riesman; 'The Rebel' - Camus; 'Women in Love'; and 'The desert Fathers' - Helen Waddell. I have embarked on several of them - but whenever I try to read the more serious I get a headache. I just can't pick up 'The Rebel' without my head splitting, perhaps it is my escapism & laziness setting up a reaction?*

*Today I have written my yearly letter to Ian, saying I may come over to Canada after finals. Earlier in the day I went to St Aldates & then read the Introduction to the Bhagavadgita. Since then I have been doing some 'Serious Thinking' on religious topics - perhaps the cause*



of the headache? Anyhow *I* meditated my way along the dazzling meadows to Binsey & had a Guinness & meat-pie in the 'Perch'. It brought back memories & made me feel lonelier than before.

The same day Penny wrote to me:

London Sunday [13th January]

*You, who pass over the world lying in darkness, see its rampant agony and distress, and the cruelty which gains strength from night; through whose mind speed the words of Baudelaire;*

*C'est l'heure où les douleurs des malades s'agissent.*

*La sombre nuit les prend à la gorge; ils finissent*

*Leur distineé et vont veis le gouffre commun;*

*You, who have seen the rosy dawn, and have flown back to direct the night on its passage into silver-sanctified day – are you well? Are you pleased with your progress? Are you **HAPPY** ??! Do you miss me? I miss you very much, and am longing for the time when I can next see you. I even felt like coming down yesterday. But don't worry – I shall not in future come down without due warning, or without being invited by you. Meanwhile, I shall keep the memory of you in my heart, until the fire is resuscitated by the sight of you. How sentimental, I sound, sweetheart, but I do mean it?*

*We have just been in the throes of an electricity power-cut... [description of and reflections on...; lecture by Marguerita Laski and publishing – quite lengthy;] ... I was reading last night some of Christina Rossetti's poetry. Crouched [sic] in beautiful terms, her whole theme is sad and tragic... I enclose a sonnet on 'Death', which is the sweetest end to a life of misery and sadness.*

Penny wrote again the next day, London, Monday Evening

*Thank you for your letter. It is now four days since I have seen you; I think we would lessen the agony of separation if we counted off, not the number of days since we last saw each other, but the number until we see each other again. O, when can it be? I miss you very much and am continually meditating upon the cruelty of Fate, which keeps us apart.*

*I am glad you received all my parcels. I had to send so many off on Friday that I am glad they reached their respective homes safely. I had sent some delicious cheese sent from Harrods to your grandparents – it was the first time I had ever tasted it, and I was very much inclined to take it home and eat it in a corner by myself. "When I grow rich / Said the Bells of Shoreditch" I shall buy some, with some shrimps and bring it down to Oxford. One day I hope to fulfil all these resolves, about purchases.*

*I am glad you have bought those books – I noticed 'The Once & future' was out in a paper-back. Read something light, if they are all too high-powered for your present state. I am reading 'Sir P. Sydney and the English Renaissance.' [discussion of] ...*

*I received a sweet letter from Richard today thanking me for my card. He is almost like a guardian uncle – and I think I shall adopt him as this. I don't believe I ever met anyone quite like Richard, combining a gentle wit, with benevolence and kindness.*

And she wrote again the next day, London, Tuesday

*How are you, dearest heart? I hope you are well, and able to lose consciousness thro' your work. I am missing you terribly, and am quite distracted from my History. I guess I shall have to throw myself into Clio's embrace, though I should prefer that it were yours.*

*I received another letter from Richard today thanking me for a book of verse. Can I therefore assume that you sent 'Archie' as a gift from me too? You are an absolute darling, and*

have “completely angled” me. *I thought at first, that Richard did not know from whom the book came, supposed for some obscure reason, that I was the donor.*

*I also received a letter from York, asking me to an interview on 24th. This somewhat disarranges my plan of work; however I do hope that I get in.*

The first letter from my mother in Assam is dated January 15th.

*My dear Alan,*

*Hope you can raise your nose from the grindstone long enough to read this, as I imagine you will be back by your little electric logs with the tape recorder going and the typewriter tapping. Do hope it doesn't really feel like prison, these are still supposed to be the happiest days of your life don't forget! I'm sending a reply to the letter you copied out, not that I think it will be printed as the letter appeared a good while ago... I'm still wanting to tackle the Moguls, Robert Shaw has seven volumes on them which I was hoping he would be bringing over soon ... We're waiting breathlessly for Lord Roseberry, send me all the cuttings on him wont you. I'm glad you got the new Tolkien which sounds wonderful from the reviews and snatches I've read, John is reading the Rings and is bringing them home with him for you. Daddy is deep in “Florence Nightingale” at the moment...*

*The Croppers party sounded fabulous, how do people afford these riots, perhaps by the time Anne “arrives” we shall be able to too. The other parties Fiona described sounded dull and typical, nothing ever seems to change..... What is Penny going to do now? How was Fiona looking, and Anne if you saw her? ... Much love from us both - Mummy*

Penny wrote the following day, Wednesday [16th January]

*Are you well and keeping warm in your Hobbit-hole? (I have just realised the analogy between the characters and plot of C.S. Lewis's books and those of Tolkien's. Do you think that Mr T. would have been the hobbit, Frodo, effecting his task of overthrowing the Dark Lord of Mordor, and his followers, who had gradually penetrated into every sphere of society). I think a Hobbit might appreciate the enclosed on a cold snowy day though I should have preferred to send him something more exciting - perhaps one of the foods served by Sam Gamgee. It is snowing here in London, and the Zephyr winds are unusually sadistic. I expect the weather is the same in Oxford - so don't catch 'flu. I m feeling FOUL (Why don't you like that word?) and am not sure what is imminent.*

*I received a charming letter from Anne today. She asked me to send her love to you. I was surprised how easily her style of writing flowed, considering her shyness. She thinks that necessity might force Felix and herself over every day for a meal. Poor Mr. Tumnus, I fear that what with Erik's, Richard's, Anne's, and Fiona's (forthcoming?) visits to us, you will be the last of the Macfarlane's to see the Marcus lair, instead of the first. Do come down and see me soon. We should like to have you, and I am sure that you & I could keep out of my Mamma's way, if she need to do some very pressing office-work.*

*My spirits have been roused considerably by writing this jovial letter, though I still feel somewhat medically groggy. I had been so depressed today because I was not with you, but now I am happier, though still missing you very much. It has helped to turn my thoughts away from my depression (sounds as if I have grown smaller!) and think of other topics...*

*PS. Please let me know if you don't have enough food - I hope this token will help out.*

I wrote again to Penny on Thursday [17 January]:

*I meant to write last night but got caught up in an argument with Mark on the nature of ‘Satire’ on which he is writing an essay. He wants to see my Essay on ‘Victorianism’ - after he has read it shall I send it on, since it is dedicated to you? ...*

*Most of my friends have come back – Eric has been round for coffee several times & Paul came round today. Pam isn't back yet, so you can't come down for a little longer. We will have to start planning visits soon, at least that distracts one from the absence a little (as you can see I, too, am missing you very much.) But fortunately, especially with exams tomorrow [Collections I presume] I don't have much time to think. Good luck in your exams, darling, surely this York interview will cut right into the middle of them? When do they begin so I can pray for you etc?*

*I bought a few more books – another 'Don Marquis' to make up for the one I sent to Richard (have you read his article?) 'Archy's life of Mehitabel'; Totem & Taboo – Freud; 'Modern Man in Search of a soul' – Jung & "Notes towards definition of Culture" – Eliot, if only one had time to read them ...!*

*Am just off to have chocolate with Ralph.*

My next letter was on Tuesday evening, Worcester College [22nd January]

*It is so bitterly cold here, if only we had each other. Sometimes I get really furious at myself for wasting the best years of my life swotting; but perhaps it won't all be wasted. I have done absolutely nothing of interest since you left. Eric comes to soup and toast every lunch time & this keeps me sane. Tonight I went to a mission in 5th week with Alec. Do write to him if you feel like it; and try to keep some time during that week free as I want you to meet John Bowker.*

*The poem I send is rather like 'Love guards the roses of your lips' ... and carries the same image as Burns's 'Banks & Braes' ("But my fair luv' has stolen my rose – but, ah, he left the thorn with me"). But even in 'the honey & the bee' there is a flippancy, & fancifulness & lack of real feeling which separates [sic] it from the Metaphysicals & Elizabethans (for a background to the Metaphysical poets you must read 'C17 Background' Basil Willey – esp on Sir Thos Browne).*

I wrote again on Sunday [27th January] Worcester College

*I still miss you very much but am on the whole much more cheerful, and immersed in Existentialism (& in my spare time with Ernle, Nef etc). I have been to see Pam [St Clair; an American girl and part of a group of friends at the time] etc several times & find it very relaxing. I went to a medieval mystery play on Thursday 'Noye's Fludde' – set to music by Benjamin Britten. It was delightful – especially the procession of animals (school-children) hopping & squeaking their way up to the Ark.*

Here, to give a flavour of the reciprocal letters, though this is an unusually long one, is part of the letter Penny wrote after she heard that she had been admitted to read history at York University.

Monday [28 January] London

*I am so happy that I am [sic] scarcely write. I have just written to Sussex Univ. cancelling an interview I was to have there on Thursday, and also to Richard. He wrote another sweet letter to me, telling me about an article of his that the "Times" are publishing in the near future. What a darling uncle he is! He hopes that you are managing to keep warm and healthy in Oxford. He seems to appreciate Archie very much. I find it extremely funny – the sort of wry, semi-serious, throw-away stuff that I particularly like!*

*By the way, Robert's book, according to Angela, will not be published until Feb. 15th because of the snow. Poor Robert, it must be very frustrating. However, I noticed in the Lit. Supp. today that he is writing another book. "Europe: 1870-1914". Aylmer seems to admire him, and called him a very prolific writer.*

*Aylmer looks rather like Robert, and is the prototype of a young don – tall, slim, wears glasses, slightly vague, but a brilliant brain. He let me off quite lightly on the interview: he*

questioned a friend of mine very fiercely. He told me about all the museums and art galleries of York, and about the old Houses. King's Manor, where the interviews were held, was formerly the home of the President of the North...

Oh how glorious is York minster. I first saw it in a haze of late afternoon blue silver light, with the setting sun sending its beams onto the sand coloured towers. Inside the air was cool, and the atmosphere awe-spiring [sic]. On all sides, the windows stretched upwards like coloured stallegnites (?), and I could only distinguish the far end of the minster by a coloured veil of light...

I liked the city of York and its people. I went into a restaurant called Betty's, where every strata of York society were having tea ... Oh, isn't it wonderful I've got there; and having Aylmer almost to myself, since very few student[s] are doing History, without any appendices. In some ways, however, I regret giving up my ambition of going to Oxford, which I have virtually done, by doing so little work for the examinations... Also I don't think York will ever have a library to compare with the Bodleian, although it has a large collection of virtually untouched medieval manuscripts, ready for the historical research.

But enough of me, sweetheart, please don't be unhappy. I wish I could be with you more to cheer you up, but so far this has been impossible. You must go around to Pam - she's just like a tonic, good for both you and me (I sent 'A Little Princess' to Carrie & to her, via Paul - I hope they got it). Also, go out sometimes with Erik - he, too, is an extrovert character, and has very few, or no, complexes. Certainly, leave Lord S[udeley] alone - I'm most indignant that he dared to analyse you - the privilege of analysis is only for you & me. Lord S. may be outwardly very beautiful, but I'm sure he has a larger percentage of grime and carbon soot, of which man is composed, than the rest of us.

I hope you were not offended by my failure to write. I felt so depressed over the weekend, that I do not think I could have written a coherent letter. But, dearest heart, I thought of you a great deal - you and York Univ - rivalled for my thoughts - St Anne's did not have a look in. I miss you very much, and am longing to see you. Do let me know the dates of Pam's opera, and of the mission - I'm too lazy to work out when 4th or 5th week actual falls.

Dearest heart, I hope your introduction to Dick's (?) talk went off successfully. I hope you weren't too nervous. Was Dick interesting? [I have a long summary of the talk] Write and tell me what he said. Enjoy tomorrow's party, and send my love to Erik.

I am sending an article from the Listner on Marilyn Monroe... Please darling, be happier. I know how depressing work can be, but it make[s] me very unhappy that you feel so wretched. I love you very much and any time that you want to see me, either come up to London, or ask me to come down - in the future I'll be able to afford both money and time.

Will you type out the essay on Victorianism, for me to collect when I come to Oxford. Aylmer seemed to stress the importance of Victorian History in my interview.

I'm also sending you some variations on the poem you sent me. Janet is studying Wyatt for A-level, and together we tried to find as many versions as possible...

The next letter from my mother was dated Jan 29th:

My dear Alan,

Thank you for a letter which I tore open the wrong way... Money first to get it over - I have told the bank to transfer £30 to your account as soon as our money gets home at the beginning of Feb, and will send another £30 in March. I hope this will see you through the next couple of months, £4.10 doesn't seem much to live on a week and you'll need lots of brain building food this next few months. Hows the Guinness going have you acquired a taste for it? We do not want this paid back out of your grant, you will need every penny of that I'm sure, our financial situation is slowly but steadily improving, the chief difficulty now is the restrictions the Indian government have put on sending it home.

I think the Canada and South America idea sounds wonderful, we will help with your fare of course, in fact could probably manage it all by the autumn. I should let the question of your

career ride until after the results of your exam come through as a lot depends on what sort of degree you get. The Bhagavad Gita has some wise things to say about work, Work is Worship is one of its main themes in fact. I'm glad it finally arrived. I'm into Tawney now and find it very interesting, specially with the little bit of "O" level knowledge I still retain, the problem of how to reconcile one's religion with the rat race is almost impossible to resolve. One can see the enormous attraction of the monastic life, and all the Indian saints who spent their lives sitting under trees really never had it so easy.

Here we are still without rain and everything is beginning to look parched.... [news of Assam] ...I'm sorry to say I still haven't got down to anything definite, I'm doing quite a bit of drawing nowadays which I find less demanding than writing, I suppose because I know I'm not much good and my standards are lower.

I wonder what Penny is going to do. She seems to have gone down very well with the A.P's [Aged Parents] except they thought how very Frail - but I think that transparent look is probably misleading. Anne seems to be settled and I hope will manage to spend a day with you if the weather allows. ... Don't work too hard, please - it's only one spring when you will be twenty one!

Much love from us both, Mummy

My next letter to Penny was headed Wednesday [30 January] - 'brillig time' Worcester College

Thank you for your long and ecstatic letter - all my friends join me in sending their congratulations - especially Ralph, Mark, Erik & Paul (who says he will tell you all about York & also wants to use you so that he can meet Aylmer). It really is wonderful & I'm sure you'll never regret going to York. It has also taken a weight off my mind as I've always been certain that you'd enjoy & profit from university life more than almost anyone else I know. When you write tell me more about your plans between now & October; when you get your job etc. Pam's play is next week (3rd week) & if you can come down on the Saturday let me know & I will book for it. As usual I am torn between a desire to see you and worry that I'm not doing enough work (and also memories of the agonies of parting).

I remember York minster, and many of the other wonders of the city from my several visits. You presumably remember Paul lives there? Do you know anything about the History syllabus - organization of the University etc? (I believe it's on Oxbridge lines - but what, apart from a tutorial system, does that mean?)

... I seem to be busier than ever & for a change have got something to talk about - apart from my work. But all the same I am taking your advice and going to see Pam. She is rehearsing non-stop for the 'Opera', but promises to be in this evening. She thanked you (thru me) very much indeed for 'The little princess' - but is too vague to write. I met Charles the other evening & liked him very much, especially as he kept telling me how sensible I was finding someone as clever & nice as you (and refusing to be disillusioned when I told him the truth about you - aren't I mean!). Tomorrow evening we have Christopher Hill talking on 'C17 women' in the college society.

The introduction to the speaker at the 'Woodruffe' went off fine. It wasn't Dick, but a Mr Thompson, chief 'Probation Officer' for Oxford. He was one of the best-informed and amusing speakers I have ever heard. He had wanted to be an actor when younger & retained a wonderful flair for impersonation & mimicry. He told stories of the cases he had met (Craig & Bentley were two of his customers) & his impersonations of the 'Colonel bloodshots' who wrote 'flog-them, hang-them, brand-them...' letters to the Daily Telegraph, or of simpering land-ladies & even sluttish prostitutes, were superb. If I can't decide what else to do I might well go into the probation service because it might be the best way of employing the few gifts I have (i.e. ability to strike up a natural personal relationship). But my thoughts have reverted to the population question & I enclose an excerpt from an article. It is so calmly stated and so horrifying that I can't really assimilate the untold misery which will result from the increases. One has always to convert such terms into human lives and imagine the disease, hunger and agony which will

ensue. And now to show my *complete* lack of any feeling such problems, I must reveal that I went to a wonderful dinner last night – Eriks party. (he thanks you for the card).

We had sherry first in Peter Lee's brother's room (you remember Peter? The only one you liked at that 'hearty' party) and then dinner in the place where the jazz band played at the winter dance. It was a sumptuous meal, with oysters, duck, raspberries & a constant flow of wine & then champagne & port! Afterwards we retired to our previous room & for three hours talked & played party-games, and consumed cigars & liqueurs. I left feeling gloriously happy. But am back in the grip of reality, sadly.

My essay on 'Victorianism' is typed and ready for you whenever you want it.

P.S. Could you send the 'population article' back soon?

Penny's next letter to me is from London, Friday [1st February].

I hail thee, my dearest Tumnus, in all your variety – Mister, Hon, K.C.B.V.C, M.A (failed Oxon), Bluebeard, Philanthropist.... Etc etc. neurotic: diagnosed 'Oedipus' complex and sexual schizophrenic... Population Officer – are all these facets of your nature happy? I am glad you are no longer depressed – some of your past letters have seemed as if you were completely bored with your work, but perhaps I have surmised wrongly. I am still feeling fairly ecstatic and longing to start all the reading, that I have postponed for such a time. I have just started again Malcolm Lowry's 'Under the Volcano' and this time I plan to finish it.

I tackled the St Anne's papers in a carefree and careless manner, and consequently have not done too well. However, it does not really matter....

York is going to be similar to Oxford, not only because of tutorial but also because students will be grouped in colleges, for lodging and/or teaching ...

I should like to come to Pam's play, but I don't know if either your time or my money can be afforded for both the play and the mission. It all depends on whether intellectual or spiritual edification is preferable. Perhaps the latter I think, but let me know. But, surely, I don't interrupt your work that much?

I am just dashing off to Harvey Nichols about the job .... [University entrance...] All these worries must seem to be something of the past for you – though I could not have managed without your sympathy.

What a superb idea that you should become a probation officer! I thought, anyway, that you might do that, although still like you to work in some remote Asian village on the population problem. Do send me a synthesis of what Mr Thompson said – I should be most interested.

My next letter to Penny was on Sunday [3rd February] Worcester College

I have had an exhausting week since I wrote. Already I had been out two evenings then I went to hear Christopher Hill on Thursday. He was a poppet, tho' rather ferociously attacked by my tutor. The next day I went to the Ford Lecture (Douglas) and there, afterwards, as I was coming out, met Hill & summoned up the courage to say 'Hullo, Mr Hill, how did you enjoy it?' and had a short chat about the terrors of giving the Ford lectures.

The next evening, Friday, I went on Pam's suggestion (with her) to 'A man for all seasons' which was fabulous. The author – Robert Bolt [sic] – was there & gave a short talk afterwards. Sir Thomas is now elevated to my list of heroes & I would like to write a book of case-studies of those who have been killed because they made their age uncomfortable – Socrates, Jesus, More, Ghandi among others. I will tell you all about it when you come down.

Today I went skating & fell flat (deservedly) trying to show off to some girls. Goodness, don't I sound 'busy'! But my thoughts have been even busier – on tolerance, hate, God, lust, torture & all the usual themes & including the most usual of them – you my sweetie. But enough drivel for now. Look after yourself poppet & come down if you can...

My mother wrote again a week later, on February 6th.

*My dear Alan,*

*.... Thank you for yours, I'm glad you aren't working yourself silly, I should think the time has come to start to digest all the vast files of information you have amassed hasn't it? I am deep in Tawney now and find it quite fascinating, have you read it? The central problem is the one you're facing now in thinking of your future, when does money-making become avarice, when does "enterprise" end and greed begin - and the book deals with the thoughts of the Church & the reformers on the subject. I simply can't come to any conclusions. The fact is that for oneself poverty (as if I've ever been really poor, but relatively speaking) means nothing, but money does buy the things one would like for one's children.*

*This was driven home when Granny wrote the other day saying we were being very unfair on you to keep you so financially insecure. I'm afraid I was very cross and wrote back rather nastily, which I'm regretting, but it was just another dig at Daddy who thinks of practically nothing else but how to get money home - the reason for my crossness too was partly that I knew she was right and that you don't any of you have enough. And yet - in Calcutta I felt that every penny we earned should go towards trying to alleviate in some tiny way the terrifying misery, of three quarters of the population. What to do? In my case just muddle & drift on getting psychotic headaches & tired feelings from submerged guilt complexes about you & the starving children of Calcutta I suppose - but in yours a life of helping would probably be possible. I still think a year or two's travel would be excellent, during which you might find a particular place or people you would like to settle down with - and then a course in social organisation to fit you for the practical side. Or you might like to do it the other way round. You would get a grant to cover it at a provincial university I'm sure, I'm always seeing them advertised. Anne seems to be working like several slaves & then wants to go abroad...*

*Here we have a grey day at last & a few drops of rain... [news of Assam] ... I've had my historical sense reawakened by Tawney. I'm not thinking in terms of writing a book for publication, just want to get "involved" in a period and learn some Indian history. I did try Assamese history on "History To-day" but they weren't interested though they wrote a very nice letter saying they enjoyed the article. Do hope the money has arrived, Richard says he'll help over temporary shortages & I'd rather you didn't even discuss the subject with Granny... Much love - Mummy*

My next letter is from Worcester College [Thursday 7th February]

*... I am in a mood of rebellion, and consequently haven't done much work this week. I went to a lecture this morning by Isaiah Berlin which was quite interesting & amusing. Going to lectures is a new craze I have.*

*For the rest of them I have been talking to people - principally to Peter G[ooden] & a neurotic friend from St J's who has just had an awful break with his girl-friend. I went to see Elvis ( Girls Girls GIRLS!) on Tuesday with him which he enjoyed. Pam's play, for which I have tickets, appears to be going well. If you come before 4.0 bring a little reading as I must do a little myself.*

*I went to talk to Alec last night about career, population etc - but with no appreciable result.*

The frequent references to Pam in the letters above, are to Pam St Claire who was part of the circle of vivacious girls to whom I had been introduced by Julie I think. I remember as a striking blond American, which is confirmed by a photograph I have of her holding a baby, presumably Julie's first son, some years later. She was, among other things, keen on theatre and there are a number of mentions of an opera she was producing in Oxford. A typed card from her with the date stamp, Oxford 6 February 1963, refers to this and to Penny's present of a book.

*Dear Magic-Maker!*

*Missing you; come backstage after the Orgy. And then for coffee, etc., and bring that delicious girlette. [Penny] Is she coming for the week-end? Will she want a bed? The method in the madness of this scrawl is to wit: I need her surname, please, so I can thank her for that adorable book. If you can provide me with same haste-post-haste I will have time to re-enforce my invitation for the week-end and congratulate her on York, etc.*

*Do let me know what's going on, how you are, when you are coming. I am in an absolute flap, tonight being firs performance. But I am eager to see lil' you always, and hope you will surprise me one of these eves. Won't be back before about midnight due to perfs. But COME.*

*Much love, P*

My next letter was as follows:

My next letter was on Monday evening [11th February] Worcester College

... *Oh if only this beastly weather went & spring came I might (and my friends in general) might feel more cheerful. If you ever wonder of a book to get me I would like any of the following -*

*'The dark Sun' - Hough (Pelican)*

*'Report from Palermo' - Dolci (if in paper-back)*

*'To feed the Hungry' - Dolci*

Penny wrote again on Wednesday [13th February] London

*Thank you very much for Raleigh's poems. I was so pleased to receive it, for before I have had only brief looks into Janet's copy. I am sorry that I was unable to send you the book on Lawrence, but I have been in bed with flu for the past two days. Hence the token of my own making. I am afraid that I am still feeling very groggy, so this letter will be more incoherent, and less effusive than usual. By staying in bed, however, I have been able finally to finish 'the Lord of the Ring'. I now understand the allegory behind it, but will explain it when I see you, though I suppose you will know it already. O darling Tumnus, this letter must be very depressing and really I ought not to send it to you; but I feel like writing, so you must bear with me. Actually all I really want is sympathy, so please send me a long & jolly letter soon.*

*What a marvellous person Danilo Dolci is! Did you hear the programme last night on his recent fast, carried out last Sept to achieve the building of a dam in Sicily? I should love to go and see him when I go to Italy. Why don't you join the Brit organisation which sends out volunteers to help him in Sicily? I suddenly thought last night of doing this, if I don't go to Perugia.*

*Pam doesn't know when she is leaving Oxford, but she will definitely have gone by the end of the month. Oxford is going to seem very quiet without her.*

*Tumnus, I believe Spring is coming! The air seemed pure & gentle this afternoon, and the sun made delicate tracings on the bedroom wall. I hope you will be wondrously happy now, dearest Tumnus, and may you strive towards your ideals, and your spirit towards its goal.*

*Have a joyful Feb. 14th and pense à moi quelequefois.*

My next letter to Penny is from 3, Southmoor Road, Oxford [Pam's house?]  
[Thursday 14th February]

*I mustn't write much as I have to catch the late post. Pam arrived back at lunch today - she seems a little relaxed. I have been to one of Huddleston's talks so far - pretty good - on the problem of how to deal with property in this unequal world: I am coming to the conclusion that there are only two answers - either to compromise or be completely dedicated & follow Jesus' suggestions to the 'Rich Young Man', but whether I have the courage to give all up as a sacrifice*



*I doubt. I enclose a poem which is a poor echo – as you will notice – of ‘Intimations’ & some of “4 Quartets” – a rhapsody on ‘lost innocence’ (please return sometime), weep with me darling! But I am happy – are you darling?*

Friday [15 February] Worcester College

*I have been as busy as ever – doing nothing very important, writing essays etc. The weather is miserable – depressing everyone, even the buoyant Mr Tumnus sometimes. He was even more depressed when he had a long talk with an ex-tutress, Lady Clay, who has given him a lovely bowl of narcissi (white) but largely because she wanted to have someone around for her to pour out all her griefs on. I will tell you about the conversation...*

*I went to tea with ‘F’ (Lord Franks) today – borrowed a suit from Ralph. Huddleston is tremendous.*

My next letter is on Sunday [17th February]

*Absolutely recovered from your cold/flu I hope darling. It has been going around Oxford too; I dropped in on Peter this afternoon and he was in bed with a temperature. I expect you will be back selling your mink bathing costumes again at H.N.!*

*I had a letter from Granny yesterday, Jummy died on Wednesday/Thursday. I am just about to write to Beryl. I’m sure she would like to hear from you (Mrs Buckmaster, Field Head) if you feel like writing. I don’t know really how one should write – perhaps I will send a Donne sonnet. Death is so strange, so distant that it only makes one feel stunned, very small, very unable to give easy comfort – especially in this case where, to use the horrible phrase, it was a “merciful release”. The tragic thing is that it brings out all one’s own selfishness, one’s fear and realization that one cannot enter into another’s sufferings. We both echo Donne “it tolls for thee” and realize (as you quoted) that we are unable to enter other’s; each other person is a little glass case into which we peer with goggling eyes. But enough; I have been pondering on these subjects for a few days & don’t know any answers.*

My next letter is on 22 February, Worcester College

*Huddleston was tremendous & you will be especially glad to hear that he read quotes from the ‘Towers of Trebizond’; three times and said it was one of his favourite books – I must read it sometime. With the last of my book-tokens I have bought “The Human Condition” Miss Arendt; “The Lonely Crowd” & “The Poverty of Historicism” – Popper. I must try to read them, but everyday the work grows more hectic. □*

*... Robert’s book does seem to have done well – and I have written to congratulate him. Do get in touch with Annie if you can, I’m sure she’d like to see you & meet people thro’ you. My mother is convinced she is lonely.*

The next letter from my mother is on the same date [Friday 22nd February]:

My dear Alan,

*A nice long cheerful letter from you which bucked us up no end, I had had a depressing week, not being very well and then having to watch my poor old cat die and also being worried about the money not getting home. However I feel better now and have heard from the bank and got over the first misery that an animal’s death always inflicts. We will wire the next lot of money home so that it’ll get there earlier in the month.*

*I was delighted to hear about Penny, a lovely city [York] to study in, perhaps not quite as lovely as Oxford but much better than any other provincial university. Will she be reading History or English? Anne said she was very well, looking much better than in the summer, and*

earning vast sums writing figures on price tags, really one wonders why one bothers to spend money on giving ones daughters a "training"! ...

I've taken up my study of Assamese again and am starting lessons with the wife of our assistant next week... I've been doing quite a lot of history reading too, finishing Fisher as Anne and I stopped with a bang at the end of the Thirty Years War, and also Assamese history. It is annoying that here where I have the time to study, I cant get hold of any books. My Family Planning has also been frustrated for various reasons...

I'm glad you are able to slack off a little in your work, I think your plans for a years travel and then a social science course are excellent, though it means that we shant see you when we come home next year which is rather an awful thought. Unless we come home in the autumn for a winter leave which we are seriously thinking of doing. ... Anyway you must make your plans as you think best and go for guidance to your friends and tutors because obviously they're much more in a position to help you.

I agree with Father Huddleston of course, but alas and alack the spirit that took missionaries to difficult and dangerous corners of the world was so often militant, intolerant and arrogant that the good that they did was cancelled out. It would be an interesting subject for study actually, missionary work in India or Africa, and its exact impact for good or bad. The Jesuits wrote vastly as far back as Akbars day & as they were always the first on the scene everywhere it would be fascinating. Another subject that intrigues me is the East India Co. but I shall have to leave all these studies till I get home & can ransack the India Office Files.

Wonder how Roseberry has fare? Granny just said she "liked" it but I hope the critics are more enthusiastic. ... are you drinking your Guinness? Much love - Mummy

One of the three surviving letters for this period from me is from Worcester College on Sunday [24th February]

*Dear Mummy and Daddy,*

Thank you very much for your letter. I enclose a few reviews of Robert's book - as you can see it seems to have been another hit (as Granny will probably have told you!), despite some catty remarks about Fowler's Usage from Mortimer. When I asked for a copy (to look at!) at Blackwells they said that they had sold out and had had to send for another batch.

Having just looked up in my little book I find that it is your 22nd wedding anniversary on March 1st - many congratulations. I only wish I could send you more than a few newspaper cuttings and my oft-repeated professions of filial devotion (and a spring crocus). It is also 'Mothering Sunday' soon. Oh dear. All I can send is my especial love and affection to you both and remind you how wonderful you have been to all three of us. I will dedicate my first book to you, rather than to any old Earl or venerable statesman! [Which I did. A.M.] I owe you everything (including my life), and although I sometimes feel like digging a hole in the ice and laying my bones among the fishes and sea-fungi, yet it has been the best upbringing one could have. (& today is a beautiful spring day)

You will have heard of Jummy's death, perhaps I have already written since it happened. Anyhow Beryl is going to stay on in the Lakes. Poor thing. I wish I could go up North, to see if I could help; but it looks as if I shall have to stay up at Oxford all the vacation - with a brief spell in London and perhaps a short hike over the Cotswolds.

I have written to the girls inviting them down to Oxford one Sunday, alternatively I will go up to London and take them out. By the way, the money arrived safely, thank you.

It has continued very cold. Every morning it snows thinly, all day the snow melts and the roads are brown, gritty and slushy. By evening there is no snow left and it freezes - and starts snowing again! I have been skating quite a lot; when I feel my brain is going to explode, I go down to the Lake and try to learn how to skate backwards. Today I intend to go down for an hour to Port Meadow; I'm told there's an ice-yacht down there.

Last night I went to 'Mon Oncle' with Jacques Tati. It was delightful, with much boisterous French slapstick, but an element of sadness as well. It fell over backwards trying not to be satirical - for it was about the difference between those who had little money & a family with all

*the modern household gadgets – which of course all erupted or broke down. The film with it was about the Riviera and I nearly rushed straight to the travel agency and set out for the sun-shaded beaches and summer coolness of the olive groves.*

*Look after yourselves, I do hope Mummy won't get any more bilious attacks.*

*All my love, Alan*

I wrote on the same day to Penny:

The next letter is on Sunday [24 February] Worcester College

*I have been living in a shadow for the last few days, and even my communion this morning was lifeless and dead. I felt the blood and body sink traceless in my arid soul and not new hope or thankfulness sprang up from the waste. But from the above lyrical outburst you can see that I have suffered a 'sea-change'. This is the result of going out, skating and walking, on a warm, almost voluptuous, blue day, when one can almost feel the young shoots being sucked with a popping sound from the hard earth, and can imagine the tees spreading their cold, bony, hands to the warmth of the Sun. For this reason I have included a very famous piece of Spring poetry, which is eminently evocative, breathless with the whispered incantations of pagan ritual [Swinburne – 'When the hounds of spring'] – Sorry, my words flow on heedless of all grammatical rules. But I feel so happy. If only you were hear to share it. Perhaps it will be nice next Sunday & we can go for a long walk, and perhaps there might be snowdrops?*

*Tell me if you can think of anything which ought to be done about Pam's party. Otherwise I will leave everything until you come down.*

*I went to a delightful film yesterday – 'Mon Oncle' – full of laughter, Paris, and quiet good-humour. Doesn't the sun make all the difference! I envy you going to Perugia.*

*I must rush off to the hospital [For my Christian visiting and guitar playing.]*

Penny wrote again on Monday [25th February]:

*How are you sweetheart? Is Spring really coming to Oxford? How wonderful! I am longing to see snowdrops and bluebells, especially along the lanes and in the woods around Binsey Church. I hope we shall be able to go for a walk on Sunday, and to penetrate the first diaphanous veil of Spring. Roll on the weekend, when I can be enfolded in your embraces.*

*Your two sisters seem to be painting London red. Fiona and a couple of friends came down on Thurs to see several art collections. On Saturday, together with Anne and Felix we all went to see 'My Fair Lady.' We enjoyed the choreography, production and stage sets, but the show seemed to lack "punch".... Yesterday Anne & Felix spent the day with us. We enjoyed having them so much. Mamma liked them both immensely and they seemed to get on with her very well. I'll try to meet them again tomorrow, and possibly take them over to Janet's... Don't do anything about Pam's party, except to invite people casually... Love to you, dearest heart. I adore you very much. Look after yourself. I'll write properly tomorrow.*

Penny wrote, as promised, again the following day, Tuesday [26th February]

*Are you keeping well, my sweeting? Please be fit for the weekend, although I should love to nurse you back to health. I am feeling somewhat susceptible, both to love-charms and ailments of sickness...*

*I have some very incoherent, muddled and depressing letters to you. I am sorry about this. Exigences [sic] always seemed to occur, whenever I sat down to write to you, which prevented me from writing other than a 'scraggly' note. Also, I have been too tired to contemplate on the ways of the world, or to reciprocate to your recent wisdom & philosophies. I sometimes feely on capable of reading novels. I must write to Alec [Graham] soon; but it needs some preparation, so please don't arrange for me to see him this weekend. I wonder if I am being coward about reconciling myself to the Church. Perhaps only very lazy about thinking*

seriously. Sometimes the desire to comprehend wells up from every limb, and body and mind unite in a sensitivity to the distress and agony of mankind. But all too soon, this surge fades, like a mighty wave, whose strength disperses as it rolls across the eternal length of golden but arid sand.

*I have decided to come down on Friday evening since I have been given Saturday morning off. It is far better that I am around in Oxford on Sat morning, if I am going to arrange this party. Anyway, I want to make the 'Grand Tour' of all my friends in the morning... Don't meet me on Friday evening, if you have 'tuts' etc. I promise I won't disturb you, until Sat. afternoon. (I'll try hard to keep my promise). Also can you invite Erik over to coffee after lunch on Sat? Will you ask him to bring his car, too, as I want him to help me carry some food?*  
[other news] ... Afterwards I am meeting Fiona for coffee, until her coach leaves for Manchester at 11.30 p.m....

*the poem I include comes from a Penguin edition of Durrell's, Jennings' & R.S. Thomas' poetry, which I have just acquired. The poetess speaks of the purity of birth.... Etc. [description] [The poem is attached. Elizabeth Jennings. 'For a Child Born Dead'] ... Now I must flee, reluctantly, from thoughts of you into the chaotic & clamorous world of H.N. Don't worry, sweetheart, I won't be contaminated. ...*

Penny wrote again from London, Thursday [28 February]

*Thank [you] for your letter - full of joy and vernal ecstasy [sic]. I shall love being in Oxford in early Spring, although London is beautiful when the sunlight filters thro' the silky mist over the parks.*

*I had lunch today with Annie Felix and Julie Wilcox. Annie really is a darling. Mamma said she wanted to hug her all the time; Annie seemed to get on very well with Mamma, but then, Annie is appreciated by everyone.*

*Sweetheart, altho' I should like to come to Othello, or go to some flics, I won't be down until about between 8.30 pm or 8.45 (The coach leaves London at 6.000 and the journey time varies from 2 ½ and 2 ¾ hrs). Sweetest, can you meet me, if possible, as I am bound to be embracing countless parcels. 25 hours till I see you again - they will pass so slowly,*

The next letter to Penny is on 27th February, Wednesday:

*Thank you for your two letters. How are you my poppet? Enjoying the wonderful weather we are having down here I hope. Today is the third blue, bright, thrushes' egg day full of the quacking of ducks and bird-song, & just as I write the humming clap of some swans taking off from the canal behind me drowns the shunting of trains for a moment. As you will have guessed I am writing from the gardens, sitting on one of the edging-stones to the Lake with my feet on the ice and the sun slanting down through the bare trees onto the remnants of the snow and onto the long, fine willow hairs which will soon burst with green and then white. There are little shiny birds on the chestnut above me. Lady Clay has told me of a whole list of places where we may find snowdrops - one of them a "deserted village" with the snow-drops growing in the burnt-out manor house. I pray that it may be fine when you come down. I have a 'tute' on Friday evening from 6-7.30 but if you arrive after that let me know. Otherwise come to my room & we can do something in the evening. Would you like to go to Othello? (though it may be booked-up).*

*I'm so glad you have seen the 'girls'. I had a letter from Anne this morning. She obviously loved her visit to the 'Marcus' household - and would like to come down here - but seems to prefer the idea of coming down with you. Perhaps the last week-end of term (17th?) you might make a joint expedition down. Give them my love if you see them.*

*This is going to be another short & boring letter. But I will see you soon. Till then this carries all my love and affection to you dearest heart.*

## SPRING TERM AND VACATION: MARCH AND APRIL

My mother wrote again on March 2nd:

*My dear Alan,*

*Thank you for your letter with the cuttings and the crocus which is taking a place of honour on the mantelpiece. I have written to Robert, all the reviews were marvellous (though of course you and I could do better!) and lets hope he will make a nice lot of money, though it seems a terrible price. Thank you for the anniversary wishes too, I must say it doesn't feel like 22 years and yet in other ways I cant remember a time when I wasn't married. We bought a bottle of champagne, had a long look at it, and then sent it back - it was Rs 72. Our only celebration was to take the dogs out tiger hunting after dinner, a beautiful moonlight night but no tigers...*

*By the way, please thank Penny for her very nice letter which I will answer very soon, I hope getting to York University wont mean we'll Lose her. I got a long letter from Beryl before Jummy died, written very small and rather vague, about you and Penny and then (as I thought) "but now he is in the hands of a woman of 28, however he has a sheep dog puppy which will perhaps win". Couldn't imagine how you could be fitting women of 28 or sheep dog puppies into your present framework but I had missed out a line and it was Martin she was talking about...*

*I haven't heard from Granny since my sharp letter, not even about Robert, so violent um was obviously taken but really its so peaceful not getting her letters. I think you're probably right not to pick yourself and all your files up and go home for Easter but I hope you will at least spend your week-ends walking or boating.*

*Wonder if you saw Fiona who was in London I believe, why I can't imagine. Hope F & A managed to come down, they're obviously lonely poor dears. Much love from us both, Mummy*

Penny wrote to me from London, Monday [4th March]

*This is just a short note to rouse you from the possible depression of starting your work again. I have just held an ecstatic telephone call with Pam - She is in a very happy and joyful mood; do try and see her, when she comes up to Oxford next weekend... She sends her love to you, and thanks you for a wonderful party. Tunnus, it really was terrific; I was only upset that the pxnch went so quickly.*

*I have also spoken to Annie this evening and told them the arrangements about coming down. I rang up Paddington Stn and Victorian Coach Stn; the travel and fare situation on Sundays is this: the first train for Oxford leaves London at 10.00 and arrives c. 11.30, and the fare is 16/- day return; the first coach leaves at 9.00 and arrives also at 11.30, but the fare is only 8/9 day return. I think, therefore, that the coach is best all round. Don't worry about sending their fares; Annie was even offering to give you some money. Apparently your grandmother has sent her some extra money thus I thought I ought to tell her about the financial crisis between your parents and your grandmother. Was that O.K? It prevented, I think, further difficulties, because Annie has now completely rephrased a letter she was about to send to your grandma. Please borrow, or have, some money from me if you want it. This letter has helped to clear the dreadful depression that I have suffered throughout today. I was very tired, and hated the noise, insincerity, brashness, crudity and lack of understand & compassion which, together with the stuffy air, pervades H.N.*

My next letter to Penny is on Tuesday [5th March] Worcester College

*... You will know how much I enjoyed seeing you over the week-end. I am only sorry that I am always a little too tired and (still trailing the fog of my work in my mind) thus unable to share*

*the wonder the world with you fully. Apart from being argumentative, or more so than usual, I am not filled with my old joy. On Friday evening I was happier than for a long time – and the last walk was marvellous, with the red sun in the mist and the ice floating down the stream and the solidness of the wet-earth and leaves. Anyhow you will, I hope, one day know me as I really am (if this work hasn't changed me too much!).*

The next letter from Penny is on Sunday [10th March – to check] London

*As I write on a gentle Sunday afternoon, the pale, honey-coloured winter sunlight gives renewed warmth to the mahogany table before me. From the radio, one of Beethoven's symphonies streams forth, and its notes are quickly dispersed by the winds, to harmonise with the 'Eternall Musick of the Spheres.' Yet, across the blue sky roll the transient-coloured clouds, sometimes completing the serenity of the afternoon, sometimes portending the fears and dangers of the future. This afternoon is but a beautiful image of the sleepy and often stultifying life which I am presently leading. More and more am I desirous to achieve something unique and purposeful, and not to let my days slip past, and be left bored and resentful of others achievements. O dearest Tumnus, I do not know how much I really feel of the above – perhaps I should go for a walk and thus lose this silly depression. I went to an agonisingly boring party last night, at which there were young people of my own age or older, whose mental age, nevertheless, was half their years. I spent the whole time with three of my school-friends, whom I have known since I was five...*

*Anne & Felix could not come to the party, fortunately, as I now realise, since they were going to Cambridge to see Nicola, who has just given birth to a baby daughter, Rachel. Isn't that marvellous? ....*

*I have read several books this week; I finished 'Black Mischief' by Waugh, in which Waugh snaps at New Monarchies, Democracy, and British Colonialism, then I read 'Of Mice and Men', which is exquisitely jewel of lyricism and poignancy, of gentleness and cruelty, of innocence and brash and crude experience; afterwards there was 'A City of Beautiful Nonsense' by E. Temple Thurston to delight me. It is a delicate and quaint fairy-story for grown-ups... Now I am in the middle both of "Potterism" by Rose Macaulay... and of 'Ester Waters' by George Moore. ....*

*Love to you, my blessed one – I am looking forward to seeing you next weekend. Let us pray that the green grasses of Spring will burst forth, that you & I might admire their beauty during the only spring of your twenty-first year.*

Penny wrote again on Wednesday [13th March] London

*I hope you are not exhausted, or bored, by reading the fifty books, that you set yourself for this week. I should hate you to collapse into another girl's arms before it's my turn on Saturday. I am longing to see you then, and I think Annie & Felix are looking forward to coming down on Sunday (Don't let all this female worship go to your head!) I do not know by which train/coach I shall be arriving, so I shall just turn up at some point in the afternoon – between 2.30 and 4.30. I have to buy a pamphlet from the bookshop opposite the Union, and may spent part of the afternoon there, if you still have some more work to do.*

*I bought some velvet ribbons for my hair today; their colours are the fathomless depths of a person's eye, trembling and wavering before the light; the texture of velvet is exquisitely soft, but one hesitates to exert the full pressure of one's fingers and penetrate through the moss surface.*

*I have been reading some poems by St. John of the Cross, translated by Roy Campbell. Their joyous beauty is like the morning freshness of an early summer's day:*

*"Sweet day, so cool, so calm, so bright,  
The bridal the earth & skie:"*

*Fro St John, the soul after 'in darkness up0 the secret stair I crept' reaches an abode 'enlaced by roses, and where the purest rills run free'; amidst such beauty the soul and its maker will for ever wander together, like a bridegroom & his bride. I was interested by the analogy you found between David 'Erbert & St J; that D.H. believed the complete surrender of consciousness and of the senses, helped the lover to reach the heights of love, and that for a short while, the spirits of man & woman cleave invisibly together, similarly St J says:*

*I entered in, I know not where,  
And I remained, though knowing naught,  
Transcending knowledge with my thought.*

*....*

*So borne aloft, so drunken - reeling,  
So rapt was I, so swept away,  
Within the scope of sense or feeling  
My sense of feeling couldn't stay.*

*...*

*Oh night that joined the lover  
To the beloved bride  
Transfiguring them each into the other.*

*As much as I enjoy, however, writing out these verses in this letter, I must return [to] the task I have set myself of copying out nearly a whole volume of St J's poetry.*

*I am reading avidly once more, and have just finished a marvellous novel by Eliz. Jennings "The Tortoise & the Hare". I am, thus, becoming very unsociable, altho I had Annie & Felix over to dinner on Monday. Mamma was out, so we, (or rather, they - I pottered about) concocted our own meal. It was fun; and I think they enjoyed it too.*

Another of Penny's letters was undated, but was probably written in later February or early March.

*London, Saturday Evening*

*I am writing from beside a warm fire, remote from the cold and suffering of people outside. It is difficult to imagine or to ameliorate the agony of the poor and sick, when one is comfortable and satisfied with one's own lot, if not with that of others. I suppose the hours that you spend in your cold room, without a fire, psychologically prepare you for the distress, you will see and experience in the future. I think the reason why the contribution per head of the English towards refugees etc is far less than that of other Europeans, is that the Englishman is unable to imagine the poverty & suffering of others, not that he is parsimonious. I was very impressed by a remark of U Thant: "We shall never obtain peace, in which we can live, so long as two-thirds of the world find it difficult to live at all."*

*And so to your Population Figures, which horrified and frightened me too. As Darwin said, the only way of keeping down the numbers is to use contraceptives. I am sure that as knowledge of them spreads, the younger generation is inclined, more than any other generation, to ignore religious doctrines, and plan their families by these means. I suppose, the major break-through will come when the RC church decides that Contra-C, are not only permissible, but essential. American aid could both in short-term and long-term policies be far more valuably spent on this, than on harvested corn. But the Kennedys and many senior senators are RC -! However, I feel certain, despite Darwin's pessimism, that religious denominations will come very soon to a decision about birth-control.*

*One point with which Janet & I disagreed. O says that a nuclear war would kill about 100m. But the point about a nuclear war is that no-one knows how many it would kill. Certainly not the paltry number he gives. Besides the immediate affects of fire from the bombs, the wind could carry nuclear atoms all over the world, and deposit them in any area. These*

would harm not only the present generation, but also children of the future... [further details and reference to *Hiroshima* etc] ...O, Tumnus, the results of any nuclear war are so dreadful, that it is preferable that the whole American economy were upset & thousands of Americans out of a job, than that this threat hang over us, and that we experience another Cuba crisis.

Last night I saw 'Hiroshima mon Amour' on the tell. It was exquisitely beautiful and sad; the actress contrasts the tragedy of her own love affair with that at H, which her Japanese lover helps her to reconjure. Have you seen it? You must if you have not - I want to see it many times again.

Tumnus, sweet heart, why did you not lend me 'Love & Death' before? I adored it. It is truly poetic, conveying the passion of the author, on an intense summer's day, beneath the cool forest leaves, in the embracing waters, or during the tranquil nights. His style has force and diversity, like a drop of water falling against a stone, and dividing out in every direction. The book made me a little sad, though, because I wondered if love could be as exquisite and ecstatic as Powys showed. I do hope so. I must try to obtain a copy of 'Love & Death', or else type out the whole - which would take a very long time. (I spent four hours typing out 5 pages of one of T-Roper's essays).

As I told you on the telephone, I have decided to go to Perugia, or Florence, from July to October, to stake the Italian course for foreigners at the University. Isn't this a splendid idea? We could see each other until you, having finished your finals went off to Canada, and I to Italy. (Aylmer also thought it would be a good idea if I was able to learn another language besides French & German). Apparently, the course only costs about £6 per month, and if I stayed at a convent, I could manage very reasonably.... I am sure that, by working at Harvey N's, I could save enough to stay there.... [further on the plan, and Perugia]...

The next letter from my mother is three weeks later on March 22nd:

My dear Alan,

Thank you for your letter and for having the girls, who will have come and gone by now. "Oh to be in England..." although Richard says you are having a wet spring but this is the time of year I feel most homesick, remembering the daffodils and cuckoos and curlews and moss, everything wet and soft and gentle, not that it isn't beautiful here but in a hot hard way that soon wears one out....

I have my Moghuls at last. They turn out to be five volumes of the travels of a certain Peter Mundy in the seventeenth century, only one of which deals with India, but all of which are quite fascinating, have you read any of them? As well there are several other history books which I have started to summarise and am already lost in another world, the India of the first traders, and a shocking lot they were, though brave enough. I don't know whether I will ever write any of it up, or what exactly to choose, if I did write about the Moghuls it would be as seen through the eyes of contemporary travellers, otherwise the whole subject is so vast that I would have to take to my bed like F. Nightingale. I think a Woodham-Smithish book called "The Great Greed" on the colonising of India might be interesting, anyway it is all going to keep me happily occupied for years. I wonder if you could find out if the Hakluyt Society is still going, and if you have time in the vac. perhaps you could browse through old bookshops and see if you can find anything relevant to the early colonisation, Portuguese, Dutch or French as well as the East India Company. I'm particularly anxious to read the descriptions of the Jesuits at the court of Akbar, and the travels of Ralph Fitch, and a book called "English Factories". No hurry for any of these as I have enough to keep me going for months and months, but while you are in Oxford you might be able to find out if these books are still available My brain is so rusty that I find myself absolutely whacked after a couple of hours reading, I'm taking your tip and making notes on my typewriter which is a great help in remembering. I'm also plodding on with my Assamese...

I was tempted to send for Roseberry but at the price didn't dare. He seems to be selling well still and I got a letter from Granny saying "I hope you are duly impressed". Don't quite know what she meant by that, I'm inclined to read the worst into Granny these days! Awfully



*sad about Uncle Roy, what a mess Aunt Margery has made of her family with that terrible spurious Christianity of hers, I still get nightmares about the holidays I used to spend with her... Poor Sheila, what a lonely position she is now in, I wish I could help...*

*I will send some more money at the beginning of the month, let us know when you expect your grant. Perhaps Richard could find you something in America to start you off? Don't think any further than June of the moment, doors always open.*

*Much love from us both - Mummy*

Attached are three Bodleian book order slips, on the back of which are noted the costs of subscriptions to the Hakluyt Society, some addresses in India, and about 30 book titles with prices against them, to do with early travels to India etc.

My second letter is dated Sunday 23rd March 1963 and typed on airmail form

*Dear Mummy and Daddy,*

*Thank you for very much for your letter, posted during the 'Holi'. Sorry to have been so long in replying & for doing so on a typewriter - my work will have to excuse both. I am now at the revision stage - 9 hours-a-day of looking thro' notes. It is difficult to prevent this deteriorating into a mechanical & absent-minded rush thro' pages of jumbled thinking. I seem to have pages of stuff - most of which I didn't understand when I copied it down conscientiously from various books; this means that there is a lot of digesting & re-assessing to be done. I am specialising on the Tudor & Stuart period &, if I have the opportunity, would like to do post-graduate research on some aspect of this age - perhaps the population & plague factors which have neither been studied adequately nor related to modern problems of underdeveloped societies - problems so similar to those faced by England as it began to absorb new industries & a rapidly increasing population & swept, as it was, by periodic famines & plagues. Tawney, of course, is the pioneer in such a field, & he puts the idea of such a utilitarian approach to history thus -*

*"The disorders of Chinese agriculture ... are one species of a genus which has been widely diffused, & which is characteristic, not of this nation or that, but of a partic' phase of economic civilisation. The persistence of an empirical technique based on venerable usage & impervious to science; the meagre output of foodstuffs which that technique produced; the waste of time & labour through the fragmentation of holdings; the profits wrung from the cultivator by middleman, usurer & landlord; the absence of means of communication & the intolerable condition of such as existed; the narrow margin separating the mass of the population from actual starvation & the periodic recurrence of local famines - such phenomena, if exception be made of a few favoured regions, were until recently the commonplaces of western economic life ... From the Middle Ages to the C19 the social problem of most parts of Europe, in spite of natural advantages of soil & climate, was what in China & India it is today. It was the condition, not of the industrial wage-earner, but of the peasant..." (Land & Labour in China).*

*This is also true of the problem of corruption of which you spoke during your last letter. As you will know the half century up to the Civil war was riddled with bribery of members of parliament, of judges, of tax-collectors, of the chief officers of State. For instance Yelverton paid James £4,000 to be Attorney General in 1617 or again Roger Manwood - Chief Baron of the Exchequer in the 1590's - awarded himself £7,000 in a series of cases which he brought up himself! Bacon assumed that everybody took bribes. Sir Edward Coke himself became one of the richest men in England. Both Robt Cecil and his father were making a tidy pile from the sale of offices on the quiet & even the 'upright' Strafford has recently been shown to have had dirty hands. The whole society was riddled with graft, tips, extortion etc. The causes are fairly obvious. There were no fixed salaries in the Law Courts & the fees paid to the Crown's officers were very low. They were expected to get the bulk of their income by indirect means. As in France, offices were increasingly sold, & the more they paid the more they had to squeeze from those below them on the ladder. Thus the main causes of corruption are the lack of professional traditions of service, static salaries in a Price Rev'n, the sale of offices & the*

absence of any really competent & public accountants. The reasons for the death of this kind of corruption seem to have been the rise of accountancy, the rise of a literate public with an opinion & a voice in the running of things (& a Press to inform it), & the bringing of salaries & fees up to the right level. But this, as you will know, is an interminable process – it took about 300 years in England!

Having finished that little lecturette, on to some lighter matters! I am progressing with the Bhagavad Gita & enjoying it immensely. But my reading is limited to a few minutes before bed so I haven't reached the middle yet.

Anne, Felix & Penny all came down last week-end. They all seemed in good health & we had several large meals – on my floor. Needless to say, it was a drizzling misty day & so we seeped wetly round Oxford's dank quads – attempting half-heartedly to visualize what it would be like in Summer. I am going up to London next week-end & will, at last, meet Mrs Marcus.

Today was wonderful, full of rushing wind & dancing sunlight & growing shoots & whirled bird-song. I went for a 7-mile walk over Wytham woods down to Eynsham where I had tea in an old pub. My happiness will be revealed when I tell you that I even wrote some sentimental poetry! My joy is best expressed in the words of a poet who is my present fad – e.e. Cummings. He never, or hardly ever, puts in punctuation etc. Here is something on a lovely day, altho' it is far from being his best.

“I thank You god for most this amazing  
day: for the leaping greenly spirits of trees  
and a blue true dream of sky; & for everything  
which is natural which is infinite which is yes

(I who have died am alive again today,  
and this is the sun's birthday; this is the birth  
day of life & of love & wings: and of the gay  
great happening illimitably dearth)

.....

(now the ears of my ears awake and  
now the eyes of my eyes are opened)

*This fits my work-induced-bleary awakening very well.*

How are the 'family planning' & 'Moguls' going? I will be very interested to hear the progress of both. No developments on 'graduate service' except that Granny can't find my passport – you don't by any chance, have an idea where all my valuables were put away?

As I am staying up in Oxford all vacation I am afraid I will need a little money – about £2 or so per week – I wonder if you could forward this – or shall I get it from Granny, with whom I would be staying? I will wait to hear from you.

Lots of love to both as ever.

Alan

A day later, on Sunday 24th, I wrote again to Penny.

I wish you could have been with me today. It was blue as a thrush's egg and one could feel the leaves being pushed up by the burrowing bulbs. I went for a long walk to Eynsham. I called for Carry [another female friend] on the way and she came as far as the 'Perch' with me and we had a drink in the sunlit garden there. She is coming up to London next week and will be meeting Charles – perhaps we might make a four-some to do something. She also asked if you'd left any brown high-heels at the flat? To continue with the walk. I walked up beside the smiling Thames where the swans were swimming on the flooded meadow & then off up Wytham Hill and through the field of rich earth to drop down on the old village of Eynsham. The trees are still stark and buddless, the grass withered white and autumn leaves under one's feet but Spring deepened [sic] in the sunlight and the shadows were awake with bird-song. I

can't convey my happiness. I rand down the woodland paths, glades such as Robin Hood and Charles escaping from his enemies must have galloped down. At Eynsham I had a country tea at a lovely little pub. And now back to the slog... (tho' I am still enjoying it immensely . )...

I enclose a snatch of e.e. Cummings poetry (This is how I felt today, after days of blindness). I am mad on him at the moment. He has the honesty and seriousness of Lawrence and the clarity of vision and faith of Blake. I will bring you his poems when I come.

My next letter is on Tuesday [2nd April] Worcester College

... I am taking your advice & will be going off to the Cotswolds on Thursday. I went for a bus ride to Burford and found a charming woman in the P. Office who will put me up. I will stay there until about the 18th - anyhow a week before the beginning of term. So write to me c/o Post Office, Burford (I'm not sure of the County).

... I won't write any more as I'm writing this in Carry's flat & the girls are talking & asking me questions. It's a wonderful day. Glory be to God for dappled things...

Penny wrote again from London, Sunday Afternoon [7th April]

I hope you are not overworking in the delightful Cotswold town of Burford. This afternoon London is reflecting every face of early Spring, but in the Cotswolds the airs must be still fresher, and the skies deeper and clearer. I should vey much like to spend Easter with you, but I do not think I ought to leave Mamma alone over Easter. Anyway, you are probably coming to London in a fortnight, aren't you? And I am coming down to Oxford with Erik on the 28th.

I have [been] quite busy during this week. On Tuesday I met Annie for coffee, and after going for a walk, we went back to Angela's for dinner. Robert was somewhat sarcastic, but the women of that household were as charming and delightful as ever. Angela's expecting another offspring in December.

On Friday I went to a party that Babs was supervising for her sister. It was very boring - Babs went to bed, halfway through the party, and Jeremy spent his time making passes at me. God, he is a drip! .... I am going to see Felix off to Scotland. F suddenly postponed her departure even to Mon even - I think she wanted to celebrate Scotland's winning a football match against England, and to go mad with the rest of the Scottish barbarian's who have been crowding London streets this week. We took her out to Lunch yesterday...

I miss you very much, even though we do bicker when we are together. I think my moodiness is due to an increasing inward dissatisfaction with my job, and with my inability to take full advantage of the interim period between school & college.

Write to me soon, sweetheart. I will write often, so long as my letters are read & not put in a paper-rack.

My mother then wrote again on April 8th

My dear Alan,

We're sitting in front of a fire with Brahms on the gramophone, nothing could be cosier or less like April... I'm sorry spring is not working its magic on you, one feels terribly restless when young at the passing seasons and youth flying past and so on and never seems able to enjoy things without the desire to "share" which spoils a lot of the time. Still its rather a delicious sadness. I'm waiting to hear from Fiona who was starving in a garret according to Granny but I hope is back by now...

[Assam news] ...

I had a very nice letter from my agent yesterday, they are terribly charming people, he said I was not to be discouraged by the publisher not wanting the background, he had liked it and hoped I would write more children's books and would like to see me about them when I come home - all this gratifying correspondence is owing to you of course. The trouble is I don't really

like writing for children, it is extremely difficult to work within a tight vocabulary and yet not be boring, makes one realise what marvels books like *Alice in Wonderland* are. I heard from the Hakluyt, an Assamese friend who is a member of the British council has got a book for me so I am busy for another few weeks...

*Did I tell you that the professor who was helping me with my folk stories, last week died of a heart attack - it is slightly ominous the way each time I get in touch with someone he dies shortly afterwards, i.e. Verrier Elwin. ... Much love from us both - Mummy*

I went off to relax and revise in the Cotswolds so my next communication is a postcard of Burford Main Street, postmarked 8th April.

*I will write properly in a day or two; this is just to say I am thinking of you and to tell you I'm having a wonderfully relaxing time here. There are a multitude of glorious Norman Churches, a host of picture-postcard villages complete with daffodils & ducks on the pond, and miles of fresh & rolling upland on which the great sheep-flocks of the middle ages used to graze.*

*The lady who runs the P.O has gone away for a few days so I am alone, but go out & meet 'the locals' at the pub & coffee-bar. At Burford was the Leveller mutiny vs Cromwell in 1649 & in the Church one can still see the signature of 'Anthony Selden, Prisner, 1649' - Selden watched two of the mutineers being shot from the Church tower.*

My mother's next letter is a week later on April 11th

*My dear Alan,*

*No letter this week, but don't think I'm complaining, I shant expect you to write more than once a fortnight now as I know you will have a vast amount of reading and writing to do. I hope you wont have to resort to pep pills, more important to you to sleep properly. I gather from Anne that you never got to meet Mrs Marcus after all, she gave the girls a slap up Chinese meal and I must write and thank her, she and Penny have both been very kind.*

*Such a beautiful day here... Not much headway with Family Planning though... In the afternoons I bury myself with the Moghuls, actually I haven't really got to them yet as I'm having to get a picture of Indian history so as to put them into context. It is fascinating but takes a lot of sorting out... In my spare time I'm reading "the Great Hunger" which is good but I don't like it so much as her other books. I think she has done too much research and the book is one long quotation which tends to become irritating. The facts are appalling of course, one wonders why so much fuss was made about the Black Hole of Calcutta when the Irish landlords forced their wretched tenants to put up with far worse conditions, or at any rate for longer...*

*Have you read the Bishop of Woolwich's book? [Honest to God?] although I'm sure it is sensible and possibly true, I don't see how he can go on calling himself a bishop and the church really should be firm enough to say so. He doesn't even subscribe to the beliefs of the creed let alone the 39 articles...*

*I hope the money arrived safely, let us know in good time if you want more, the difficulties the Reserve Bank are putting in ones way these days make us feel we shall have to think of packing up, we have now had to send our passports back to 1936 in order to remit money home... Much love from us both, Mummy*

My final letter to my mother was one which is a pointer to future interests and a life of work, written in the still point before I started my last term at Oxford from my Cotswold retreat, the Burford Post Office, on Sunday 14th April. Easter [Day]

*Dear Mummy and Daddy,*

*Thank you for your letter. I hope the various philanthropic campaigns progress well - keep me informed. I enclose an e.e. Cummings - as a late Easter present. I am absolutely crazy on him at the moment. Someone described him as a 'romantic realist' which isn't bad; he is a sort of poetic counterpart of Lawrence, someone who reminds you of all the basic things one*

tends to forget and reassures one that all the materialism, lies and cruelty which cloak themselves under the words 'common sense' and 'expediency' nowadays are as wicked as they ever were – I think he sums himself up “there’s never been quite such a fool who could fail pulling all the sky over him with one smile” and his message “love is the whole & more than all”.

A wonderful week in the Cotswolds & one more week before I return to Oxford. I have been for some glorious walks through these rolling, lamb-haunted uplands. They are very lonely and very old, and one often feels uncomfortably like an intruder when the rabbits scitter away and the pheasants brake from the hedges. There is also a sense of magic and witchcraft, of Puck and Merlin; of distant elfin-laughter and the gloom of evil spells. The stream of jaguars and sports-cars which scream along the roads, the tired business-men & their wives who drift shadowy & pale into the pubs heighten the effect of man’s transitoriness. As you can see from the above I have been meditating on lots of ‘deep’ subjects – brooding over the new, flower-strewn, graves and medieval paintings of death in the churches, and feeling the ritual and primitive growth of Spring. All this blended with Easter and a re-assessment of my Christianity has given me plenty to meditate on as I wander, (like the scholar-gipsy?) with my long [h]air and black duffle coat flowing in the wind & my eyes dream-filled. (this is how I like to picture myself – those in the cars probably see a dishevelled & tattered beatnik with holes in his shoes!). I went to Chedworth Roman Villa yesterday, built overlooking the fields & woods of the Colne valley. It was a day of sun & rain, with glorious rainbow’s – one of which spread over the valley while I was looking out from the village – and the earth humming with growth.

I have just heard from Graduate Service Overseas, to whom I applied (did I tell you?) for a job for a year abroad, that they can’t have me. My enquires about teaching in Canada have not been answered – so it looks as if I will have to spend the year just wandering about – stocking up with memories & experience for the rest of my life. I am leaving everything open at the moment “Take no thought for the morrow .... Sufficient unto the day is the evil thereof...”!

I have been thinking a good deal recently about something I would like to think, & perhaps write, about, after I left Oxford – a sort of hobby (like Robert’s history). This is the relationship between the following – Religion (partic’ Eastern) – Anthropology, folk-lore etc – children’s stories – poetry – C16-C17 & C19 (Literary) English history. The strand joining them is the process of ‘growing up’. This is a very large subject as you can imagine and I won’t go into it now – but just mention the sort of things I am on the look-out for.

Wordsworth of course is a prime example – in the prefatory note to ‘Immortality’ he speaks of “that dream-like vividness & splendour which invest objects of sight in childhood, everyone, I believe, if he could look back, could bear [sic] testimony.” This, W.H. Hudson calls “animism” – “that sense of something in Nature which to the enlightened or civilized man is not there, & in the civilized man’s child, if it be admitted that he has it at all, is but a faint survival of the primitive mind.” This struggle to reach beyond everyday experience – to assert that Science has not ‘nabbed’ Nature as Lawrence said is, perhaps, at the heart of the Romantic revolt in the early C19, & is implicit in the poetry of the Metaphysicals who sought to yoke together two modes of thinking – the old all-embracing, magic-believing, religious temperament of the middle-ages & the new scientific sprit of enquiry. Ultimately it is an attempt to unite all action & all thought into one pattern – for instance as in ‘Religion & Rise of Cap’m’ to subordinate economic action to higher ends – and also a belief that there is something wonderful & unalysable in the world.

A study of this vast borderland of mystery, romance, ‘totem & taboo’ etc would entail a research into those people & books who most interest me at the moment – Lawrence, Wordsworth, Donne, psychology – Freud etc., fairy stories, the Grail legend etc. The danger is a) that it is a boundless field – a dream-land where one could easily get lost – to wake up to find life gone & nothing achieved b) that it is merely a temporary attempt at escape but some have suggested that nearly everything we do is such an attempt. As Prof. Murray says in ‘Religio Grammaticus’:

“Man is imprisoned in the external present; & what we call a man’s religion is, to a great extent, the thing that offers him a secret & permanent means to escape from that prison, a

*breaking of the prison walls which leaves him standing, of course, still in the present, but in a present so enlarged & enfranchised that it is become not a prison but a free world. Religion, even in this narrow sense, is always seeking for soteria, for escape, for some salvation from the terror to come or some deliverance from the body of this death ... some find it in theology, some in art, some in human affections; in the anodyne of constant work ... the permanent exercise of the inquiring intellect called the search for Truth etc...." – this covers most things!*

*Probably the desire will die out as I come into "the light of common day" but I hope not. The area I would like to explore has been 'mapped out', thou' that is the wrong expression, by Robert Graves & I will finish by quoting him.*

### **Lost Acres**

These acres, always again lost  
By every new Ordnance survey  
And searched for at exhausting cost  
Of time & thought, are still away.

[Three other verses copied out]

*Well another 7 weeks or so to exams. Can't summon up much enthusiasm for revision. The nearer they get the less I care & the less work I do.*

*Look after yourselves,  
Much love, Alan*

On the same Easter Day I wrote to Penny from Burford, so some of the wording overlaps. I may choose one version later.

*Thank you stacks for the cats – they are delightful. I hope you have had a wonderful Easter – and perhaps time to meditate a little? This break in the Cotswolds has given me leisure to ponder on some of the things which in the fury & stupefying rush of work I had forgotten – the eternal problems of 'what is it all for' – 'what does death mean?' etc. Easter, of course, is an especially appropriate time for this. I wish I had Herbert's poems with me as I would send you his lovely poem on this subject – instead I send you a snippet from East Coker which is appropriate. It is very stark and harsh – almost cruel (I have also included a little of the famous opening of the Wasteland) or Spring is a savage season. It is full of the primitive savagery, the sweat & agony of new life, the bloody triumph over the forces of darkness, cold and fear. Here in the Cotswold with only a few lambs about, and hardly any flowers, with the warm but strong winds bending the thorn trees over the long fields one feels very close to the old struggle for mastery. In the older churches there are often wall-paintings of death & in many churchyards there are new graves covered with a profusion of flowers – often fading fast. There is a blankness and secrecy about a countryside which only seems to be scratched on the surface by the movement of Spring.*

*The twisted agony on the Cross, the Crown of thorns and the glorious resurrection when Light triumphed over darkness find expression for the age-long triumph. The borderlands between faith and experience, between one's orthodox religion & one's most inmost & primitive desires & feelings becomes misted over. One walks again in the strange twilight of the 'Wasteland' where forces larger than life move & where the petty doings of man pale to a shadowed dream. Witchcraft and fairies, magic and ritual murder suddenly people the haunted woods and sunny streams. Puck is heard over the distant fields and the sound of nightingales as if the woods were rich with summer. Do you know what I mean? Perhaps I'm babbling; perhaps just trying to escape. But the escape is no less real than the tinsel land from which one flees. The mystery of the old fir-forests and the eternal rives, of the startled rabbits and the whirr of the pheasant is as real as the brassy women and frightened rabbit-men who patronise Burford pubs, fear in their eyes, money wedged in their pockets, tiredness on their*

*brows and a jaguar outside. The country people are nice – tho' I haven't met many, but the younger ones are mostly Americanized and loud. Enough rubbish for now! If nothing else this rest is making me realize how small-minded my work-mania was. I do intend to read some children's stories next term – starting with 'Once & Future King'. Have you read it all?*

I also copied out 'Lost Acres' by Robert Graves, which is enclosed in the long letter to my parents.

My next letter to Penny is on Tuesday [16 April] on Worcester College Notepaper – though still in Burford:

*It is indeed wonderful here – and the Churches are fantastic. Every day I find out more about the historical associations of this place – for instance yesterday I discovered a) that Burford was the site of a great battle between Mercia & Wessex in 752 which I was studying that morning. B) That Speaker Lenthall (who answered Charles when he came searching for the 5 members is buried in the Church here). C) That Charles II came here for the racing. D) I went to a delightful & tiny church – St Oswald, Widford – about C11-C12 but built on the site of a Roman villa, of which a few tessellated paving stones (mosaic) remain. Also there is a medieval 'morality' on the wall – 3 kings out hunting meet 3 spectres. After Widford I went beside the winding Windrush to Swinford where a) was buried 'Unity' (Valkyre) Mitford (ask your mother about her if you don't know who she was) & in the Church are the Fettiplace tombs – 6 knights all leaning awkwardly on their elbows in the chancel because there is no room for them to stand upright.*

... *I have cut down my work-time & am already feeling much refreshed.*

*I heard from the Voluntary service people today that they don't want me – but can't be bothered to think of anything else.*

Penny wrote again on Thursday [18th April]

*I miss you so very much that I'm not sure my patience will last until a week's time, when I'll see you. Life seems to go up and down. Sometimes I hate every individual I meet, sometimes this creature is in a fairly affable mood. I lack any stimulus, and am too-lazy, or bored to seek a way of raising my spirits. At times, like these, I think I am one big drip, not revealing a thousand thousand coloured prisms, but fog-hazed over.*

*We spent a quiet Easter, although we had a number of friends over... I went to see 'Salvatore Giuliano'. Tumulus! It is a superb film about the life and background of a Sicilian bandit... [long description of] How I should love to go to Sicily.*

*Instead of poetry, I am sending you an article by Laurie on spring. Please keep it, since I would like to copy it out when next I come to Oxford....*

*P.S. In my next letter – no time now – I'll comment on the effect of this prose upon me. Meanwhile, I was interested by the similarity to your letter (or did you listen to LL on women's hair)*

Penny wrote on Saturday [20th April]

*How do you like being back in Oxford – I send you some G.M.H. to remind you of its own beauty – after sharing the eternal innocence of the Cotswold hills. Please don't lose the benefits you have gained in order to entertain the rabbling crowd of historical characters, threatening you upon the stage. Work sensible hours (ie don't get up at 6.00 (?) or have lunch at 11.30 am) and be calm and tranquil. I'll be mad if you are tired or depressed when I come down next weekend. Also I shall try to find dozens of children's stories for you to read. I hope you have the self-control to be able to settle down to them. Pam and I have decided to try to get down to Oxford for May Morning. This is probably my only chance of taking part in the May-*

day revels for years to come and I don't intend to be without you, while you prefer to stay in bed.

Jeremy took me out to lunch after work today. .... I had a card from Erik this morning. Besides imparting the information of where & when to meet him for coming up to Oxford together next weekend, he was very poetic about the mountains – in his remarks about the loneliness he revealed his Norwegian spirit. Erik is a wonderful combination of Slavonic dignity and French vivacity and frivolity....

Love me, darling, as I love you, and care for me a little. My hopes and aspiration go with you till we wander through the 'cuckoo-echoing, bell-swarmed, lark-charmed, rook-racked river-rounded city; which scattered the same white flames of rarity upon G.M.H. [Gerard Manley Hopkins] in the C19 as upon Duns Scotus in the C14.

My next letter to Penny is on Sunday 21st April – from Burford

... I am a placid, sleepy creature, perhaps a drowsing trout at the bottom of some deep pool like the one described by Kathleen Raine, which is content to swim gently, occasionally rising to inspect a fly, then sinking to his slumberous dream. When you are around I feel as if I have been hooked and am struggling for my sleepy existence – for you are as the young deer, easily startled, pausing a second with uplifted nose on some wild moor & then darting off, leaping fallen trees & streams.

I'm sure the above is an exaggeration and it is not meant to be at all derogatory, most people would far rather be the deer. I just mean that I am no longer eager with the curiosity of a child. Perhaps you think you are losing this when you are 'too bored or lazy' to make any way of raising your spirits; I wouldn't have thought so. But enough of this analysis – it probably irritates you & quite rightly so.

I return to Oxford in about half an hour, blissful and blistered, expecting to feel very superior over my neurotic & care-worn friends – which is very unkind of me. I am looking forward to going back and getting the exam over, I always seem to want to be where I am not. I have lost my concern about the exams so much that I'm getting worried that I'm not worried enough. I spend less & less time working and am spending the new freedom thinking for a change. As I have been rejected (?) by Voluntary Service I will have to think of something else to do next year. Vague ideas 'sink or swim' in my head, including going out to Assam to study Assamese history etc, but nothing firm has turned up. With luck I will become one of life's Wasters – perhaps a sort of scholar gypsy, learned & detached, wandering like a phantom through the autumn woods?

Thank you for the Laurie Lee. No I hadn't heard him when I wrote, but I agree there is a remarkable likeness, I suppose because poets (& pseud-poets) are likely to react in a similar way, especially to something as 'poetic' as spring. I enjoyed the article very much & like his poetry – though I can't help feeling he is rather an inferior Keats or Hopkins, tho' this is unfair.

Finally I sent a picture postcard of a mosaic "Spring" from Chedworth Roman Village, Gloucestershire, date stamped Oxford 23 April

Please excuse my laziness in not writing properly – but I will be seeing you in a few days. I saw this inconstant nymph while at Chedworth. Thank you for your letter & the by-leaf, and also for the G.M.H. poem – one of my favourites.

Oxford is bright with bird-song and bubbling with spring sunlight which splashes down the roofs and that gathers thickly in the shadows. It is too wonderful – and here am I stuck working. My relaxation regime doesn't start 'till the beginning of term & collections are an added burden, so don't expect to find me too carefree on Saturday.

\*

The only poem which I wrote and has survived was written in the Spring of 1963. I was enamoured of e.e. cummings and this is in his style.



actually well actually I don't  
come here often so don't bother  
asking of course perhaps that's  
because I'm not a ballet dancer  
nor have I ever written a santa  
claus letter my sweet so please  
forgive aw [sic] why am I always  
making excuses

my friends say I must  
become a Grown Up Person and  
forget the fairies and stars and  
dreams and mysteries and realise  
that Life is tragic and hard  
and decisions must be taken for  
instance that I should stop  
getting starry-eyed about you  
and the way you let the light  
make gold out of your hair and  
close your rose petal lips  
instead I should say to you  
hey girl I think you're a  
cute chick a real slazzy  
hipster or to put it in oxford  
terms and more politely i  
hope we can be friends i  
have no long-term intentions we  
can never marry or make love  
properly but I like being  
with you and isn't it fun  
kissing this is o.k this is  
fine whoopee but then when  
I see you all my good  
Resolutions go and I get  
All mean and jealous and  
Melancholy and go round  
Trying to 'emprison your soft hand'  
etc etc when you would much  
rather I didn't and looking  
mournful and getting all  
spiritual when my friends really  
know that all I want is  
to persuade you and me  
that we're 'in luv' and also  
that I want to possess  
your wonderful body but  
daren't strange how this  
kind of letter-poem drags - all  
sorts of things from me -  
sorry I can't put an  
exclamation mark there tho i  
could have a full stop

## SUMMER TERM

### EPHEMERA

There is a Certificate of Life membership of the Oxford Union Society, and the programme for the summer term.

An invitation card:

Mrs Sonya Coleman requests the pleasure of your company on the occasion of the 21st Birthday of her daughter Christine Joanna on Sunday, 5th May, 1963 at the Hilton Hotel, Park Lane, W.1. R.S.V.P. Lattenbells, Ditchling, Sussex. Dancing 9.30 o'clock Black Tie

An invitation card, from St Hughs College.

Maran Liebmann & Jane Piachaud invite you to punting birthday party on Friday May 10th. Meet 3.45 p.m. Timms, Bardwell Rd. R.S.V.P.  
P.S. Guitar also welcome!

A programme for the Worcester Buskins Summer Production, 'The Dream of Peter Mann' by Bernard Kops. A Play with Music. May 27th-June 1st - 8.30 in the Gardens. I have one ticket for this costing 3/- on 27 May

A ticket for the Royal Festival Hall for the London Philharmonic Society, Tuesday, 3 May, 1966 8 p.m. Choir 7/6

A sheet issued by Oxfam in May 1963 stating what money donated to Oxfam can do.

A letter from the organiser of the Dulverton Youth Scheme, asking me to get in touch about offering assistance after University.

A programme for the Thomas of Walsingham Society (History Society) for the Trinity Term, with talks by K.B. McFarlane, G.D. Ramsay (my economic history supervisor) and J.D. Caute.

A McTavish's 'Good Luck Card' to wish me success in the exams.

Interestingly, again, there are few cards for religious activities - which had been such a notable feature of previous years. They started again when I went back to Oxford for my D.Phil, but for this term all I have is an Oxford University Church of England Council Trinity Term 1963 Card.

In the College archives, there is the following, which summarizes the costs of my fees and other expenses as claimed by Worcester College from the Lancashire education authority.

A sheet of paper, in handwriting, headed:

The County Treasurer,  
Lancashire County Council,

P.O. Box 49  
County Hall, Preston

A.D.J. Macfarlane      History

Admiss - 21

Matric - 10

Tuition 25

Coll Dues 14

Univ Dues 44

Exam 5

Total 89 4      7.12.60 [all totals are ticked, and presumably paid]

The following terms the tuition, college dues and university dues remain as above.  
So the totals for the following two terms are £53-4 (with no admission, exams etc)

For the dates of 2.11.61 and the following two terms, there is the added sums of £3-50  
for clubs and £1-50 for JCR, making the totals £57-4

The clubs increased to £4 and the JCR to £1 for the last three terms, and there was an  
added item of library £1-10. In the penultimate term there was £8 for exams, and for  
the last term £10-13 for degree. So the totals for the last three terms were: £59-14, £67-  
15 and £70-7 respectively.

Thus, adding these up, the total cost of the course was a little over £500.

\*

During my last summer term at Oxford, as I prepared for and took my final exams, the intense relationship with Penny continued, but started to subside. There are hints and traces of a mutual acceptance that things had changed, but also perhaps an understanding that having given Penny so much support during her entrance exams, she would make a last strong effort to support me in these difficult days. The fact that the early urgency was draining away is shown by the fact that within a few weeks after the end of term Penny had left for Italy and we were 'just good friends'.

I shall include just a very few of Penny's letters in this final set of letters. In fact she wrote more frequently to me, some 18 letters from her survive with only 13 from me. But many of her letters were just short notes of encouragement. I shall again omit the endearments in the address and salutations at the end. I only give an indication of the poems and prose attached to the letters, and have only included some of the letters I wrote.

There are no letters from me to my parents for this period - I was obviously immersed in exams, and the few letters I probably wrote have disappeared. I shall just give my mother's letters to me, and two from Julie, who had not written for some months and who came up to see me just after exams.

The first letter from my mother was dated May 9th, Cherideo.

*My dear Alan,*

*Ten o'clock of a hot May morning.... We had the Catholic Bishop and Father Harold staying over the weekend... Needless to say he was an absolute pet. If only I could quiet my*

reason and accept the whole bag of tricks I would be a Catholic to-morrow, just on the example of the priests...

I have been writing round about getting you a job, no answers so far but I am told there would be no difficulty in your getting a lecturers post at Gauhati University if all else fails, the Vice Chancellor is an Englishman whom I hope to see soon...

We shall be able to give a bit of help with your passage out as we are being given new cars by the company which means we can sell our old one, wont get much for it but will probably be about £100 to the good...

I am half way through Sir Thomas Roe (I see his letters are in the Bodleian) and finding him great fun... [long description of Roe etc, on which my mother wrote an article for History Today] ...

Hope you aren't getting nerves & the revision isn't proving too vast, take some tranquillisers if you feel you need them, my little mauve heart-shaped pills are wonderful for about 2 hours & would be just the thing for an interview but you'd better see what effect they have on you first! They make me feel tall, fair & elegant & completely confident though this might be dangerous in an exam! When exactly do you "sit"?

Much love from us both - Mummy

The same day [Thursday] I wrote to Penny.

Thank you for your note. I still miss you very much - more than usual - and am longing to see you on Saturday. I have tutes 1.45-3.0 & 6.0-7.0 - but you will be going out to see Rupert.

I enclose some escapist Arnold, full of the sad and delicate imagery characteristic of Tennyson & other late Victorians. As I think of the years ahead and the final death of all we know I feel very tempted to escape into the dream-woods & lakes which once Arthur haunted. But the mood will perhaps pass. Most of my friends are getting jobs - often teaching - while I wander on sleepily. But this is not the time to worry of such things.

It has been too beautiful here. I feel sad & lonely as each day dies & the purple lilacs and the white whisper spells to the new-climbing moon and wood-smoke shadows drift against the darkening houses. I do make some use of this weather - for example I went to see Carry etc on Tuesday and drowsed beside the canal watching the baby-ducklings paddling furiously after their mother...

Please thank you mamma once again for a wonderful evening.

Enclosed are 29 lines from the 'Scholar Gipsy' by Mathew Arnold, starting:

Here, where the reaper was at work of late -  
In this high field's dark caner, where he leaves.

The first of Penny's letters I shall include was written from London on Monday [13 May]

How are you sweetheart? Did you enjoy the party, or did you go to bed early? I really had a marvellous weekend with you, and now am sad that I may not be seeing you for over four weeks. But after your finals are over, we could make whoopee, and visit the places that alternatively one of us has postponed seeing. I found out today that I shall have to leave Harvey Nis earlier than I had expected.... I will have about two weeks free before going to Perugia.

Erick [sic] and I finally arranged where to meet on Tuesday... I'll write to Carrie & Sally tonight, and perhaps Jo too. ...

Look after yourself sweetheart - I love you as much as ever, altho' perhaps we are now both wiser about the future. Thank you very much for the brooch. It is exquisitely beautiful, and was admired last night and thro'out today. I shall always value it as a token of our love and affection.

*Tumnus, would you please have some post-card size copies made from the negatives of me? I don't have many photos of me at this young, healthy, age, and should like to possess some. I'll pay you for them when I next see you - oh when will be the day?? - together with the six shillings I owe you.*

*Darling, darling Tumnus, please don't worry excessively about the finals. And DON'T OVER WORK. You did enough last term, unlike many of your friends, and therefore you don't need to work as desperately as they are doing now. And if you want some relaxation, you know that you can either come up to London or summon me to wherever you are.*

My next letter, with its recognition that our relationship had changed, was a day later on Tuesday [14th May]

*Thank you for your sweet letter. Yes, it was a nice week-end, tho, as ever, I moped around. Perhaps I will be better company when the cloud has gone. I have been round to thank Geraldine & enclose a letter from Jane - I went round to thank her this afternoon but she was not in - nor were Carry & Sally when I went round to them.*

*I enclose a poem by e.e.c [e.e.cummings] - the one you asked for. I will send the whole of his work soon. It makes me sad - as it reminds me of our last few minutes together - perhaps for another 4 weeks? I still love you too my poppet, and I agree that tho' things have changed - there is no need for sorrow.*

*I am not working very hard at the moment - as you say there's no point in getting hysterical and I reckon that I have paid enough sacrifice for this exam without going mad as well. It has cut me off from many of my friends & what is worse it is precariously near cutting me off from God - for materialism as someone pointed out - is not a disbelief in spiritual things, but a loss of interest in them consequent on an absorption on earthly matters. It will be a heavy loss if I get a good 2nd and lose my soul! I must keep the old flame flickering - even if it's only by reading poetry & going for walks. Today is leaden, but the purple & white lilacs are still beautiful and I can dream of "the whisper of the seas among the furthest Hebrides" if I get too sated with Oxford.*

Enclosed the e.e. cummings poem:

Anyone lived in a pretty how town  
(with so many floating many bells down)...

The next of Penny's letters was written the next day, from London, on Thursday [May 16th]

*Thank you for your letter. It is marvellous that your spirit is so calm and reassured - it is the only way to tackle these damn exams. Don't worry about your soul. The spiritual conflicts may be difficult for you, but I am confident that never, throughout your life, will you stop seeking, nor will you, especially, succumb to materialism.*

*'I Must Be Talking to my Friends', Michael Mac Liammoir's survey of Irish literature, was superb. He had a wonderful voice range, and he acted as old women, young lovers, and fops with equal verve. Alone, M. M-L held the complete attention of his audience for over three hours, while he savoured the tragedy and comedy of Ireland's progress," lyrical and grotesque, wayward & pitiful, blood-stained and laughing", from an ancient to a modern civilisation. Perhaps this was due to his own poetic genius - I wonder if a volume of his poetry is available.*

*I hope Erik was not too tired, afterwards, for his interviews the next day. Send him my love, and ask him from me how they went.*

*I have just written a note to Mark, telling him not to work so hard. Also, would you give the enclosed letter, for the flat-mates, to Paul?*

*Send my love to all your friends.*

The next letter from my mother is dated May 17th, Cherideo:

*My dear Alan,*

*Thank you for your letter describing your visit to London, Mrs Marcus sounds just like Penny and I'm sure I'd like her a lot. There seems to have been a hitch over my letters as Fiona also mentioned not hearing, but I write every week without fail, the only entries in my diary are "Wrote Alan" etc. I haven't had any replies to my enquiries about you here, but nobody every answers letters for months in Assam. I hope to go to Shillong on June 2nd and will go and see Dr Verrier Elwin then, and also the Vice Principal of Gauhati University. You will probably have changed all your ideas by now, but never mind, can always cancel things. The only snag might be that we will have thrown in the sponge ourselves, we wrote to the Board last week and said unless something was done about our salaries (which have just been lopped by Rs 600 a month due to tax and oddments) we would have no alternative but to resign...*

*I feel a little depressed this morning after my visit to the hospital, my baby has measles and none of the women are interested in family... The Moghuls are more rewarding, I really feel I know Sir Thos Roe well and Jehangir and the lot of them, I will write an article when I've finished which I'll send to you and you can read it and see if you think "History Today" would be interested. I've had no reply to my letter to the Hakluyt Society gent but am still hoping... ..*

*I long to hear you and the coffee cantata ... I hope you manage to get to the Cotswolds for a few days before the exam to get that peace and inspiration you need, this is the last big hurdle anyway, you really have had rather an orgy of exams this last few years, one forgets what its like to dread things that much and to have a date hanging over you, but you seem to be being sensible & fatalistic about it. Don't forget to let us know when the exam is will you. I really will answer P[fenny]'s letter this week, what are her next moves?*

*Lunchtime, roast beef & Yorkshire pudding, ug! What wouldn't I do for a salad & a Guinness!*

*Much love - Mummy*

I wrote again to Penny on Sunday [May 19th] from Worcester College

*With two and a half weeks to go even the most calm among my friends are beginning to worry - you know that awful paralysed shivering feeling down one's spine and the emptiness in one's stomach! I know that there's nothing really to worry about - but the worry is thoroughly irrational. I am doing less & less work - largely because I don't seem to be able to concentrate. Also feel periodically depressed about other things - which tho' they seem disconnected I suppose will vanish with the cloud - e.g. about the bomb, the death of my soul aforementioned etc. But today feel better and am reading poetry so don't worry for me - thou' you might pray for me? ...*

*I went to the Scala yesterday afternoon. First was "Through a Glass Darkly" - marvellous as ever. You'll no doubt know the story, but the agony of the girl schizophrenically torn between two worlds - between her husband and God - between her more-than-real dreams and her less than real life was stark & terrible, and for obvious reasons I felt this terrible tension especially. The faces of the girl and her younger brother were exquisite, strong bones yet soft and delicate. The horror of the scene in which God suddenly comes in through the door - and turns into a spider was awful.*

*The second film - a Polish (?) comedy - "Little Eva- had an adorable sex-kitten in it and some amusing touches - but it's picture of innocence untouchable in the midst of crowds of kindly policemen & crooks was a little overdone. But there, I think I'm in too serious a mood for such things.*

*I have also been for some walks – one round by the Trout and down beside the ‘sparkling Thames’.*

Enclosed:

(1st 3 verses of long poem by Charles Causley, ‘Survivor’s Leave’)

‘The Song of Samuel Sweet.’

I live in the grassy meadow  
Where the little houses lie

Worcester College, Date stamp [Thursday] 23 May

*My brain is quite numb with its burden of facts & theories – I hardly take in the beauties all around – for instance the joys of watching the trout up at Godstow in the warm water lazily chewing bits of floating grass or the strength of a chestnut stallion against the green of Port Meadow.*

*This afternoon I went to the last 3/4s of “Les Enfants du Paradis” & came away dazed but delighted. I won’t attempt a trite description with terms such as ‘tragic, yet comic, sparkling, yet heavy with grief’ etc. You will just have to see it if you haven’t. I met Jo afterwards & went along & had tea with her. Christine has just got engaged so there is great rejoicing. I met the boy this afternoon – David someone, he seemed nice...*

*P.S. One of my favourite of Wordsworth’s poems – I often quote the first line & it sums up my present state – yours too?*

Enclosed:

The world is too much with us; late & soon  
Getting and spending, we lay waste our powers:  
... etc.

Penny wrote on Saturday [25th May]:

*(Today, I write on pink paper to remind you of my early letters).*

*How are you, my crxxy man? Has your wild social life been sustaining your spirits? Wasn’t our conversation on Thursday strange? I am sure I was talking a great deal of nonsense, especially when I was encouraging you to flirt with that St H. girl. If you pursued any advantage in that field, I’d be wildly jealous, so you had better remain constant to me (while my eyes meanwhile are wandering this way or that” [small pictures of yes – ‘ho-ho!'] What has been [written above ‘and still is’] marvellous about our affair, is that neither of us has ever inflicted any unhappiness upon the other. Really you are a darling man!*

*Today has been a very satisfactory day.... [exhibitions etc – at length] ...*

*But now I am getting tired and my thoughts are growing hazy. I am going to tea with Judy Hudson tomorrow, which will be fun. [Judy Hudson was the girl-friend, of a limited kind, with whom I had broken up in spring 1962 just before I met Penny.]*

*Look after yourself and carry my love within you. Love to Erik, Mark, Peter etc. Also send my love to Ralph – do go over to see him. I’m sure that he, especially with his optimistic, “poohish” outlook on the world, would keep you happy.*

*PS Take time off on Monday to read this piece of Dame Edith, at her most bubbling and intoxicated.*

My next letter is postmarked 26th May [Sunday]

*I have been dipping into 'Love & Death' as you can see from my quotations. I hope to read it this afternoon when I laze on a punt and drift willow-veiled through the land of Mole and Ratty. I will also take 'The Wind...' with me - which I have borrowed from Ralph. It is a glorious day, with the old ladies basking and your hated swallows glittering from the eaves. It has been too beautiful this week; I went for an agonizing walk on Friday evening to the Victoria Arms & down to the Parks. The young trees and the evening sun and the warm sunlight on the tree-trunks and my shadow against the earth banks and the smell of growing hay and of willow-roots deep in the cool water and the stillness of the leaves and the lakes of butter-cups made me want to cry with delight and sadness. I was in the mood with which Powys is imbued - the bitter-sweet of beauty & mortality. Luckily I met Peter after my walk and talking to him soothed the rawness. Today looks as if it will be another such evening, but if I go walking it will be with Ralph & I am having lunch at the Perch with Peter...*

*Mark is very dispirited and will hardly see anyone. Euan held a dinner-party yesterday at the Tudor Cottage - an inn at Ilfley about 3 miles from Oxford - and all the gang were there - except Mark who said he was too tired etc. I must go & see him this morning. The party was fun - tho' only Alistair & John Munks were very lively as it was a drowsy evening. We had sherry in Ralph's room - drove out to this 'Ye Olde' place, had a plump meal of sweetbreds etc and then afterwards Peter Ralph and I had a look at the dimly lit Ilfley Church. Amidst the darkness of the yews and the graves it was tall and very distant, and as in De la Mare's 'Listeners' we seemed to be intruders into the bat-haunted dusk where the strong Norman carving became soft in obscurity. Then we returned to coffee & brandy.*

*So the days pass by breathlessly and the fruits and the flowers and the stillness of evening blend into an ever richer harmony and youth flies and the thunder of the waves grows ever louder outside the sheltered reefs of this pleasant lagoon - and we desperately attempt "to squeeze life's grape against our palate fine". And what is left of us my darling?*

*The above isn't really sad - so don't sympathize - it is just dreamy reverie & clichéd at that - and a lousy letter. But forgive me poppy, look after yourself & love to your mamma.*

Enclosed are two quotes.

For our tyme is a very shadow that passeth awaye, and after our ende there is no returnynge, for it is fast sealed, so that no man commeth agayne... The Boke of Wysdom.

'In the house of the moon where I was born  
They fed a silver unicorn  
On golden flowers of the sun.'  
(From 'Love & Death')

*Cherideo May 27th*

*My dear Alan,*

*You will be very near the Time now, if not already embarked on your ordeal - it sounds like labour the way I've put it and I expect it feels like it too but the relief when it is all over is so exquisite that its almost worth it. As far as we're concerned its of absolutely no importance what sort of degree you get or don't get, my only regret now is that we couldn't have let you have more money at Oxford so that you could have enjoyed the lighter side of life and not been worried about finances all the time, but there it is. We shant expect to hear from you*



till its all over and you're home, you'll need to hire Pooleys lorry to get you back or perhaps Richard will be able to help.

*I cant imagine that any of my doings will be of the least interest to you at the moment, I'm so cross that two of my letters went astray, one in which I sent ideas for jobs you could get here. I think a couple of months in a Kibbutz would be an excellent scheme, if you learnt fish rearing you would be able to give the chaps here a few tips, they have a sort of scheme at Sibsagar but it is very haphazard. I only hope the Chinese don't knock all our ideas on the head, they are making menacing gestures again but its impossible to work out their reasoning. I'm off to Shillong next Sunday 2nd June...*

*Is it too late for you to apply for a research grant I wonder, Dr Verrier Elwin has been very ill which is probably why he hasn't answered my letter. I had a letter published in the Statesman last week about the burial mounds here... I have finished Sir T. Roe and am on to Peter Munday now, I was so sorry to leave Roe...*

*My hospital work is fairly static now, but I think of F. Nightingale and take heart...*

*Our thoughts & prayers will be with you, I'm quite sure you have nothing to worry about but that isn't any comfort when one is already worried sick! Life does go on, with or without B.'s!  
All our love - Mummy*

One of the two letters from Julie was dated 27 May 1963

*Dearest Alikins,*

*Many thanks for your letter; I was so pleased to hear from you. I should have written to you before now, but I'm sure you know how I dislike the role of Ugly Sister, or Wicked-Step-mother-waiting-in the wings; and did not want to intrude on you until you made it clear that such an intrusion would be welcome. Also, I was very pleased to hear that Penny had passed on my message to you...*

*I passed thro' Oxford about 10 days ago with Sally and another girl and two boys from the Courtauld. My parents were in Wales, so we drove to Blenheim in Mummy's Wolsley. I did want to stop and see you and our friends, but there was no time. Sally and I both found it heart-breaking to pass through like that. I was driving, and I was so overcome that I had several narrow escapes. When we were passing Worcester, I thought I saw Alistair, and called to him delightedly. It was most unfortunate, because firstly it wasn't Alistair, and secondly, I went straight into a stationary car. He must have thought me dotty, but he said the dent in the car was an old one, so we took his word for it, and hurried on!*

*Also, I nearly attended May-Morning with Pam, but at the last moment, decided not to, and then regretted it bitterly for days.*

*Sympathy. I don't know if I deserve any sympathy... I'm not being very successful at the Courtauld... How exciting for you to be going to the Far East! I wish I could. ... Sally and I spent a week on Lesbos with a charming and handsome boy... I am glad you are coming to London. I suppose you will stay with your uncle? Of course I shall not try to monopolise you, but hope there will be time for us to see each other a couple of times. I should love to come to Oxford, esp. to see 'Ondine', but I think that will be over. If I did, it would probably be Friday 21st for the weekend, if that's all right with you. I expect Jo Benson would have me. But I don't think it would be very pleasant if everyone will be leaving during those days, would it? I should think the weekend of the 14th would be a much better idea, but only if I can get enough revision done by then, to allow me to lose the 2-3 days before my exam, which is unlikely. If you'd ring me during a lull in the finals (or even just as soon as they are over) I could tell you then. It would certainly be lovely.*

*.... I shall certainly pray for you, esp. during your exams, tho' honestly, I doubt the efficacy of my prayers right now!*

*Bonne Chance, and much love. Pusseybite.*

Penny wrote again on May 27th [Monday] London

*Thank you for your exctatic [sic] letter and for all your love – I received both from Pam herself, and from Pam via Judy. I spent yesterday with Judy, and am quite delighted by this enchanting creature (She sends her love to you.) Had you managed to catch her, instead of me, you would have done very well for yourself. However you caught me, and did even better he-he – I wish I was more modest).*

*I received a short, but nice, note from Mark this morning. I earnestly hope that he manages to pull off the Granada television job... Luckily, sweetheart, I have no such fears for you. Your own tranquillity has sustained me whenever I have been thoroughly neurotic. It is wonderful you are so happy now. Keep it up, my sweeting.*

*PS The enclosed poem may show you, though you've disbelieved me in the past, how difficult it will be for me ever to return to Oxford when you are not there.*

Enclosed a poem by Elizabeth Jennings:

Absence

I visited the place where we last met,  
Nothing was changed, the gardens were well-tended,  
The fountains sprayed their usual steady jet;  
There was no sign that anything had ended  
And nothing to instruct me to forget.

[two more verses were included]

I wrote again to Penny on Wednesday [29th May]

*Thank you for your two letters. I'm glad you're having such a cultured time. I also am indulging in culture of another sort. I have permission to record the records of a friend & spent yesterday evening & the whole of today transferring 10 of Beethoven's string quartets and a quantity of Schubert onto my tapes. At the moment 'Die Winterreise' is playing – it brings back memories, for I played it constantly last summer. How are things going sweetie? Have your straying eyes alighted on any worthy object? My attempt to carry out your instructions re. Linda were unsuccessful.*

*I went to the college play on Monday – 'The Dream of Peter Mann' – it was most enjoyable, with some superb acting. Yesterday it was rained off, but Monday was a beautiful evening, with the Lake calm and the trees silent in the evening sun.*

*I will be going off to the Cotswolds tomorrow – but write to Worcester as usual as I don't know how long I will be away for.*

*Poor Mark has gone home feeling very depressed I suppose. Peter is morose & very tired. There must be something wrong with this bxxxxy system somewhere to drive so many people to such depression.*

*I will write at length from the Cotswolds. Look after yourself poppet & think of me. Will be seeing you in a couple of weeks!*

Two days later, on Friday (31 May) Penny wrote back to the above letter, over-interpreting it as being wretched, which it does not seem to be

*For Christ's sake cheer up!! This last minute wretchedness of yours is fatal, nor is there any need for it. Your recent letters have been so happy, that this morning's epistle almost astounded me. Also don't be affected by Mark's depression. Mark has always been neurotic, and is certainly not typical of most undergraduates. So take FULL advantage of Burford, DON'T WORK, and read a couple of light novels – at this time they are more useful than*

poetry, which is often exhausting because of its intensity. Don't forget, either, to go to this party on Sunday. Parties are marvellous just before exams. This is all my advice for the present, tumbling forth in a typical hickedy picked [sic] manner.

*The concert on Wednesday was superb... [detailed description of] ... Judy and I met for lunch today, and wandered around in the blazing heart of Knightsbridge and Piccadilly - hence my weariness.*

I wrote again to Penny on Sunday [2nd June], postmarked 4th June, from Worcester College

*I was meaning to write to you this evening from Burford, but have just missed the 1.0 bus back there after coming down to Oxford for the party last night so will write now instead. First to answer you questions about addresses - Roy Collins, St John's college and Michael Davies (Worcester) both start history schools on the same day as I. Eric thanks you for his letter & says he will be writing soon. Jenny hasn't yet written back about his letter. Eric failed his interview [for a job in the Civil Service] in part, but has had another & they say he can take method B. which entails taking an almost identical exam to schools a week after he finished proper schools - he's not sure whether he'll do it. I saw Carry today - her exams are not going too badly. She hopes to see you after Wednesday this week. Finally, many thanks for several letters. It is nice to hear from you. I think of you often & miss you.*

*As you, even in London, will have noticed the weather has been superb & my Burford excursion is, so far, a great success, and I have lost that depression which you say pervaded my Wednesday letter. I am enclosing a Keats poem, one of his best known, which describes better than I possibly could the lush scenery of the Cotswolds. The change from when I was there last - April with its new-born lambs, bare hedges & fields, cries of curlews and rain-and-sun showers to June with its full-blooded warmth and vegetation, the thick texture of cream and ripening leaves, the glimpses of bluebell lakes and ragged-robin, the smell of warm grass and browsing-cattle, the moss and coolness of the dappled woods is astounding. If only the intoxication doesn't cloud my mind too much over the next week and doesn't make me dream too much of the sleeping woods & fields when I am meant to be writing about Cromwell's Baltic policy! Already I can feel a satisfied numbness creeping over me - an unconcern with the sordid present.*

*I walked up the delightful Colne valley on Friday. If you remember I went there on Easter Sunday, in the pouring rain, but this time I escaped into the cool, timeless churches with their white walls and rich-wood seats, their mysterious chancels and solid fonts not from the rain but the baking sun. I drowsed in the churchyards and leant, rustic-like & straw-chewing on gateways watching the cattle swinging through the crushed grass. Each bridge I came to I stopped and watched the trout delving upwards to catch flies or swaying like weeds in the pale water. Sorry for all this descriptive gush - but at least it shows I'm happy - tho' I would be happier if you were here to share it all.*

*I walked back over Wytham woods yesterday evening for the party at the Vicky arms. It was a superb sunset-glowing night and this all helped, but I didn't really enjoy the party terribly as I felt too lazy to attempt conversation or to do anything 'mad'. All I remember of it is a vague impression of faces dancing in the fire-light, of smoke and the distant sound of a tape-recorder, and then the river with dark trees and the moon above and the may-hedges spectral white and cold...*

*P.S. I am just about to walk through Wychwood - the original from which Tolkein [sic] took his name (Witchwood)*

Enclosed two verses from 'Ode to a Nightingale' by Keats, those starting

I cannot see what flowers are at my feet,

Nor what soft incense hangs upon the boughs, ...

....

Darkling I listen; and, for many a time  
I have been half in love with easeful Death...

The next letter from my mother was from Shillong on June 3rd.

*My dear Alan,*

*I'm sitting in a little wooden hut looking out on green ridged hills very like the downs with big soft English clouds resting on them - 3,000 feet up at a place called Burrapani just below Shillong...*

*Your poor nerves must be frayed to shreds. I'm thinking of you all the time & wishing I could help in some way, but by this time the worst should be over I reckon...*

*17 years ago to-day I sent you out of hospital here after your tonsils operation, & started having Anne, strange that I should be back & makes me have long sad thoughts of how I have changed since then when I was full of bright dreams for you all - now I realise how little we have managed to accomplish & how much of the sparkle seems to have gone out of life too. Enough dreary reminiscing, it must be those Readers Digests with their hearty advice to the Over Forties, the most depressing thing about middle age is that your feelings all seem to be carbon copies, nothing quite fresh or authentic. All hormones according to the R.D. [Radio Doctor]! ...*

*I do hope you'll have a couple of weeks of peace & good weather in the Lakes after you've finished, we'll discuss plans in due course, we shall be able to help a bit with your passage - a great deal depends on your finding your important papers! e.e. Cummings arrived safely & very quickly and I love it, wish I had him here. Actually, wish I had some paints too but I couldn't capture these humped monsters of hills...*

*I won't mention money except to hope that you have enough to get you home, let us know eventually. Do hope you aren't too worn out, discouraged or generally got down by Events, this time last year it was Anne & I in a minor way but it all seems terribly unimportant now.*

*All our love & thoughts, Mummy*

A couple of days after my exams had begun, Penny wrote on Friday [7th June]

*I hope everything is whoopee with you. Isn't it hot? I hope you are not being baked in the examination schools. What are the questions like? Interesting? Unstimulating? Do send me some examples of the questions.*

*Yesterday I went to the flics with Carrie. ...*

*Look after yourself, sweetheart. I am thinking of you.*

*PS Have a nice weekend - don't work too hard.*

*PPS. I am sending you one of my favourite Auden poems. I sometimes believe that the sea, which has made for England's greatness, and the sauntering clouds, are part of England's physical solidarity, which remains unchanged in atmosphere and climate, though the character of its people is constantly in flux.*

Attached:

'Look, Stranger' W.H. Auden

'Look, stranger, at this island now  
The leaping light for your delight discovers  
Stand stable here  
And silent be,  
That through the channels of the ear  
May wander like a river

The swaying sound of the sea.'

[And two further verses.]

I wrote again to Penny in the midst of my exams in a letter postmarked 9th June [Sunday]

*Thank you also for the delightful Lear we had a session after dinner on Friday reading him - Euan, John, Sally and myself. I know you'll forgive a short & dull letter. I've been scribbling madly too much recently & have the worst to come. But before I get onto my troubles - how are you sweetie? Carry said you were a little tired on the evening she saw you. Are you happy poppet? If you've had this superb weather through which I've been sweating even London must have begun to look like Paris. It looks like being by far the most balmy summer term of my time - it would be! ...*

*Today I take off. Yesterday evening I had supper at Nos. 3. Carrie seems a bit depressed - vacant & purposeless - probably a reaction of tiredness and anti-climax. I expect I'll feel the same. It is once again lovely today and I intend to go up above Godstow with Mathew Arnold. I have liked the passages you sent me, especially the Auden. Bother! When I was just looking for a snippet to send you I packed up the 'Rubaiyat of Omar Khayam' into my essay yesterday. Anyhow here is a snippet - 'Gaudeamus igitur...' There is so much of the sadness, the hopeful bravado of the Victorians in it that I don't know what to include - anyhow you must have a copy so I will just put in a very little.*

*About next week-end darling. Would hurt you terribly my sweetie if I said I think it would be better if you didn't come down, but we saved all our celebrations to the following week-end? I will probably be still tired and anti-climaxish and all my friends will be tense and in the middle of their papers still. Apart from this I have an enormous amount to do. For instance I've got to record a lot of music, prepare some reading for before my viva, sort through my notes and books & all my junk of 3 years before packing it, I am having dinner with my tutor and have got to go and see some friends in the Cotswolds for a day & take Carrie to the witch museum another day. My mother wants me to search for books on Indian history for her and I've got to organize my trip to Israel and see people etc about getting a place somewhere next year as well as write a million letter. Please say if this is thoughtless of me - especially after my Wednesday protests - but I'm sure it would be better to be completely free and revived than still worried & involved in 'business'. Anyhow darling I think of you often & will write soon - Look after yourself & love to yr mama,*

Enclosed is a sheet:

Yet Ah, that Spring should vanish with the Rose!  
That Youth's sweet-scented manuscript should close!  
The Nightingale that in the branches sang,  
Ah whence, and whither flown again, who knows!

My mother wrote again from Cherideo on June 11th:

*My dear Alan,*

*A letter from you just arrived, very calm and relaxed I'm glad to say, by now all will be Over - but not the wonderful weather I hope I hope so you can have some really carefree summer days afterwards. I'm longing to hear what the papers were like, hope you'll send them out. Before I go any further, no I didn't get your letter about reading on the Ahoms, but 2 lovely books have just arrived, the "History of India" and "A Pearl to India". The former is*

*exactly what I wanted to pull together the threads of my somewhat scattered knowledge, so far I've only read the Moghul chapters but intend to go right through it, it even mentions the Assam Co! Thank you very much for both, I shall consider them as my birthday present, so don't dream of sending anything else.*

*When I was in Shillong I rang up Dr Verrier Elwin the anthropologist in charge of N.E.F.A. (or rather advisor to the North East Frontier Agency). He was very nice and asked me to go & see him, but alas I couldn't without transport. He said he didn't think N.E.F.A. was much good to you as no Europeans are allowed passes, but gave me the name of someone who is in charge of a new research institute in the Garo Hills and said he thought this might offer you an opening. Anyway I'll try it. I saw a few days later that according to the local rag "Dr Verrier Elwin's philosophy for N.E.F.A. has failed & he'll soon be leaving". I was almost glad to see in yesterday's paper that 12 N.E.F.A. officials had been killed by the Daflas, one of the wildest tribes. Dr V.E. advocated a very careful approach, with emphasis on not disturbing the tribal pattern, by the Assam Govt. thinks it can charge in and order everyone about willy nilly.*

*I enjoyed my stay in Shillong very much... There must be somewhere a religion that combines service with wide tolerance, Buddhism perhaps, but I've never seen this in action. Or Quakers? I must learn more about them...*

*Have a good clear out of all your papers & see if you can find your passport & birth certificate, if not I'll get a copy of the latter from Shillong. We'll be able to help you with your fare to Israel & on here, so hope you'll carry on with the Scheme - unless you get a 1st & then will you stay on at Oxford? Could you please send this to Penny, I've lost her address, it was chewed by a goat!*

My next letter to Penny is Friday June 14th, from Worcester College, two days after the final exams were finished.

*I am taking it fairly easy at the moment. Writing all the letters that have been piling up - sorting out my notes etc. I don't quite feel like beginning to read yet - though I took some notes from a book on C16 witchcraft yesterday. I bet I was the only historian who went and read a history book in the Bodleian the day after his exams!*

*Otherwise I have been drifting around, vaguely thinking of my future plans and talking to Ralph etc. I probably won't go to Israel until the Autumn as I must get some money before I go, just in case .... Looking at David's letter I see he thinks of spending September in Perugia, when will you be there? Can you let me know soon as I will be writing to him shortly. He is coming back to England at the end of this month.*

*I waited for Mark & Peter outside schools with Sally. Then when those two had gone off to dinner (their exams seemed fairly ghastly, but everyone is relieved that things have started) Sally and I went to a film 'The Apartment' with Jack Lemon and Shirley McLean. It was most amusing and Shirley completely (?) won my heart.*

*You will understand why I have enclosed the Wordsworth - I'm longing to see the Lakes again (& you),*

*Look after yourself darling & write.*

Enclosed are lines from 'Tintern Abbey':

These beauteous forms,  
Through a long absence, have not been to me  
As is a landscape to a blind man's eye: ...

From The Tables Turned

Sweet is the love which Nature brings;  
Our meddling intellect  
Mis-shapes the beauteous forms of things: -

We murder to dissect.

I wrote again to Penny on Monday [17th June] Worcester College

... *The weather has been gloomy ever since schools and my spirits reflect it. Its funny – you'd think one would feel happy and relaxed now – but the reaction after the release of tension leads to a mood of vagueness and accumulated tiredness. I am unable to concentrate for long or get very enthusiastic about all the books I intended to read. I've started Zorba but not got very far into it. Yesterday evening Roy came round when I was about to write to you and we talked for a longish time and then went & had a drink at the 'Welsh Pony'. He seemed cheerful – if dazed – and much appreciated your card – as did all my other friends. I haven't seen Mark or Eric since the first day, but I imagine they are already feeling much better. Mark & Peter end tomorrow afternoon and having their champagne at Carrie's flat. But I'm having tea with Alec (chaplain) so won't be there. I wonder if they'll suffer from the same feeling of anti-climax and the same conviction that they have done badly which I now feel. I hope we're partly recovered by next week-end, tho' by then we'll probably be getting sentimental at leaving the old place...*

The following note from Penny shows that the relationship lasted until the end of the term – I left for the Lake District on Tuesday 25th so also had to pack up this week-end after three years in Oxford. Penny came up to see me in Oxford for the last time, with some others. I am not sure how I reacted to her motherly advice on clothing...

Friday [21st June]

*This is a very brief note to cancel this mornings time-arrangements. Unfortunately I may be running about 1 ½ hrs late, and so won't be coming with the others. [Possibly my sister and Felicity] I think I shall arrive at your room about 2.30 however I do not know by what means of transport – so don't meet me. Sweetheart, also, do try and look decent for the evening – ie. white shirt.*

*Love, love, love, Poppy*

There was another letter from my mother was from Cherideo on June 19th.

*My dear Alan,*

*I hope by this time you will be a man of infinite leisure with nothing to do but go through your possessions (says she hopefully). Alas the wonderful weather seems to have just lasted through your exam and now broken as it did last year, never mind if you have Penny with you I expect the weather will be of little consequence. Anne said she might be coming up also Felicity and Fiona and Rosemarie so that hunt for Men will be on again as the Lake District never seems to be able to produce anything new in that line.*

*I'm enclosing a letter I got from this place I wrote to, I will leave it to you to decide if you want to follow it up. Dehra Dun is certainly a delightful place and as she say there are lots of schools there where you could probably get fixed up but of course its rather a long way from here. Perhaps you have changed your mind about the whole tour? But I'm pressing on regardless, the only snag is that we may not be here by then ourselves. We have decided to resign at the end of the year if they don't do something drastic about our terms, this struggling on against financial odds, wearing climate, indifferent health (mine out here) and the dreadfully callous attitude of the people in charge is getting us both down. We should have to work for three years at home until we get our pension but both feel we'd be happier and healthier and more satisfied living on bread and cheese (and Guinness) than banging our heads endlessly against the rocks of indifference, corruption and complacency which is our lot here. As I get*

older too I find I am physically worn down by the suffering of people and animals all around me, and can seem to do nothing to alleviate any of it as everything needs money of which we never have any to spare. I could continue my study of the Moghuls just as well at home, better in fact as books are easier to get, of course there are lots of things I would miss and I'd carry a million regrets for all I have left undone, but in this particular sphere it is almost impossible to do anything I've discovered. ... Even if we do decide to retire though you could still carry on with your tour, spending less time in India perhaps and concentrating on the cities where the need is greatest...

What is your present money situation? I sent £50 to Fiona this month and I don't suppose she has spent it all so get some from there. I feel a little worried about her, Granny and she don't get on...

We went to spend the week end with friends at Mohokutie which was the first garden I came to in tea and is full of memories of you all, the river you fished and fell into, the little pool where you learnt to swim, the tree you fell off, cant think how any of you survived there actually! It's a terribly hot bungalow...

I have nearly finished Peter Mundy and am then going to write an article on S T. Roe and send it to History To-day, could you give me their address? [Comments on possible projects on Indian history PERHAPS INCLUDE] ... It is the post Mutiny period when society petrified into the stony superiority of the Raj as revealed in E.M. Forster and as I remember it when I first came out that made the tragedy of modern India. It's a tragedy I've had almost enough of frankly, though I'll never cease to feel guilty.

A dull letter but you must be used to them -  
My love to Penny, and everyone, and lots to you, Mummy

The second letter from Julie was on 22 June 1963 London

Dearest Alikins,

I daresay our letters will cross; I have been expecting one from you for several days, and have now decided to write, and encourage you to tell me the situation.

Before I get on to business, let me thank you very much for your kindness to me last weekend: you know how much I enjoyed it, and only hope there were not, and will not be, any unfortunate repercussions.

Have you been able to find some kind of a saddle for Sally? If so, please say how much it cost, and whether I can send you a cheque, as that would be more convenient than a postal order. If not, as I do not wish to impose on you, may I offer to continue the search in London? In that case you can tell Sally she will be receiving a saddle by post within a few days (3, Southmoor Road, isn't it?) Now, as to the cloak. It doesn't matter if you haven't succeeded in locating Tim, because I can claim it from the Insurance; but as you probably know, they will not help me unless I first inform the police.... Do please thank Sally again for me very much. Love to you and the others. Pusseybite.

P.S. You will be happy to hear that Our Sally's mother is getting along very well.

The final letter from my mother in this period was on June 23rd.

Cherideo June 23rd

My dear Alan,

I was relieved to get your letter and hear that you got through the exam without getting nosebleeds, toothaches or a nervous breakdown, all of which I had envisaged! As you say it is really of no consequence what degree you get, a friends brother is now doing a year of Social Administration at London after getting a 3rd at Cambridge so you could always do that. You sounded as if you were in a slight trough of depression and anti-climax, sheer tiredness I expect and I hope by now you will be feeling revived. I understand the feeling you have of not quite knowing where next, but I'm sure you are doing the wisest thing in taking a year out from life to



wander and wonder, and don't worry about the money side too much, we will help you as much as we can and will pay your fare from here to Vancouver, we are now allowed to draw on our Provident Fund for passages and you can count it as a late birthday present. We Can also help you get started as we have the money from the car coming in, so go ahead and make your plans. I suggest you set off in mid-August then if you spend a couple of months in Israel and a month in Calcutta I reckon you will reach us for Christmas. I haven't had much success in getting you a job here but haven't tried the University yet, the trouble is there wont be an awful lot of time if you want to get a job in Canada too, because we hope you will be home again for the last month of our leave next year, and anyway whatever course you take will start in September.

Jack Simpson came back last Monday, and we have new terms so I suppose will hang on after all, the increase in pay wont affect us too much at the moment as so much of it goes in tax, but it will bump up our provident fund quite a bit. It'll mean we can send a bit more home too and save us tearing out our hair in handfuls quite so often. When you have seen how much if anything you get from your grant let us know because its now a subject we can discuss without anguish!

Seem to be having an unusually dull time here and do little but read and write, I have got onto a thing called the National Library where I may be able to borrow books for my Moghuls, I'm half way through my article on Sir T. Roe and finding I know far too much and could really write a book on him and pruning is a problem...

Please tell Granpa I'll write to him to-morrow, are the raspberries ripe & the azaleas blooming & is there honey etc?! Wonder how Beryl is, she seems to go from one problem to another poor dear.

Lunch time again, oh to be eating it in the front lawn, am terribly homesick. My love to everyone and don't do too strenuous a job if you have to do one at all. I'm so glad the ordeals over (or nearly) but I suppose leaving Oxford is a sad moment. Much love - Mummy

My undergraduate days at Oxford were now over, and I awaited my exam results in the Lakes.

## SUMMER VACATION - JULY AND AUGUST

An anthropological theory of rituals of transition, which fits well with my Oxford experience, describes three stages in which an individual is moved from one status and role to another, in this case from adolescence to adulthood. The first stage is the separation from a former existence, or 'disaggregation' as it is called. Then, for a time the person is held apart, suspended in a somewhat timeless and special, borderline (liminal) state. Then they are re-absorbed into ordinary life with a new position or status.

My Oxford experience was like this. The six months between school and going up to Oxford (March-September 1960) was a period of disaggregation from school - a trip to Norway, work experience, my first real love affair. I stopped being a school-boy and started to reach towards adulthood.

Then came Oxford for three years, which is the story of the growth of independence, sheltered responsibility and confidence. It is a period of liminality, inside the timeless and somewhat egalitarian 'Ivory Tower' of an ancient and beautiful university. This experience re-arranged my mind, emotions and spirit.

When it was over, in the last week of June 1963, came the period of re-aggregation, of re-joining the normal world. But now I was an adult, on my own to a large extent in an adult world. I marked this transition by taking a job for a couple of months in Youth hostels and my love life slid away from the intensive affair of my last year. I read a good deal and tried to work out what project I would devote the rest of my life to, starting with a planned trip around the world. This launching back into the world was put on hold, however, when I was awarded a State Studentship to go back to Oxford - now as an adult.

Given this three-fold transition, this account of 'Oxford Enchantment' is 'book-ended' by a brief account of my three months vacation, the equivalent to a long vacation from Oxford.

\*

## EPHEMERA

There is an out-patient appointment card for Cumberland Infirmary, Carlisle for 21 August. I think this must have been to have my nose cauterized after a series of nose bleeds described in my letters.

There is a card from the Examination Schools, date stamped 31st July, announcing that I had received a Class 2.

There is a letter from the Ministry of Education in London dated 29 August 1963,

State Studentships      UP 63/9154

*Sir,*

*I am directed by the Minister of Education [sic] to inform you that you have been selected for the award of a State Studentship.*

*You are requested to inform the Ministry, not later than 19th September 1963, whether you wish to accept the award.*

*A pre-paid label is enclosed for this purpose.*

*I am, Sir, Your obedient Servant, D.E. Lloyd Jones*

The following day there was a letter from my tutor, James Campbell

30th August, Worcester College

*Dear Alan,*

*Thanks for your note. A letter arrived today to say you have a State Studentship, I'm pleased to say. No doubt they've sent to you too. I'm not quite sure what view they'll take of your proposed delay. They may not think the general good of your soul an academic enough reason. I should write off to them asking and linking your proposed trip as closely as may be compatible with reasonable honesty with your proposed research. Tell them they can write to me and please send me a reminder of what sort of research you now propose to do and where you are going. God, or Jehova, only knows who writes the most effective testimonials for kibbutzes (though you might ask Paul Hyams). Anyway I've typed out a sort of ticket to anywhere and have put all the signs of authenticity I can find in the Bursary on it. I think the college seal looks rather grander upside down.*

*Yours in haste, James Campbell*

I wrote to the State Studentship funders as follows [this was a rough draft, written on the back of another letter below, dated 12th September.

*Dear Sir,*

*Thank you for your letter informing me of my selection to a State Studentship which I gratefully accept. I enclose the "statement of Financial Circumstances and undertaking". I have included alternative dates for the commencement of my award since I would like, with your permission, to postpone my postgraduate study for a year. I believe my tutor, Mr Campbell, has written to you on this subject.*

*Firstly I feel that since my knowledge of European languages is meagre a year in which to study two languages - probably German & French - would contribute fundamentally to the educational topic on which I hope to do my thesis. ~~Since educational & intellectual reform was heavily influenced by Continental thought.~~ Secondly there are personal reasons, for instance the fact that I would like to see my parents who have been abroad for several years as well as the conviction that a year abroad would deepen somewhat my limited experience & thus enrich my work. Could you inform me of your decision on this matter as soon as possible since I must make arrangements accordingly.*

A letter dated 18 September from the Ministry of Education replied:

*Dear Sir,*

*With reference to your letter of 14th September, I write to say that after careful consideration of your case, we are unable to approve postponement of your State Studentship. Would you therefore tell us whether you propose to accept our offer for studies commencing this October or to decline the award.*

*A prepaid label is enclosed and an early reply would be appreciated.*

*Yours faithfully, K.T.V. Humberstone*

[scribbled on this is: A. Macfarlane £65 -17 -6]

I then wrote to James Campbell as follows:

Youth Hostels Association, Goldrill House, Patterdale Saturdays Sept 21st [A typed letter]

Dear James,

I have just heard from the Ministry that they won't let me have a year off. I tried to ring you on Friday evening but hear that you have been away for the weekend. As they wanted an immediate confirmation if I still wanted to accept the grant I have written to them saying I will start in October; I hope this is in order. I am working here until the end of the month, tho' I can get off to come down to Oxford before then if it is urgent. Otherwise I will be coming down in the first week of October to look for accomodation [sic – corrected by James!] etc, & presume I will work out the details of the thesis then. I hope all the regulations of College & University authorities can be settled.

I am just off to sunbathe beside Ullswater as it is another sweltering day & my 'puritan' conscience is partly quietened by the thought of the work ahead.

Yours sincerely, Alan Macfarlane [in red biro]

For the postgraduate course, there is a letter of 23rd September from the Ministry of Education. The scholarship was tenable from 1st October 1963 for the period of the approved studies and was as follows:

- (a) approved fees;
- (b) a maintenance grant at the rate of £450 per annum, which will be paid in four instalments.

This was conditional on the fact that:

- (a) you will be required to devote at least 44 weeks of the academic year to approved full-time study, during which time you will be living away from your parental home. Otherwise, a proportionate reduction in grant will be made;
- (b) your total income from other sources, including Scholarships etc., will not exceed £100 in the academic year 1963/4.

[From College Archives]

A very generous grant indeed! (Especially as my parents offered to supplement it by £100 per year).

The rough copy of the letter asking for a delay is written on the back of a letter dated 12th September, from Houlder Brothers & Co.

*Dear Sir,*

*Thank you for your letter regarding Miss Felicity Cowan who is travelling on the "DUQUESA" and we have to advise you that this vessel is due in Buenos Aires about the 29th September. However, we regret that it is impossible to mail letters to her on route as the vessel is only calling at the Cape Verde Islands and is due there in four days time. The mail service to this part of the world is extremely poor and we suggest that you write to her at her address in Buenos Aires, if you have it.*

[There is a note at the bottom: 9.a.m. Campbell. Saturday]

\*

## PLANS FOR A TRIP AROUND THE WORLD

I had been planning to spend a 'gap' year after I graduated in the Summer of 1963. There are frequent references to these plans in my mother's letters and my letters and writings. Various places are mentioned. I was also wondering whether to spend part of

the year working for some good causes. Through the summer of 1963 as I worked at the Youth Hostels I tried to finalize these plans – called off at the last minute by getting a non-delayable State Studentship.

I have a file with some of these plans. This consists of several items.

Several letter and brochures about the Cheshire Homes for the sick, both in England and in Dehra Dun, India.

Several documents about visiting Israel, including a 'Working Visitors Application Form' for Kfar Hannassi kibbutz. I never sent the application. The details on this application are as follows, leaving out personal details and religion. The purpose I specified as 'Learn about fisheries; meet interesting people; learn about communal life.' I was recommended by Paul Hyams. The period of stay was specified as 'Am travelling overland so dates are very approximate – will confirm nearer date. November 1963 – January 1964.

There is a travel brochure for Greece.

There is an International Certificate of Vaccination showing my TAB and other vaccinations.

There is a brochure on 'Essential Information for citizens of the United Kingdom and Colonies who intend to travel overseas'.

I have two references written by friends at Oxford. One, dated 13 August, is from Dr Ralph Johnson, a medical doctor (Schorstein Research Fellow of University of Oxford) who was doing his D.Phil. at Worcester and who became a close friend for some years. Among other things he wrote that he had known me for three years.

'He came up to Oxford University in 1960 to read History and applied himself diligently to his studies and obtained a good degree (Batchelor of Arts) this Summer. He has, therefore, proved himself an intelligent and able person. He has, during his time in College, also shown himself to be a competent games player, and organiser and he tackles anything he takes on with tenacity.

During last Summer he and I were both helping with a camp for Borstal boys and he showed himself then to be able to get on with most types of person as he is sympathetic and understanding.

I have every confidence in recommending him for the work he now has in mind; he will prove an excellent companion and colleague and give every satisfaction in his work to which he can also contribute in thoughtful approach.'

My tutor, and the Dean of Worcester, James Campbell, wrote a more succinct statement on 30th August.

To whom it may concern:

Mr. Alan Macfarlane is a member of Worcester College whom I have known for three years. He is a man of the highest character.

[As James commented in a letter to me, the College Stamp, looks rather impressive – especially upside down!]

Other than this, there are various small cards with addresses of people whom I could contact. These included R. Hamlish, Chief Economics Branch, Fisheries Division, FAO, Rome; Sir Geoffrey Nye, Technichal Co-operation at the Ministry of Agriculture.

There are several short lists of what I might take on my travels: sleeping bag, matches, cycle cape, foam rubber, ground sheet, sleeping bag, torch, mug & cooking set; raisins & nescafe, meths tablets, book, medical – sunburn, fly-repellent, midge ointment, Savlon, plasters, enterovioform (2 tubes), Hallwag – map of Europe; water

bottle. A less impressive list of things than those I had taken to the Outer Hebrides in the summer of 1961.

It was not to be until 1968, in fact, five years later, that I went to Nepal and started on the many dozens of trips around the world, more than 40 long-distance visits, from then on.

\*

The major source for my life during the last three months in this account are letters.

The deep relationship with Penny seems to have withered very fast, partly because she had gone off to Italy for several months, before returning in October to attend York University. We seem to have had a serious row, according to a later account by myself, and then made it up and become 'good friends' and continued to correspond and occasionally see each other until the late 1970's. I shall again

One of the three letters I received from Penny during the summer was written from Perugia on Friday [5th July]. I shall include the address and salutations, as they indicate the affectionate cooling of the relationship.

*My dearest T,*

*Thank you for your letter, which Mamma forwarded from England. I hope you are well, and have managed to recover finally after exams. It is hard for me now to imagine the Lakes, for Italy is wonderful and quite unlike anywhere I have been before.*

*Perugia is a small town... [description] ... However, apart from the above, I am having a tremendous time - will write again properly soon. Do write. Much love, Poppy*

A day later Julie wrote to me also from Italy. 6 July 1963 Bellagio (Como) [Forwarded to Greenside Youth Hostel]

*Dear old Alikins,*

*Many thanks for your letter and note (in which, by the way, you sounded rather displeased with me, but I hope you were not.) ...I'm awfully glad you managed to pick up an old saddle: it was very clever & resourceful.*

*Catty remark of yours re. Scotland visit - there were no marriage plans at all! ... Did you get the letter I wrote to you in Oxford before I went to Scotland? Giulietta will probably be staying at Denham now - do get in touch with her. I leave for Budapest on Tuesday. Letters will be forwarded.*

*Fondest love, Pusseybite.*

An significant new correspondence started about this time. I have quite a lot of letters from Felicity, whom I had known since she was about six, as she explains. She had become very close friends with my sister Anne and they had shared digs, visited me in Oxford and right at the end of my summer term Felicity had visited the Lake District. My grandfather's diary notes: Tuesday 25 June, 'Alan arrives' and then on Sunday June 30 'Felicity Leaves'. It was during those five days that we suddenly became closer. Having established a closer relationship over this summer, we continued to write for some months after she went to South America and I returned to Oxford. Her letters during this summer were long and complex, so I shall just extract a few bits that directly concern our relationship.

Thursday July 4th [Scotland]

Dear Alan,

Thank you so much for your letter. I'm not at all sure how I should write to you – I can't compete with your lengthy epistle – did you take a carbon copy of it?

I'll leave our finer feelings till later on and start by answering some of your other questions: ... [account of other boy friends] ... I don't know why you ask me what our relationship is – I think that is unfair and also unkind – besides I can't supply you with an answer for the simple reason that I don't understand it myself.

Of course I'm fond of you Alan – very much so! As to when I first thought of you in this way again I must say I don't know. I suppose (I know really) that I have harboured romantic (with a small 'r') ideas about you, on and off for years – like most things that one lives with – one doesn't notice how they grow or change.

What I am going to say next sounds very cold blooded and you will probably be offended and won't understand but I have to say it because otherwise you'll only have half of the true picture. I've said that I am very fond of you – I like you a lot (how idiotic that sounds) not that any two people's definitions of these phrases seem to agree but I do mean it in my own way. But (here it comes!) the trouble is that I think I must be – or have a split personality – I'd use the other word but I can't spell it – .... You see only one part of me – a big part but still a part likes liking you (compris?). It likes holding your hand or talking to you or being talked to by you or getting your letter or even merely looking at you etc., but the other part despises me for it. It (part the 2nd) doesn't despise you in any way ... I practically vowed never to kiss anyone – ever again.

I don't know why you think that I should want to laugh at you – boy but I am sure that you will be in kinks when you read this. Write back soon but not so long – I can't hope to ever write decent letters. I just haven't had the practice... One more thing Please don't be my servant. Yours, Felix.

Her next letter is a few days later.

July 9th [Scotland]

My Dear Alan,

Firstly I thank you for your card... Secondly I think you for your letter which came today... [plans for meeting – difficult] [description of Simon...] ... we never even got as far as you did with one girl you told me about – touching finger tips! Or playing footie! ...Sensual you may be but can you believe me being the very same. I make every effort not to be now because who knows where it leads but I have a very vivid memory of this at the age of about eleven ... Because I am afraid (and I am) of as you put it “the physical side of love” this does not mean that I should be treated gently but quite the contrary.... Please do quote anyone you like (at length) in your letters – you can be as sentimental as you like –you can go off into poetic description if it pleases you – and I'll lap it up eagerly – You know full well that I'm not half as hard as I like people to think... Miss you madly – See you soon, Yours Felix or Felicity

My mother's first letter of this period was written on July 11th.

My dear Alan,

I cant remember whether I've heard from you this week but it doesn't matter, don't bother to write until your viva is over (except for my birthday!) as you must be sick and tired of trying to express yourself on paper. I have very little to write of except that I'm feeling much better, physically and mentally, got so depressed with the heat and feeling ill and not having anything to take my mind off it but am right back to normal now...

Anne sounds very happy which is also a comfort, it just remains for you to get this last beastly bit of the exam over, how important is the viva anyway? I expect your plans are all in a state of indecision still but don't worry, its much better to be elastic and grab at “handles of chance” as they come along. I am writing to-day to the Principal of Tura College in the Garo

*Hills as I see he is advertising for a teacher of English, he wants one straight away so it wouldn't do for you but he might have some other ideas. The Garos are the people Dr Verrier Elwin mentioned in his letter, wonderful fishing rivers there, we could visit it even if there isn't a job available. I see Oxfam are starting a project in Naini Tal so it might be worth while enquiring about that.*

*... I have started on my old round of family planning but am not having a great deal of success, only two more women this month.... Am struck with the Moghuls too as I can't get any more books... Could you give me the address of the Hakluyt Society and I think I will join. Meanwhile I'll brush up my Assamese history which I've largely forgotten. If I don't get the address of History To-day I'll send my article on Roe to you and you can see if you think it's interesting enough to pass on to them. ...*

*I will ask Terry Luscombe if I can buy his guitar off him when he goes, you can't lug yours round on your back but it would be a wonderful ice-breaker here, apart from picking up catchy tunes and learning them. Keep your tour elastic, if you are enjoying Israel you might want to stay much longer, or vice versa...*

The next letter from Felicity is again from Scotland, on Monday July 15th.

*My Dear Alan...*

*I should be very grateful if you'd write and tell me when Penny comes back from Italy - if you know that is.*

*And now to answer your letter. You asked if I ever felt lonely - I don't really, at least not in the ways that you suggest - I suppose that I do sometimes feel that nobody loves me and I'm lonely and pathetic but this role doesn't fit me somehow and only makes me smile at myself. My experience or what I call loneliness is a sort of isolation of the mind ... sometimes I get very depressed and frustrated when people don't latch onto things the way I do... [distracted by poetry]*

*The other day I came across one piece which, though not very spectacular, seems quite a good description of how certain persons, unnamed, seem to feel.*

*"Shall you and I go eastward in grave thought  
And inward prying,  
Be conscious, introspective, haggard, caught  
Sighing any whying;  
With all clear mind and valuable breath  
Expended on cold doubts about eventual death.  
Will you and I, submitting to the wind,  
Go northward roaring?  
That may be one good way to leave behind  
The too trim harbour mooring;  
Partake some great campaign, some large experience, some  
Worthy extensive excuse for returning glorious home."*

*... I did like very much the one you sent me.*

*... Good luck with your viva.*

*With love from your momentarily depressed friend - Felix*

The next letter from my mother from Cherideo is on July 20th

*My dear Alan,*

*Thank you for your very nice birthday letter which as you see arrived in good time, I wish you hadn't sent me a book, I counted your last books as my present...*



*I don't see any reason why you should become humourless or bigoted, one is much more inclined that way when one is young and sure one knows the difference between right and wrong, the older one gets the less dogmatic usually, though of course its easy to confuse tolerance with laziness. I'm sure you'll find a job where you can use all your talents and enthusiasm if you don't rush things and don't expect your life's work to be anything but confusion, frustration and just occasional gleams of pure happiness and fulfilment. I don't think that's a cynical attitude, so much of our trouble is expecting happiness as a right, those who don't expect it are patently the happiest people.*

*I haven't quite got the idea of the fisheries, are you planning to learn about increasing fish production so that you can go to some part of the world where people are hungry? I think it's a jolly good idea and I'm sure Freedom from Hunger or one of those things could advise you. I feel so guilty that I didn't get a letter off to you to cheer you on your way to your viva, I lose all sense of time here but nevertheless it was most remiss. Anyway it'll all be over now for better or worse, I hope the warden thing comes off, it should be amusing, no word about your passport so I presume you have found it... Hope you'll manage to see Felicity again, she is certainly very attractive ...*

*With much love, have a good rest (mental)*

Mummy

Three more letters from Felicity came before the end of July.

Monday 22nd July [Scotland]

*My Dear Alan,*

*I do like you - you're so nice - or is it sweet? (I never can remember). I write you a rotten letter when I'm in a lousy mood and you write back so soon and without a word of complaining...*

*Why do you think that everyone has a fear of death. I am not afraid of death! ...I wish I could go round the world with you - I think we could have a wonderful time. ... Are you as good natured and long suffering as your sister? ... I think of you far more often than you might imagine from the letter I write. And now I give you goodbye "mia Mario" with love from Felix*

Friday July 29th [Scotland]

*My Dear Alan,*

*Thank you so much for your letter, you do cheer me up... I am only supposed to be going to Buenos Aires for six months but if I find something over there to make me stay - who know if I'll ever come back? ... Isn't this Skopje earthquake tragedy a horrible affair - one can't help imagining these thousands of people, especially children, crushed to death... You won't go and get pulverized by an earth tremor - will you? ... Please! Not yet anyway! And now, Alan my sweet, I must refuse to send you a picture - I just cannot! ... Missing you. With love from your Felix*

Wednesday July 31st [Scotland]

*My Dear Alan,*

*Thank you so much for your letter. Very kind of you to let me off the leash to the extent that you have! I don't know why you think that I'm going to meet so many fabulous oil magnates etc. Remember that I'm going to stay with relations... However - in return for your generosity - you have my full permission to put the pilliwinks on any girl you want to. ... And now tell me why, Alan, you are always so depreciating (I don't know if that's the right word) when you write about yourself... Or is it reassurance you want... I am on tenterhooks to know your result. Write soon.*

*Loving and missing you, Your Felix*

The next letter from my mother was from Shillong, [postmarked at Ambleside August 6th, hence written towards the end of July]

*My dear Alan,*

*Perched on the side of my hillside in Shillong I'm thinking of you perched on the top of Ullswater with all your cares and exams temporarily behind you ... I came up last Friday through the awful floods... Now we have the Chinese making warlike noises again... [failed to see Verrier Elwin because he was not well] [reflections on poverty etc]*

*I can't accept any of the religious excuses for the world's unhappiness – i.e. it is man's wilful turning away from god that brings about his destruction, or his payment for the sin's of a past life, this might apply to grown men but don't tell me little twisted starving children are responsible for their lot. If there is a loving god in charge of this mess it is so impossible to understand his motives that it is profitless to think about them. We shall know eventually, meanwhile there is this unfair, unjust, unhappy world into which millions more children are being born daily to become twisted and starve...*

*Anyway enough of this, the trouble is there are very few people I can let off steam to out here, everyone thinks I'm mad for even thinking about such things, except Daddy who agrees with me but is so burdened with practical problems that he doesn't have much time or energy for metaphysical speculation...*

*I will send £20 this month and £30 next as I said, I would like you to have £40 in travellers cheques before you leave so let us know at the beginning or anyway middle of September how things stand. You will need some clothes don't forget.*

*Much love, enjoy yourself, Mummy*

The second letter from Penny was from Perugia on a Wednesday [Either 24 or 31 July]

*Darling Tumnus,*

*How are you? How went your interviews at Oxford? When are your results coming out? We examine the papers daily for the Ward trial and for University news – so far only the Law results seem to have appeared – I see Phil got a 3rd.*

*I am still adoring Perugia... [long description of Perugia and her doings there etc...] ...Anyway, I am having a tremendous time – I am so rushed that it is difficult to find the time to sit down and write letters or cards. I dread the prospect of having to return to England – the climate and surroundings are so gorgeous.*

*Do write.*

*Much love to you and to your grandparents, Poppy*

The first of my writings, a post-card, is written to my grand-parents a few miles away in the Lake District. There is no date on this but it is from Glenridding Youth Hostel, so must be in late July or early August soon after I went there. The postcard is of Ullswater, with my youth hostel indicated by arrow.

*Dear G & G,*

*Hope all goes well – I will try to get over later this week but it is complicated & expensive (about 10/- return) so will come over Friday or Saturday. Please give my regards to Beryl, Anne J etc. I dream of the strawberries & raspberries – perhaps I will collect some when I come? The job here is not too strenuous and we have had wonderful weather. The hostel is where the arrow points (in the middle of the picture) from my room there is a glorious view*

down to the Lake. There is good fishing & I caught 2 plump 6 oz trout the other day. Look after yourselves – see you soon. Much love, Alan

The second communication from Julie was a picture postcard from Budapest, dated 31 July

*Many thanks for your letter. Hope you are enjoying your vacation. I know about F[elicity] because I remember you getting rather excited when she came to Oxford with her mother 2 years ago. So glad things are clicking again; pity it's only for a short time now.*

*I'm finding Magyar life v. exciting, & rapidly losing my prejudices, esp. re Communists.  
F.L., P.*

The next item is a short letter from my uncle Richard, dated 4 August.

*Dear Alan,*

*May I send congratulations on getting your 2nd in History. I saw the notice of the results yesterday... It was a good reward for a lot of hard work. What new? Maybe some travel. Are you still keen on teaching? I will be interested to hear your plans.... [school news] I hope you get yourself a good holiday, Love Richard*

[My sister Anne also sent a card from Germany to congratulate me]

The next, undated, letter from my mother was written in early August 1963

*My dear Alan,*

*I thought you would like to have this which was waiting for me on my return, and gave me a great thrill as you can imagine. My first rather unworthy thought was "Snooks to Robert", I thought it was a very nice letter though and sent almost by return of post – don't lose it, it might be the Breakthrough. I owe a lot to you for your interest and encouragement, it is very easy to get discouraged when one is thudding away on a typewriter on boiling hot days in this remote corner of the world, but I now shall take up my work with fresh enthusiasm.*

*By now you will have heard your results and will either be sunk in gloom or whooping it up, I suppose the long viva meant that you were a border line case, but that doesn't help because one doesn't know which border! It doesn't matter to us in the slightest, or to you really except your pride as you don't intend to get a "good" job in the sense of one bringing in large sums of money where the snob value of a first might matter. You don't need to have your injections till ten days before you leave so needn't worry about that for the present, the situation here is a bit depressing again, many people think this is just a political move on the part of the Chinese, a sort of war of nerves, lets hope they're right. We are to be flown out at the first sign of any real trouble...*

*I came down from Shillong yesterday and it was lovely to be back... Mind you send me a copy of the paper when it comes out.*

*With much love from us both – Mummy*

The next letter from Felicity is dated Monday August 5th, once again from Scotland.

*My Dear Alan,*

*Thank you so much for your letter and for everything – the record, the card the book and even the Beatles. As regards the book and record – how did you know??? Congratulations on getting a second. It's merely perverse of you to want a first – you're a perfectionist aren't you? Funny – so am I! ... [A very long letter...]*

*I agree that our relationship or rather the way it began and seems to progress, is very mysterious. Would it have been the same if I had gone home on Sunday – as I should have done? ... Why do you think that I'm going to forget all about you or are you just preparing me for your forgetting me?*

The next letter from my mother is from Cherideo on August 9th

*My dear Alan,*

*We saw the results of your exam in the paper yesterday and were thrilled – of course we knew you would do it but it is wonderful nevertheless. You deserved it after all that hard work, and I hope now you are having a blissful rest with all the tension eased out of your system. We just can't get over our good fortune in having such gifted children, really it is little short of miraculous – anyway thank you for all your work and for making the very small sacrifices we have had to make more than worthwhile. I only wish you hadn't had to scrape so much at Oxford, but I suppose a lot of others do too, it's just one of those things. How I wish I could be there to see you get your degree, Daddy is talking wildly of flying me home but I'm afraid it's out of the question really, let us know when it's to be so that we can visualise it anyway. I shall always remember getting the news, I was watching the efforts of a python in the chicken run to climb out, he had been caught in the tea and was about to be hacked to death when Daddy rescued him and we let him cool off a bit before escaping. He had just reared his eight-foot length and got his head over the edge of the wire netting when Daddy appeared on the back verandah with the paper, I was so glad he read the lists first, I should have been in such a panic I would have missed your name altogether. We celebrated with some cherry brandy and I felt wonderfully relaxed and fulfilled, all the things we had planned for years coming true although there was a sort of sadness too that our "little boy" was finally grown up and on his own! Now you will be able to concentrate on your tour with an easy mind and I hope the Israel thing will work out.*

*Your birthday present arrived yesterday and looks fascinating, I have glanced through it but not started to read it yet but it just what I revel in as you know. Thank you very much. Assam is one of the strongholds of the "White Goddess", the primitive tribes who first flowed in were all matriarchal, and even when they became Hinduised it was a special form of Hinduism with the worship of the "sakti" or female principal as its main form. One of the things I've often wanted to study but never got round to (chiefly language difficulty) was the strange blending of myth and religion that produced the Tantric cult which was special to Assam...*

*No more news of the Chinese... am now writing an article on Peter Mundy which I will send to the Statesman... I'm delighted at the thought of getting Robinson by the way, it is the one account of Assam I've never read and seems unprocurable here. I read a D.H. Lawrence in Shillong, three short stories which I'm afraid I found mildly irritating though wonderfully written...*

*[Daddy] ...joins me in love and congratulations, or even might write with luck. Have a good rest & don't worry about anything for a bit – how did your friends do?*

*Much love from us both – Mummy*

The last letter from Penny is from Perugia on Sunday 11th August

At the top I have written as points to reply are: Research; Lerici – villa; P. Gooden; Israel; Max; Venice, painting; Anne.

*Dearest Alan,*

*Congratulations on your second, you clever man. You will now be able to do research at Oxford, won't you? Whoopee, whoopee!! But how come that Mark got a 4th, poor chap. I imagine that the only thing that would buck him up would be if his trip to Israel [with Worcester Buskins] were a terrific success – I hope so. Also I was unable to find Peter Gooden's name – did he not get a degree?*

Friday – Lerici

*I am staying here in N. Italy at Barbara's house for the five-day university holiday. It is fantastically beautiful. ...[description of Lerici] ... But guess who drove Babs and myself up here? Max, Fiona's friend at Manchester ... I went to Venice last week. It is fantastically ornamental and artificial ... [description of in detail] ... But now it is very hot, and I'm tired and want to sleep. Much love – look after yourself – keep well.*

*Poppy xxx*

*PS. Send my love to your grandparents and to Fiona. How's Anne? Is she enjoying Germany?*

Three days later Penny's mother wrote also.

Wimbledon 14 August 1963

*Dear Alan,*

*How very kind it was of you to write!*

*Yes, I do indeed miss my Penny – but I am so happy she is having such an enjoyable time & managing to explore some of the wonders of Italy – she does seem to have got around in Penny fashion. I have had some most interesting letters from her.*

*Congratulations on your results! I know you hoped for a 1st, but a 2nd is pretty good, too! And all good wishes for your plans of travel which sound most exciting & enterprising. You will love meeting up with your parents in India, won't you? How are things with them. Last time I heard the situation in India was pretty unsettled.*

*I had a sweet note from Anne just before she left for Germany.... I'm glad Felix is going to South America. Felix is cute: I enjoyed both her & Anne a lot. I hope to see & hear more from them.*

*I'm so glad you and P. are in touch. P. did mention that there had been some sort of disagreement between you both (one wanted to go places, the other didn't). How normal! And, anyway, you both know far more of concord than discord. So here's to Alan and Penny!!  
.... All good wishes to you Alan. Don't omit to look us up when next you're this way, & thank you for writing. Ruby Marcus.*

Next comes a letter from my grandmother at Field Head, dated August 13th

*Dearest Alan,*

*These are the shoes I meant to bring you & enclose a shirt as well as I feel yours must be getting a bit "rich". We so enjoyed our day with you & so grateful for all you did to make it a wonderful outing.*

*I wish you could get away somewhere nearer & with a pleasanter warden. Fiona came for the day yesterday & after a huge lunch here they all went to Tarn Hows & bathed etc. Robin was terribly sick early evening & luckily Billy & Julia wee here to clear it up ...Fiona returns for a few days before hitch-hiking to Cornwall – She left Poochi behind this time .... Look after yourself & come nearer or even home,*

*Lots of love, Granny*

Felicity wrote again from Scotland on Thursday August 15th

*My Dear Alan,*

*Thank you so much for your letter. I'm very much afraid that you've spoilt me again and I'm sure I don't know why... I'm sorry to hear about your friend Peter – I didn't know that people every failed completely... Sounds like a really interesting person. Glad (because you're glad) that your mother has had an article accepted... I know that you are always talking about your Oedipus complex and you do admire your mother but what about Papa – I could put in quite a few good words for him...*

*I have decided that one of the things that make it difficult for me to write to you (and v.v.??) is the fact that I've thought so much about you that what I know of you I know very well but the rest not at all. ... I send all my love to my long-suffering "malenky malchik". I miss you and sign myself: un abrazo, afectuosamente*

*Yours Felix*

She wrote again six days later on Wednesday August 21st

*My Dear Alan,*

*Thank you so much for your letter.... You seem to be in an "extraordinary" frame of mind at the moment - one that I can't at all understand but can picture all too clearly. I suppose that I ought to herewith set out my arguments but anything I can think of seems so very futile against the forcible way you state your case. I can't see where you find the idea that you convey - that there is such a big step and big difference between "Youth" and "adult life". To me it seems that the change is so gradual as to be imperceptible. There is naturally an enormous difference between boyhood and manhood but one doesn't leap suddenly from one to the other. ... It is surely up to the individual to decide how much of their "Youth" they want to keep? ...*

*Love to you, Felix*

The following day my mother wrote:

Cherideo August 22nd

*My dear Alan,*

*Thank you for your letter and the enclosed, how sad you were just pipped at the post for a first, but a comfort to you to know how close you got and as you say may do the trick as far as a scholarship goes. I couldn't quite understand your tutors remarks, which paper was it you didn't do so well on? If you get a scholarship will you give up your tour for the time being and carry straight on? I hope Robert was duly impressed, I don't know why we have such shabby thoughts about him as he has never been cocky or unpleasant about his successes!*

*I was amused by the descriptions of your picnic with the Kiddies, Fiona had one too which was equally chaotic, but she found them attractive and liked Julia too, J's sense of humour makes up for most of her faults. The visit seems to have gone off without scenes which is something, cant think why Granny is now landing herself with Leigh and family but I think she really enjoys....*

*In a way I would like you to go straight on with your diploma but don't want to influence you. Sorry to hear about the nose bleeds, its funny how they always come on at this time of year, you might think about having your nose cauterised if you can ever get to see Mylchrest, your mountain fastness certainly has disadvantages without transport.*

*The only name I recognised from the list was Monks who was that nice boy you went to Borstal camp with I think, was he disappointed to get a 3rd... I am finding "The White Goddess" fascinating, but at least half of it is above my head, such erudition is depressing rather, but I suppose if you spend a secluded life-time of study it becomes possible. I feel I've wasted so many opportunities with all these primitive tribes working here who I could have studied but its too late now, I've contacted someone in Lahore who will help me get books on my Moghal so will be able to carry on with yours and the help of the National Library. I agree there will not be the same interest in my article as Roberts, but if I ever finish a book it might be handy to have the contact with Quennel? ...*

*I hope you're feeling rested, mentally anyway, don't feel you've got to go on and on with your job - though it might be advisable to make it last till the cousins have scattered from the region of Field Head. What is Felicity going to do? Haven't heard from Pat for ages, probably my fault.*

*With much love, Mummy*

Felicity wrote again on Wednesday 28th from Scotland.

*My dear Alan,*

*Thank you so much for your letter... [problems of writing to S. America etc.] Alan, James says that historians are narrow-minded – he says even more than scientist – is this so? Do you think you like James? ... Why then do you think so much about “melancholia”?*

I have a carbon copy of a letter written at the end of August. It shows that I was writing at length and includes an answer to the question in the letter above.

*My dear Felix,*

*Thank you very much for your letter. I hope the confusion sorts itself out & you get off without leaving too much behind. I can imagine you reading this at snatched moments, sitting on top of a pile of half-packed cases with clothes etc strewn around & the family downstairs moaning for their next meal. I think this will be the last letter you will get from me until you let me know another address. Why don't you tell me the name of the ship you are going on & where and when it calls & then I can send post to await you – as you did with my mother. Don't you know the address to which you are going in S. America. Should I write to 'Borrowlea' & put 'Please Forward'. Of course we'll go on writing as long as you still want to. If I go abroad for 9 months I would like to write to you regularly and keep copies of the letters instead of writing diaries. This means you would [receive] whole passages of reflection & description with little reference to anything personally relevant, but you could do the same to me, killing two birds etc. Our whole relationship has been so strange that one can't tell what will happen. At the worst it will be a melted dream. At the best – who knows? At least I can truthfully say that writing to you & hearing from you has given me great pleasure & helped me over a trying period. I only wish we could have spent a few days together before you went, though this might have made parting very much more painful.*

*Now for my plans. I have just heard that I have been awarded a State Studentship – which means money to do research for 2-3 years. Thus I will either go back to Oxford in October or, I hope, go abroad for about 8 months & come back next spring when my parents come (about May) – spending the winter wandering round the Mediterranean in a D.H. Lawrentian manner. You must come back – I, at least, want to see you again, and you know you are always very welcome at the Macfarlane household.*

*I feel that I should give you some “good advice” or some reflections or something; but my mind is empty. As usual I retreat into the escapist realms of dreams & enclose Yeats at his most ethereal. You will know why I enclose such a passage. It is central to my theory about looking back to some lost glory which once made the world bright, a high mystery which brought wonder when the world was new. My present aspiration is to seek the hour of “splendour on the grass & glory on the flower where brood her high lonely mysteries.” Sorry, I'm putting this badly. I haven't analysed my present mood & its coming out all muddled. All I really feel is only to think that you'll be gone soon, and thus I have lapsed into one of those moods of ‘melancholia’ on which you chide me.*

*You ask me why I think about it so much; I suppose the answer is simply I enjoy feeling sad – like my lustful feelings, though I know indulgence only makes the disease worse & makes me less sensitive and pleasant. I haven't the will power to stop myself. I'm not asking for sympathy here; at least not meaning to.*

*James says historians are narrow-minded? Let James say what he likes, only narrow-minded people go round saying “so & so are narrow-minded” (you notice I've committed the same fault – but am at least aware of it, like that puzzle – all Chinamen are liars said a Chinaman). From my limited experience at Oxford, I have found you just can't divide people into faculties – though I agree that the conception of the narrow-minded scientist which is held by many is not true. Most of my scientist friends are interested in many things. But the difficulty*

really is, what is “narrow-minded”? Everyone assumes that “breadth of mind” is a virtue. But most artists are very narrow-minded i.e. their interests are intensely focused on one object & to make any impression they have to exclude many other subjects. By most standards D.H. Lawrence, Yeats etc were very narrow-minded as were most of the greatest musicians. Is depth of understanding worth more than width? I would readily admit myself very narrow-minded if this means that I am much more interested in some things than others, but in the damning sense I suppose it means “shutting your mind to things one should be prepared to allow in”. Nowadays it is often more difficult to be narrow-minded than superficially broad-minded. Enough of this rambling. You see my difficulty?

As for James; I withhold judgement ‘till I know him better. I gather you don’t adore him?! I am getting into the state of mind where I use that favourite Felicity expression. I don’t know more & more frequently. Sometimes it is genuine humility, but there is a temptation to laziness & escaping from decisions I suspect at times.

I have another week at this hostel. I will be glad of the change as I am beginning to get restless. My reading & writing have practically stopped & I can’t be bothered to go on. There are moments of ecstasy, as when I walked down to the village thro’ a superb sunrise on Wednesday, the lake & hills glowing with mist and the glory of the early rays or when I suddenly hear a snatch of my favourite music. Again there are long dull interludes of vacancy and there are occasions – too frequent I am afraid – of tension & struggle with the monster which lurks and broods black & venomous inside me & makes me sick with its power – you will guess what I mean. [A theme worked out a little in my long adventure of Tristan.] I exaggerate perhaps, but I know I will always be like Lawrence, a Puritan at heart trying to argue myself into making sex into something beautiful & clean when my background & upbringing & the world’s conventions have drummed into me that it is otherwise. But enough of that also.

Please do write when you can & look after ... [carbon gone]

The final letter in these two months is from my mother from Cherideo on August 31st:

My dear Alan,

No letter from you this week, maybe you are changing hostels or perhaps given up altogether, no letter from Fiona either so maybe it’s the post but the paper is arriving... I had another letter from the Principal of Mayo College ... [who] said he probably could give you a temporary job if you would let him know when you would be coming. The term starts in January and I imagine what your plans are, ... If you could keep yourself for a couple of months in Israel we could save up enough to pay your fare on here, if you haven’t abandoned the whole idea by now... [various comments on Indian history] ...

I’ve finished the “White Goddess”, slightly dazed, it was fascinating, though I thought his idea that we should go back to worshipping a lustful and bloodthirsty mother figure instead of a loving and compassionate father rather odd to say the least of it. I am re-reading the Golden Bough to compare it, Frazer also has some odd ideas, such as the dangerous and miserable state of the savage who must quickly be weaned of all his old ideas and education – which makes one wonder if he ever lived in a savage society as the first thing that strikes one is that they are happy and well adjusted. Of course he was a Victorian with all the reforming zeal and intolerance that implies. ... How was Stephen Grieve? ...



## SUMMER VACATION: SEPTEMBER AND OCTOBER

I continued to write to, and receive letters from Felicity, as she prepared to leave for South America. The first letter is dated 3rd September from Scotland.

*My Dear Alan,*

*Thank you so much for your letter. ... [details of plans for trip] ... I'm glad to hear that you've been awarded a State Scholarship. ... You know one reason why I take so long to reply to your letters, or only have time to write short ones, is that when I read the pieces of poetry that you quote it reminds me that I found something I like in some book or other and I go off to look for it and then get engrossed... [address in Buenos Aires] ... Why do you say that you can't make yourself believe that sex is something beautiful? To me it is the easiest thing in the world to think of it as both beautiful and rather wonderful. I am afraid of it but not because it is dirty in any way... I miss and love you - Felix*

The second letter is on Saturday 7th September, again from Scotland.

*My Dear Alan,*

*Thank you so much for your letter. What are you doing now? I thought you said you were going home? And how is the writing progressing - if it is at all - won't you tell me about it?*

*...[writing to the ship] ... Love-making, guilt complexes, desires of the flesh - I won't say anything about these now because perhaps you wish you'd never mentioned any of them, but if you do want to talk to me please don't hesitate because you think I'd laugh at you - ...I do have some soft spots in my inner heart and you know quite well that you have touched one of them, so ....? ... And now, much as I love you, I must take my leave of you, I kiss you goodbye and hope to hear from you - somehow in the not too distant future - Yours Felix*

My mother's next letter is from Cherideo on Sept 7th. There are some notes by me at the top: Thesis at Oxford; money; Sicily; Ting [monkey]; 'Sword at Sunset'; wire.

*My dear Alan*

*A letter from you at last, it seemed ages since we had heard and I was worrying that all your plans were going astray, but we're delighted to hear that you had got your State Studentship, we will leave it to you and your tutor to decide when you start. We will add £100 a year to your grant, that will bring it up to 500 a year which won't be very much but you should be able to manage and of course we shall be able to help out at odd times if you are short.*

*I agree that something practical would be best now, humanitarian work nowadays is not charity but positive instruction in how to grow two crops instead of one irrigate, drain and fertilise or breed fish - I think you would find this interesting too once you got started - couldn't you find a course that combined social economy with anthropology and then you could spend one of your long vacs out here living with the Garos who are as backward as they come -and could probably pay for your time in articles. Will you be going to Oxford or some provincial university? I agree that there won't be time to do a world tour properly, you could leave that till your course is over.*

*I only sent £20 this month so that is 60 altogether. I don't want you to start off for Europe penniless so let us know how things stand. Perhaps you could go to Sicily and get some practical experience if you can't make Israel. ....*

*[sickness of monkey] Your two books, "Mughal India" and "Account of Assam" arrived a couple of days ago and I was delighted with them both... In between my work I'm reading "Sword at Sunset" a novel about King Arthur which I'm enjoying very much... Do hope the cauterisation has worked, its very tiresome having these nose bleeds, does height affect them I*

wonder as you don't seem to get them in Oxford... Much love & hearty congrats from us both - Mummy

Did you ever get our wire?

My mother's next letter is from Cherideo on September 13th

My dear Alan,

*Thank you for your letter yesterday, sorry I was so moany about not hearing, it was just a bad week and I was moany about everything. I hope your present youth hostel is a little less remote, it doesn't sound it! Daddy and I might well throw in the sponge and retire to some mountain fastness, I often feel we would be happier but D. feels he must go on earning to the last moment.*

*I expect you will have come to some decision about your future by now, don't leave it too long and lose the grant. If you spent your holidays doing social work perhaps you wouldn't feel so bad about spending your time contemplating while the world suffered, but couldn't you use your grant for social science in some form, there is endless scope here for youth club and after care and so on in the cities. I seem to give you contrary advice in every letter, luckily you will probably ignore it all and make your own choice...*

*I'll see what I can do about collecting folk tales, I mean to try and visit in the villages when it gets cooler... Its been an awful week... [sick monkey etc] ... I got a letter from Julia saying Granny had thought I'd got my article accepted on the strength of Robert's name but you had quietly put her right - thank you! Poor Billy is mugging up for a Min. of Education Diploma and selling insurance, a bit dreary.*

*I've had my depressing week cheered by "Sword at Sunset", a lovely book about King Arthur, you should read it, very moving and though it strips a lot of the glamour off the chivalric story and replaces it with a more likely setting, it is still inspiring. Quite a lot of Frazerish incident too, the ritual sacrifice of the king, the Sin that must be expiated etc. We have such a nice new assistant, your age and half way through his first novel, and a fan of T.H. White... Its odd how much more I have in common with the young lads than my old generation... Sad that Felicity is going away but perhaps not for too long, hope she doesn't get spoilt and lose her refreshingly different outlook on life. Write to Anne sometime, I think she's a little homesick, though happy.... Are you a B.A. officially?*

During the late summer, I had a brief flirtation with a girl I met at the Patterdale Youth hostel, lasting only a few weeks. Jean was pretty and sweet and I helped her to carry her pack over towards the next Youth Hostel and visited her once at her home. There are three letters from her, the first of which I shall include.

15 September Palatine Sq, Burnley Sat.

Dear Alan,

*Thanks a lot for your letter, I didn't get it until this afternoon, as I overslept a bit! I'm sorry we missed you yesterday but I can assure you, that we didn't deliberately avoid you. ... [description of her visit to Youth Hostel near Troutbeck] ... If you ever feel inclined to write, please do, as I shall be pleased to hear from you again. Remember me to Jack, and once again thank you very much for everything, you have been "very gallant", "Sir Galahad", no seriously though, I do appreciate your "pack-horse" act.*

*All the Best, Jean*

I wrote several poems for Jean which are reproduced elsewhere and show a return to a sort of calf-love stage.

I also wrote several letters to both Penny and Julie during the summer. Only one survives, because I kept a carbon copy of it. It was written from Patterdale Youth Hostel, Sunday, 22nd Sept. [I have added paragraph breaks]

*Dear Julie,*

*Thank you very much for your long letter. Please excuse this typewritten reply. If you object to such an impersonal way of writing please do say, it is only laziness on my part & also the fact that I can write much faster like this & thus much more.*

*Poor Pussy, you sound very disconsolate, or rather the contents of what you say sounds very depressing, but the way in which you say it is so resigned & stoical – even self-amused as if you were looking at yourself from outside – that I don't quite know what to make of your state. For instance when you say "I expect I'll be done for in a few months" or "the advent of my long-expected breakdown is nigh" the contrast between the terror of what you say & the casual way in which you say it makes the thing almost ludicrous. I wish I knew what to say to help you, but all I can really do is offer you my sympathy & tell you that I am thinking of you. If I was to start to analyse you in my amateur way I would probably end up in an awful mess, but here are some way-out suggestions.*

*I think that the truth lies between the two theories you mention, deep-seated causes & environment. Judging from my own experience the deep-seated cause is that you are too sensitive & intelligent. This means that the disease, a kind of religious schizophrenia which I believe to be at the heart of modern life affects you most & brings you more agony than most. I can hear you protesting – "Why bring religion into this" & it may be that I'm just a fanatic, but listen on a bit. Also you may object that you don't have any great soul-wrestling, no great spasms of guilt etc. This isn't really what I mean by religious agony. I am thinking more of a dryness, a feeling of hopelessness perhaps, a disillusion & conviction of purposelessness. It is the dull ache hinted at the end of *Dover Beach* & Meredith's *Modern Love* – "Ah what a dusty answer gets the soul when hot for certainties in this our life". It is the realization that your last attempt to impose coherence & order on things, to live by an absolute code & to believe in things above greed & selfishness is failing, that everything is splitting up & losing its relationship; that the mystery & the 'otherness' as Lawrence would call it are only conjured up by the brain & that reality if there is such a thing is dry & meaningless. I have a suspicion that I am speaking more of my own spiritual struggles than yours, but perhaps it may help all the same.*

*This whole problem, the fading of coherence & belief, the emergence of an entirely relativistic philosophy & the death of the great dark & light powers which once lived just below or behind the surface of life is the central core of what I hope to turn into my background work for the next ten years. If [you] are sick with this disease, as most of us are, your help would be invaluable, since you are a more than ordinarily gifted & sensitive person. I don't know the cure yet, I just guess that to study the disease itself might provide the answer. I suppose most of us immerse ourselves in some little escapist world, whether it is the common man's busy life or horse-racing, or the intellectual's pursuit of some kind of abstract truth. All I am certain of is that to try to give up the struggle altogether is death, while probably the best temporary solution is to immerse oneself in something bigger than yourself. For me I hope this will be some kind of humanitarian work, that if I pit myself up against some monster of cruelty & ignorance, for instance the giant problem of population of the slums of Calcutta, this may cure my ache and & also help someone.*

*I doubt whether recommending you to become a nun or something would be very helpful, but I am certain that unless you make a complete break with the rather dilettante life you have led for the last 2 years you will only get worse. I hope this doesn't sound too presumptuous [sic], it will I'm afraid, & also it will sound a bit like those of your advisers who say that your state is only the result of being well-off & spoiled. The only truth in this is that even if you were a prostitute you would have to struggle to keep alive & have less time for thought, & probably wouldn't be thoughtful enough to feel as miserable as you do now. I can feel that I'm not helping at all so I will leave the subject until you tell me some more; perhaps after all it is merely that you need to get married & have not found anyone suitable yet. Why do you want to*

bring Per[egrine] into this bitter world of which you seem tired? As I have said my own long term solution as I see it now is to a) try to keep hold onto my traditional Christian faith b) self-discipline myself and try to help others; immersing myself in some great cause – perhaps something to do with educational reform c) as a hobby & relaxation study the intellectual aspects of the problems which are worrying me & I assume many others.

You ask why I am doing such a badly-paid job which anyone could do. As you may know I have a Puritan obsession about money – I am determined not to let it become a devouring object in my life (which is, of course, just the way in which one drifts into becoming obsessed with it – in a perverted way) and hence the money angle doesn't matter. I would rather do a job I enjoy – & I do enjoy this now that the season is over & things are a bit quieter – than a highly paid & unpleasant job. Anyhow I haven't much longer since I am finishing on about Friday.

I've just heard from the Min. of Ed. that they won't let me go abroad for a year & so I've got to go back to Oxford in October; it'll be nice to see Paul, Alistair, David Izaac etc, but I shall miss those who have gone – including Peter who failed his English exams entirely & Sally (Broadbent) & Carrie at nos 3 Southmoor Rd; also I'm afraid of becoming too dry & academic. Still if I read plenty of Keats I should be alright!

There has been absolutely gorgeous weather here for the last week & I have been sunbathing on the side of Ullswater lake. I could imagine myself beside the Med'n with the ripples kissing the rocks, the steep gorse & bracken hillside away from the water & the smouldering air, just the cicadas were missing.

On Monday I left the Lakes for a couple of days & hitched down into industrial Lancs to see a sweet girl who I had met when she was staying in the hostel here. She is a nurse in Burnley & a good corrective to my pomposity & dreaminess. I also stayed with my sister in Mancs where she has got a very 'arty' flat.

I hope you'll be able to come over to see me in Oxford, I will come to see you if I'm in London. Yes, do write to Penny, she comes back soonish tho'. Felicity is half-way across the Atlantic headed for Buenos Aires at the moment.

Look after yourself Pussy & write soon; don't get too depressed,  
Fondest love, Alan

The next letter from my mother is on September 23rd from Cherideo. There are notes by me at the top: Colour-bar; Ting; Granny writing; Cornwall. Fiona etc; grant; Corryat; Folk stories. The letter was addressed to Patterdale Youth Hostel; forwarded to Field Head', then forwarded again to Worcester College, Oxford. So it heralded the start of my doctoral years.

My dear Alan,

I didn't write last week, it was a bad week as Ting died on Thursday... I have been terribly bleak since, this is a bad place for trying to get over things as there is no outlet, nowhere to go to, I read and work until I'm dizzy but then there comes a time when I must stop and then regrets and memories rush in. I know it is only a minute fraction of the suffering that goes on everywhere, but one is struck afresh with the pointlessness of it, let us beastly selfish grasping men suffer but why a small innocent animal who has done nobody any harm. One can go on banging ones head and asking why for ever, there seems no answer but acceptance. I don't think I got a letter from you either, by now you will probably have made up your mind about your future and I hope are happy about it. Granny never writes these days, I don't know if I've offended her or if its just a surfeit of Leighs...

Just at present I feel I want to leave India, now, and for ever. I cant take it any more and the helplessness of its suffering – so we shall probably be after that wardens job in the Isle of Arran – how lovely it sounds, the cold sea air, the gulls, no more blindness, starvation and sores. But I doubt if there is really any escape and one will carry the sores and sorrows round with one forever.

*I have just read James Baldwins "The Fire Next Time" (Terry's father has published it) it is very moving and beautifully written and makes one see more clearly exactly what it is to have a black skin. I think your generation will have a saner outlook on that, it is something ingrained in the older people, so instinctive that it probably dates way back to a primitive world, that despising of colour. Like anti-Catholicism and anti-Semitism - really the more I survey the Victorian scene the more unpleasant they seem to be. And yet my grandmother who hated Catholics and despised Jews and thought Black Men were animals was in many ways a pet and spent an awful lot of time and money on charity. Ditto Granpa who is a terrible snob, it seems that people who are intolerant in general are kinder in particulars.*

*Daddy and I have made a vow that we aren't going to the club any more, at least not unless we absolutely have to, and I hope to visit the villages more and try and paint and collect folk stories. I'm beginning to get the hang of the Moghuls and their administration, and feel I know enough to write several books already but I still haven't decided how to approach the subject from a fresh angle. ....*

*I hope I'll be feeling more cheerful in my next letter - time is a healer & the stale flat & unprofitable feeling will pass. Much love, Mummy*

The next letter still echoes themes of the summer, so I include it here. It is from Cherideo on October 3rd.

*My dear Alan,*

*Two letters from you last week for which I was very thankful as I was feeling pretty depressed. I am recovering now, though have terrible pangs sometimes. Still I think I am trembling on the verge of some discovery about pain and suffering, something to do with pain being at the heart of happiness (as it always is) and vice versa - I cant really explain but it has a lot to do with Evelyn Underhill and the one-ness of experience, I haven't grasped it yet except in flashes. It's a most interesting and enlightening book, and I now want to read all the references he lists, I think I shall start with the Sufi mystics who I can get here, I cant ever see myself having the time or opportunity to meditate properly!*

*I am glad your future has resolved itself, as you say there are things in favour of both courses but now it has been decided for you you can relax and make the best of it. You don't say what you are studying for what degree or doctorate. Of course I am longing to appear in my llama-chewed headgear to coo over you - we were both regretting bitterly the fact that we wouldn't be able to see you get your bona fide B.A. - but as you say you might perhaps have to take it now - I hope not though.*

*I'm glad you managed to see your Jean again, I don't think long absences make the heart grow fonder, short ones do but time is the great eraser and when you cant remember what a persons voice is like even its hard to stay ecstatic.*

*We got a p.c. from Penny from Perugia which was nice of her, are you still Good Friends? Here it is quite chilly to-day....*

*I have finished my notes on your Moghul book and have sent off to the National Library in the hopes I'll be able to get more from them, if they cant help I will join in the Hakluyt Society....*

*It was nice to get your description of Fiona's flat, she did actually send us a scrawl a few days later but told us little except that she was happy...*

*You can do what you like with the money, you will need clothes, probably a suit, and anything you have over can go to the Croft Fund. We are hoping to go to Geeya (?) [Gigha] where Daddy's uncle was a minister and find something there, we still owe you a 21st birthday present and that could perhaps be it. I believe you lent Fiona some money, as neither she nor Granny let me know how things stand it is difficult but I thought she had plenty. Do hope you are cosily dug in somewhere with your tapes and filing cabinet and don't feel "stale" - 0but this time you will be working along different lines presumably without an exam hanging over you? With much love, Mummy*

One of the long letters I wrote to my Sedbergh school-friend Ian Campbell in Canada is dated Thursday 26th Sept, addressed from Field Head, but clearly written at Patterdale Youth Hostel. It is a carbon of a typed letter.

*Dear Ian,*

*Thanks for your letter which has galvanized me into action after months of sloth (recognise the word?!) Apologies for this typewritten letter, I get lazy in my old age. I can't remember if I have replied to your last letter or when I last wrote so I will start from my news since I finished at Oxford in June; with luck I'll cover your remarks about career, Joyce (to whom best regards by the way) etc under the usual divisions of sex, religion & vocation. Here goes...*

*Exams after three years were a nightmare, tho' I was luckier than some of my friends who almost had breakdowns - one of them failing his English finals completely into the bargain. For lack of anything better & for a rest & an opportunity to read I then got a job in a Lake District Youth Hostel on the slopes of Helvellyn. The work was much harder than I expected, cleaning out toilets, preparing meals, scrubbing floors etc for nearly 70 hours a week at about 1/3d per hour. The Warden was rather an aggressive Geordi & there were a stream of Geordi's with whom I reminisced about my brief visit to Jesmond Dene! The great compensation was a superb view down to the Lake and a stream of pretty & friendly girls.*

*Most of the time I was waiting to hear my results. I had been given a long 'viva' or oral at Oxford after the written exams which meant I was a borderline case, but between which grades I wasn't sure. Anyhow the outcome was that I found that I had just missed a first. Then there was another long wait to see if I had been awarded a State Studentship which would finance me to do research. During this time I planned my world tour, writing off to Leonard Cheshire & beginning to get clued up on fisheries etc. Then I heard I had got the Studentship, so letters flew back & forth from my tutor & myself to the Min. of Educ'n to try to postpone the commencement of the grant to allow me a year abroad - probably in the Med'n region - before I started. I learnt about a week ago that they refuse & I have got to start my thesis in about 4 days. I haven't even chosen a subject - but one can't turn up one's nose at £1500 [£500 a year for three years], however much one harangues at the gross materialism of life etc.*

*I hope to do a subject which both takes me slightly nearer practical matters & also raises literary topics - since literature has always been my real love - perhaps I will do something on English educational reform in the C16 or C17. I will be off in a couple of days to find digs & will emerge in three years with a B.Litt. or D.Phil. & probably dried up inside. I have been, as usual, thinking along the same lines as you & agree entirely that tho' one cannot underestimate the importance of training there is a constant pressure dragging one away from one's earlier idealism & eagerness to contribute. Financial temptations & the desire for security is one of my greatest temptations; once I was married I think the battle would be lost. And that takes me on naturally to the next topic - sex etc. But before that I must say how sorry I am that I won't be able to get over to Vancouver next summer. Is there any chance that you might be on this side of the Atlantic in the next three years? You know that you would always be very welcome at Field Head. My parents will be home next year. Is Joyce still thinking of coming over to England?*

*As far as love/lust is concerned I've come to the conclusion that I'm too young to fall in love, & that consequently I might as well be slightly less intense about my affairs than previously, tho' careful not to hurt any girls. This is all very well to say, but I'll idealize & spiritualize each casual affair I have in the future as much as I have up to now.*

*My affairs are slightly complex. Penny & I are, I believe, just 'good friends'; she has been in Italy at Perugia university for the last two months & starts at York university in a couple of weeks. We had a great row, but parted in friendship with many wonderful memories of a strange but enriching relationship which saved me from a worse neurosis during my pre-exam work.*

*Since then I have been writing to Felicity, a daughter of my God-mother who I have known since she was about 6. I won't go into details in this letter since I have a suspicion that I've told you about her before. But if I haven't she's very pretty, with turned up green eyes, very gold hair & a nice smile. Also she is very sensitive & intelligent... Anyhow she has gone off to South America & at the time of writing must be a few miles off Buenos Aires where she will remain for about 6 months & then come back to do a nursing course.*

*In the absence of anyone serious I have flirted gently with various youth hostellers. At the moment I am having an idyllic affair with a girl who I met about 2 weeks ago (I have been at another Youth Hostel for the last two weeks, here there is much less work to do & the Warden is a bachelor & seems about my own age, tho' he is in fact 38 & one of life's wanderers) we talked until about 3 in the morning & I then helped her with her pack over Kirkstone pass (romantic isn't it!) & went down the following week-end & took her out to dinner & a film from her home in Burnley. She is a trainee-nurse, good Lancashire background & very sweet & attractive needless to say (she has been down South on a beauty competition this week-end). She may come up this week-end, but I don't know what will happen then.*

*Apart from anything else as a student & I hope, helper of humanity as well as a budding (?) writer it is most valuable to be with someone from such a different environment & to break through sociological & intellectual barriers on the pulses of emotion. Do you still [believe] in keeping away from marriage until your are nearly 30; in abstract I agree more than ever .... But who knows?*

*I am going thro' my usual spiritual turmoil. Work for exams helped to drug my mind to a certain extent & I was forced to put such questions aside, but it all burst out again when I had time to think. I get more dazed every minute and I expect this is what has made me decide to undertake a course of study, reading & writing, in the attempt to re-impose unity & order on a world which seems to be breaking up before my new knowledge.*

*It's a bit late so I won't bore you with the details of the plan - anyhow it's probably a fad & won't come to anything. But it is centred on the question of what happens to a child's mind & imagination when it becomes an adult. I would study this on a collective basis in modern history, with the impact of modern science on old religious beliefs; in anthropology, with the impact of new ideas on an old, closed & united, system of beliefs & taboos; in literature - especially in children's stories & of course in psychology. If nothing else it should give me a framework from my reading.*

*This summer I have been trying to start on the Literature aspect by comparing what happened to the poetic & artistic imagination in the C17 & C19 when there were giant shocks to the older order from the new astronomy, geology etc & all absolutes seem to vanish between an entirely relative world in which the air was too rarefied [sic] for man to breath. In the next three years I want to study Anthropology, Psychology & Literature. Of course this will be just an introduction to these fields & probably I'll find that my thesis more than drains all my reserves of intellectual energy. My uncle's successes as a writer - he is now an established historical biographer & is reviewing for newspapers, going on the wireless etc spurs me on. My secret ambition is to be asked by Sedbergh to talk at Civics!*

*Actually I expect all this study of poetry, the Grail & Arthurian legends etc is probably my equivalent of the scientist's escape into the world of abstract 'truth' & absolute laws - far from the harassing problems of contemporary life.*

*I've been reading Yeats avidly - do you know any of his poetry? Tell me what you think of the 'Sorrow of Love if you can get hold of it. Not sure what it means but sounds good.*

*All the very best & write. Regards to all the family. Alan*

It is worth noting the conspicuous absence of any reference to my family, esp. parents in Assam, in this long letter.

The second letter to Felicity was written just as I returned to Oxford to start on a postgraduate degree.

3 October Worcester College, Oxford

Dear & beloved Felicity,

I don't remember if I've typed a letter to you before & asked our pardon for this obnoxious practice. If I haven't please forgive me & do tell me if it worries or irritates you.

Thanks very much for your letter from St Vincent, I'm sorry I didn't write to you there but I must have left it too late & the boat company advised me to write straight to B.A. - I hope you got my last letter. Already, I expect, events on the boat will seem very remote but as I only have that letter before me I will have to talk about that episode, though, of course, I hope you are having a wonderful time in B.A.

I was not really surprised to hear of your chaotic departure for tho' you are not in fact particularly disorganized you seem to be one of the people fate likes to tease; I hope you have managed to acquire some other clothes than Aunt F's pyjamas & bathing costume. I envied you very much when you described your sunbathing & visions of a golden brown & more than normally beautiful enchanted my mind's eye; only to be momentarily drowned by a vision of a golden & more than normally handsome & suave 1st mate - ah, well, I deserve it after my talk about Jean. By the way, if it interests you, that slight affair is over & at the moment my flirtatious attentions are vaguely directed towards a girl who lives on the same landing right at the top of my new digs, tho' she is 'going steady' with some guy.

You say that the distance & change in temperature makes me seem a bit like a dream' which is roughly what I said in my last letter & what I feel now as I sit looking out onto a lowering autumn morning with the trees tossing & the rooks being hurled about the sky like the dead leaves. My only vision of South America is based on the film 'Black Orpheus' - thus I see life as one long carnival underneath which stirs old & bitter tensions & dim memories of old civilizations. On the other hand my picture is made up of spies & smooth bars, & the atmosphere of 'Our Man in Havana'.

I left my Youth Hostel on Friday last & went home for the night, encountering the Robert & Angela etc clan for lunch. Angela, as you probably know, is having a baby in a few weeks & seems very well. They are selling, or rather giving up the rent of their house in the Old Brompton Rd & hope to move down to Sussex & build a house in my Uncle Bill's field.

Then on Saturday I bussed down to Manchester with half a ton of books on my back & arrived at Fiona's flat in time for her inauguration party. I don't know if I've told you about her flat which is absolutely ideal - nice area, convenient for buses, good landlord etc. anyhow the party was a success tho' I didn't enjoy it very much. The thing to do was obviously to stand around in a gaggle with the other men for a while & consume a large quantity of beer & then to choose one of the arty but good-looking girls & neck passionately for a few minutes & then find another. Actually my account is rather catty since my rather half-hearted attempts to do this were completely unsuccessful. The girls I chose must have been rather astonished when I started discussing D. H. Lawrence & Sartre etc & anyhow they probably felt slightly embarrassed since I was Fiona's brother.

There were one or two striking differences between this party & the normal Oxford party - tho' I suppose they could mainly be accounted for by the fact that this was in a private flat & able to go on much longer than the normal undergraduate party. In Manchester they drink beer rather than wine & spirits & the girls are prettier & the men older & sex more naturally accepted. Since I was not enjoying it much I left for a walk at about 1 a.m. I always do this if I can during a party since I find that my senses are doubly keen after being choked by smoke, drugged by drink & meaningless conversation. I walked round the park opposite Fiona's digs & in the slight misty rain I felt very deeply the mystery and darkness of the night. I could feel the sleeping city around me, half shut out by the great black trees which slanted up against the glowing sky & my mind became as cool as the great pools of wet grass which lay rippling beneath the flickering moon. The sense of strangeness & beauty were so powerful that I could not help giving thanks to the mysterious presence which seemed to brood in silence above. Perhaps this sounds like Wordsworthian slush - still it's true & is a disease I just have to bear.



We went into Manchester next morning at 5 a.m. & walked through the echoing streets down lines of majestic-in-moonlight buildings to try to find breakfast – but in vain. But just as the girls were about to return to the flat & myself to try to catch a bus to Oxford we walked through the gardens at Piccadilly & found a surprising phenomenon. There were thousands of starling, twittering & wheeling like swarms of bats when disturbed. They hummed in the trees in thousands & seemed to be the souls of all the sleeping people, slowly wakening into the dawning day. And then came the grey light of dawn & the mystery was gone & I had breakfast in a heavy-eyed café where prostitutes & night-watchmen drank coffee & stared morosely at the morning papers.

I caught a bus down to Oxford & changed at Birmingham & Stratford. This was Sunday & so the park at Stratford where the swans & waterlilies swam in the brown ponds & the Salvation Army band played pathetically among the chunks of lawn was full of people exploded like popcorn from the charabancs (is that how one spells it?) A few listless Americans were staring wonderingly at the monument to some local writer whose name I didn't catch, tho' I rather think it began with S.... Then shrouded in that great black duffle coat of mine & wearing a pair of dark glasses which I accidentally stole from my Youth Hostel I bumped my way in by country bus to Oxford. Which seems a good time at which to stop this probably tedious letter. Like you I don't at the moment feel like discussing any abstract & serious topics but hope to be in the mood next time I write.

Look after yourself sweetie & be happy, but don't stay away too long. Write when you can.

Loving and missing you, Alan

Finally, although the next letter to Julie, from Oxford and dated 14th October, is two weeks into period of postgraduate work Oxford, it winds up several important features of the previous period, so I have extracted parts.

Dearest Pussey,

... It doesn't really matter that you didn't ask Penny since she is up at York & would not have been able to come anyway. I had a short letter from her a couple of days ago, the first after a long gap. We seem to have agreed to part. I haven't heard from Felicity in South America for a while, being rather a vague girl she'd probably walked into a shark's mouth or something. [then an account of preparations for my D.Phil....]

Can you remember on one occasion James Stowe giving a Freudian interpretation of Khubla Khan? Perhaps you weren't there? I've been thinking recently about such interpretations. How far can one treat poems symbolically? The reason I say this is because since I am working on this idea about the schizophrenia of the modern mind & how the poem tries to bridge the gap, often by building an idealistic world like Yeats, often by invoking the remembered unity of childhood like Wordsworth, often by exalting human [reason] which seem to bi-pass problems of split duty etc. One common expression seems to be the remembrance of a golden age – either in the writer's experience (cf 'Love & Death' Llewellyn Powys) or the past of the race – Eden for instance. Would it be distortion to apply these vague ideas to a passage which has always been one of my favourite ones in the Bible but whose attraction for me has never been explained? That is the passage at the end of Ecclesiastes beginning "Remember now thy creator in the days of thy youth..."

[I then quote the passage down to "Then shall the dust return to the dust..." and against a few of the lines put my own interpretation, ending] This bald summary is immediately dissatisfying. Perhaps you could do better? But I think the central contrast between the joy & desire & fear & lethargy of age is certain.

## **SOME REFLECTIONS ON OXFORD: FIVE THEMES**

### **English identity and preparations for a life of exploration**

When I was at Sedbergh and in the months before Oxford, I began to explore a world outside England. I went to Assam when 17, went to Scotland for several holidays, including one to the remote Orkneys, went for my first continental tour – to France, Italy, Switzerland and Germany. And after leaving school worked on a boat between Norway and Holland. So it was not an entirely parochial existence.

What is striking now, looking back on those undergraduate years at Oxford, is that it was in many ways the most purely English-centred of my life, even more so than the Dragon period (a holiday in Assam and several in Scotland) and certainly more so than Sedbergh.

I did not go outside the British Isles during my undergraduate years, only leaving England twice for holidays in the Outer Hebrides. I did go on Borstal-Oxford camps – to Spennithorne in Yorkshire in my second summer. But otherwise, apart from one period at a religious camp in Dorset and a retreat in Devon, I was almost exclusively in Oxford and its environs, or the Lake District, with infrequent visits to London or other cities. In many ways this was the period of my deep immersion in the history, and less so the culture, of England. I became fully English and the roots which had started to grow in Broadstone and the Dragon went deeper. This was the emotional and intellectual involvement which gave me the security, in later years, to participate and enjoy – by comparison – Nepal, Japan and China. In a way I was exploring internally, finding out how my mind and emotions worked. I was also assembling the tools to enable me to explore the past through independent and hopefully original research.

The period at Sedbergh included a few trial runs in neighbouring, friendly, seas or under sheltered conditions. I learnt something of the pleasures of short voyages. Then I spent six years (as an undergraduate and graduate) more or less in port (Oxford) being equipped intellectually and emotionally for my task which, as I saw it, was real deep-water exploration to the furthest isles. I assembled the tools and the resources for the long voyages ahead. This was the building of the exploration ship and would prepare me to travel out from England into new worlds, which I did over the following 40 years, when Sarah and I made over 50 voyages outside Europe, as well as a number of over Europe

So the period up to leaving Oxford was one of preparation; making the boxes and jars to hold the specimens we would discover, learning how to make the reports and diaries which would be needed, learning a framework of interpretation, discovering what might be interesting and how to discover new things.

### **Head**

How hard I worked & in what an organized way – and yet, because of immaturity, I seem to have not done very well – except in certain essays for Leyser & Campbell. My written exams were generally not good.

How hard we were pressed – especially in the first term where we were covering - Macaulay, Gibbon, Bede & Tocqueville & also doing some A-Saxon history.

How much work we were expected to do in the Vacations.

How it was probably especially in my second year, 1961-2, that I became really obsessed with keeping everything, my notes and work obviously, but also much of the ephemera, my mother's letters etc. I remember that this was the year when (a) I took a Pitman's typing course and learnt to touch type (b) Bought my first organizational suspended tray - with In/Pending/Out trays which have followed me for the rest of my life (c) Began to keep carbon copies of many of my 'out' letters. For example I kept copies of important reflective letters to Ian Campbell.

How I seem to have been self-consciously writing for my future self - e.g. the portraits of my time with Julie at the start and later with Penny.

How much I crammed in - there is a 'typical day' routine which, along with the various accounts, shows how very much I was doing - many things in parallel. It was at Oxford that I really learnt time management and above all the ability to switch from one task to another and give each one some total concentration (as described frequently by Maria Edgeworth for Lord Oldborough)

There was a great disconnect between my academic work - which was pretty intense and high level - and the kind of sentimental poetry, letters and other writing. I had learnt the important art of 'changing gears' in communication.

As with my essays at Sedbergh, I am amazed at how much my later ideas were already anticipated by my essays - for example the one on land tenure and Eric John's new book, early architecture etc. This may be the main theme to pursue when deciding which parts of the Sedbergh and Oxford essays and work I should leave in the more detailed account.

What, I wonder, was I being taught for - what would my mind be handy for? To be a professional I suppose - a teacher, lawyer, civil servant etc. I think that by this time it was such careers, rather than imperial rule which was clearly over. There was no formal attention to character and morals - that was left to spare time. What it was about was shaping my logic, memory and above all the ability to read and synthesize and order a great deal of information in a short time.

The core was brilliance, ingenuity, unconventional and questioning thinking, taking the path less taken. There was a hatred of humbug, cant, conventional thought. This was the very stuff of an elite ruling class - and the theme of my Chinese Research.

This year was also crucial organizationally. It is when I really professionalized my work and above all my archiving. The five by 3 inch cards became frequent; I started to keep carbon copies of significant letters, I learnt to touch type from a Pitman's course and bought a typewriter, and many of my notes started to be typed. I was now keeping all my mother's letters and most of my ephemera and all my work. I was also writing much more in the way of occasional pieces, especially poetry. So it was really from about the age of 20 that the total archiving was born.

#### The nature of education and teaching.

The mixture of essays, gobbets, seminars, lectures, holiday work, comments etc is well revealed. Very much left to our own devices. The inter-action between the formal

learning of history and the joy of using original texts, with flights into other kinds of writing (poetry etc)

Our teaching stretched no further than Turkey & was mostly British (and no American/African/Colonial/ Imperial etc). I did not venture out of the U.K. during these 3 years. I was digging in my roots and might well have settled in, if I'd been brighter, to the sheltered life of an Oxbridge don. My dimness saved me. Although I was reminded of another world by my mother's writings, it did not deeply affect me – mainly it concerned my sisters etc

Another is that while I remember the Oxford undergraduate years as a sort of Zuleika Dobson paradise, in fact, the papers show much more of the depression, conflict, almost agony and stress and strain (particularly through work) of the time. It was both wonderful and difficult.

In fact, what memory has mostly erased was the immense work effort of those three years how far I had become immersed in history and political science. Only my running letters and the essays and notes reveal this.

Only now do I also realize how I was always envisaging writing a sort of autobiography – both through the conscious retention of materials, the keeping of carbon copies, but even through explicitly keeping field notes, as it were, of the experience – impressions/thoughts etc as I went along.

I suspect that Oxford thought is more of a continuation of Sedburgh than I had realized. [This is especially true of my first year, when I am still really a grown-up schoolboy in many ways. The real change coincides with my introspective writings, which start towards the start of my second year. So my second and third years are the real turning point.

## **Heart**

How almost all of my friends through the three years were in place in my first year – a very revealing list in the party with Julie.

How I was pulled between a desire to find a soul mate & become deeply in love & on the other hand realizing I was much too young to marry.

How I confided in my mother, including materials about my love life – and how she gave me support & advice.

How hard up my parents continued to be and how they struggled to help me through University – but I was quite economical etc.

How, without my parents etc, Field Head was just a base for festivals, for example Christmas. But I was spending all the terms and much of the holiday away on religious camps, trips, Borstal camps etc. etc.

How important Julie Simor was in jerking me out of childhood and introducing me to European culture – but in the gentlest of ways. In fact, in a letter to Ian Campbell, I explicitly comment on how much I think she has helped me to mature.

How easily I got on with girls, for example Julie and I were the centre of a web of friends. Many of my friends who did not have sisters (or a young and involved mother) found girls much less easy to handle.

How I maintained friendships for longish periods. I wrote to a number of Sedbergh friends & even when my love affairs with Julie and Penny and others were over, I continued to be close friends and wrote to them. And was able to distinguish romantic love and affectionate friendship.

How sensitive I was to rebuff, as Julie noticed, and suffered from ‘melancholy moods’ – very mild moments of loss of self-confidence and a desire to compete. I remember loving Keats ‘Ode to Melancholy’ and feeling sad and melancholic and mopy. (I really continued this until Sarah more or less cured me of it).

I seem to have preferred the company of girls – with the erotic overtones & softness – but had many male friends and some of my closest friendships were with men.

It is clear that the strong emotional relationships with Julie and then Penny [and I have JUST re-established contact with Penny and found she has some of my letters etc!!! and have written today to Julie] were starting to occupy the space which my mother had filled. Though it may partly be the result of the virtual absence of letters from me to my parents this year, so that being at home for 5 months the letters from my mother are much less frequent – but the relationship with my mother seems less intense. This also is reflected in what I think was less of an excitement when they returned on leave, or trauma when they left again for India. Just as Field Head became more of a background for me – as did my grandparents, so did my parents. I was starting to be separate & alone.

The frustrations of romance – the ardent desire for a soul-mate etc, and yet the realization that we were too young & immature to pair for life. The attempt to control the body etc – masturbation & frustration and explorations. Very nice that I have the account of three love affairs, Gill Lister before I went, the love of my first year – Julie, the love of my 2nd and third years, Penny.

A second shift is that while the relation to my mother is less important in my undergraduate period than I had thought it was, that to my girl friends, especially Julie & Penny, is far more important than I imagined it would be and provides the emotional core of the whole account – the search for love.

## **Spirit**

How beautiful I found Oxford & Worcester – there are many lyrical descriptions.

How important poetry was for me – both as a source of inspiration & how much I was reading (especially of the Swinburne, Arnold, Keats, Shelley variety) and also in my attempts to write poetry.

I had not remembered my really serious attempt to write poetry and the reading of poetry, if only writing mainly in the style of other poets, for example Dylan Thomas, T.S. Eliot etc. So there is quite a bit of poetry – and I seriously talked in my 21st birthday letter to Penny of wanting, perhaps, to be a poet.

I had not remembered how seriously I was wanting to be a writer – perhaps a novelist, as I wrote to Penny, or a factual writer. There is quite a long plan and preliminary writing for a book on Oxford in the summer of 1962, and then in September plans for books on the Lake District and an anthropological analysis of folk stories or myths. This both shows my early interest in anthropology – I had forgotten I knew of anthropology at this time – and anticipated one of the three topics I suggested for a D.Phil. when I met Keith Thomas (witchcraft, sex, myth (e.g. Arthurian).

3. I had forgotten how important the theme of Arthurian Romance was when I was at this stage – not only was I reading it (Tennyson etc) but wrote the Tristan story to explore sex and religion – as I explained to Penny.

## **Soul**

How religious I was – and almost mystical

How much I was reading, especially Love & Death, Tolkien's influence, children's stories – I was still trying to keep together my childlike vision – this is a continuation of the Wordsworth story.

How I quite often mourned the loss of innocence & youth, which has long been one of the central themes of my work – before I realized that this was the personal cost of 'modernity'.

This period was one of the central times when I was making my continued attempt to prevent my life from losing its magical or mysterious aspect, the central theme in many ways of my Wordsworthian and religious writing. The constant struggle of the head and the heart, the preservation of the otherness & the force of the imagination. I now realize that my long essay on Victorianism in December 1962 summarizes all this very well. The search for magic has continued, and even in this survey of the roots of my life & in memory I am pursuing it.

There is the religious questioning throughout – the feeling that religion was both essential & yet somehow unsatisfactory – playing with Catholicism, the hunt for a religious surrogate through poetry.

I think I sensed that this was the crucial period when, turning from a child-like integrated vision which combined head and heart, I could lose the meaning of that integration. So, much of the struggle was to hold it together – which would foreshadow my life's interest in dissociations of modernity & the preservation of alien worlds of shamanism, pre-Axial, integrated which I found in anthropology & particularly in Thak & Japan. My education was a slow indoctrination into modernity, by my resistance to this, supported by my mother, means that out of the tension & resistance (and the fortunate preservation of documents) I am now able to reconstruct in detail the process of education into imperial rationality.

But my anticipation, that the central theme would be the dissociation of sensibility & the Cartesian dualism, or the invention of modernity, turns out to be correct & the love aspect is part of it all. The loss of religious faith and of childhood is indeed central to it all.

## **Body**

I was rather scruffy and unaware of my looks and clothes – as Julie pointed out.

I suspect that I was sexually frustrated & masturbated – there are signs of guilt etc, but can't remember this particularly, except, perhaps, later in my last time at Iwerne religious camp. I was determined to stick to my sexual principles as a Christian and when I went down from Oxford in 1963 was still a virgin.

And of course we were being taught the manners and culture of the ruling class – just as important. We were being taught to be country gentlemen in these quasi-country houses; we were to learn the drinking, eating, debates, language, aesthetics etc. But all that was added to the formal side.

## **Other**

A reasonably developed sense of humour and self-deprecating style.

How I joined a lot of University societies, but never gave myself up to any of them really – I acted in minor capacities, but never as President of anything – it was partly a strategy to keep my freedom, to be on the edge as at the Dragon and full-back in rugby.

There is an absence of manipulation in my relationships. I did not seem to cultivate people because of what they could do for me etc. I wasn't sucking up to people, or seeking patronage. Nor, as far as I can see, did I manipulate friendships, dropping friends when they were no longer 'useful' etc.

I was rather scruffy and unaware of my looks and clothes – as Julie pointed out.

I felt at ease with both much older (e.g. Lady Clay, Ralph Robinson) and much younger (a number of younger girls etc) people.

Apart from world poverty, I don't show much interest in World Affairs, I suspect, even in the period of the Cuban Missile Crisis. I was involved with the U.N. society, but do not remember attending meetings.

I didn't spend much time listening to the news, reading papers (C.S. Lewis's advice) etc.

I depended more than I now remember on Richard to lend me money in difficult times – and frequently refer to his loans.

The writing of all this has been another good test of memory. After reading my letters etc, I remember a lot, including details. But when I sat down to write down what I could

remember, I was only able to remember fragments, and could not date them. It is another reminder of the importance of keeping field notes!

One thing that strikes me as to why my account may be important as a record is that I was absolutely average as an undergraduate, as I had been at my previous schools. I was neither rich nor poor, upper class, or lower class, brilliant or dim, etc. Just in the middle in every respect and hence I can represent or stand for so many others.

I have tried to write this account, as we have done for the Dragon and I shall do for Sedbergh, as more than personal. It should be written for the average Chinese or reader in a thousand years. The obvious needs to be included. And the advent of new publishing means one can put in as much detail as one likes.

I am aware of how my intellectual relationship with my mother – now blossoming – was so important. It spurred me on, gave me confidence, taught me how to write and always challenged my puritanism, religious zealotry and narrow mindedness.

So far in this account, that is up to the summer of 1962, my sisters have been away and hence little influence. Robert also is off on his career, though I do stay with him. Richard is the only important person really, apart from my grand-parents.

I wonder how much Oxford was a break, or merely just a continuation, of the trajectory of the Dragon and Sedbergh. After all the cultural and other influences were continuous and even my teachers were all clustered round Oxford and Cambridge. The history and literature was continuous. And it later continued into Cambridge.

The quest for a vocation – various ruminations of how I would like to spend my life, my vocation, philanthropy, joining etc.

The Lakes became a holiday home – rather than the real home they had been in Sedbergh day. I think my passion for fishing began to fade to a hobby (and I sold my boat) and my passion for the countryside & Wordsworth became less intense. The ‘gang’ of friends became less important than my Oxford & associated London friends. My grandparents became less important & I spent quite a bit of the vacations away in camps and visits. The Lakes were probably most important in the two summers, when my parents were on leave (1960 and 1962), and my sisters also there. Then it became a real family home. But with just my grandparents there, it was less so & for the first decisive moment, my heart was in Oxford.

Just as the chief virtues of the Dragon Triptych is that it follows the anthropological dictates of seeing that world through the eyes of the other – in this case young children, so I have tried with Oxford to see another period & a growing-up process through the eyes of the participants in the process – not hind-sight, not the application of faulty memory – but in the natives own words.

Of course I have knitted together with the advantages of hindsight & the techniques of the historical anthropologist. But the goal is no different to that of my work on Josselin, Fukuzawa or others, to see it through their eyes, not my present distorting lens. I imagine this was Proust’s aim, as it was Thomas Mann’s in *Buddenbrooks* (not having read) or Llewelyn Powys etc. Others have chronicled through memory; I shall attempt to do so through contemporary documents.



Above all, the exercise has shown, as with Dragon and Sedbergh periods, that without the contemporary documents, fifty years later it would be very difficult to retrace my footsteps. Ninety percent or more of what is in the documents would be lost & the contemporary accounts, written from the actual perspective of an actor and observer, would be lost entirely. It would all be re-construction, as with Nabokov, Berners et al.

Interesting that I did not visit Field Head for half a year, January 10th to end of June 1963 – shows it was becoming less important as a refuge.

The simplicity of my living and finances.

It becomes very clear that the Van Gennep model of rites of passage: entering/separating – Liminality – Leaving/re-aggregation as an adult.

I suppose the most important thing to say at this stage is how interesting I have found it. When I started I did not have high hopes. I suppose I thought only a few deep memories would be retrieved and that the general interest might be less than the Dragon and Sedbergh. Instead, in many ways this could be the most interesting stage, if well handled since I am articulate, observant and changing rapidly. I am dealing with an almost fully grown observer at a special time and place. It could be poignant and insightful and unusual. I don't know how much it will touch those who did not share this experience, but for me it has been enormously bracing and fun – if further intense and exhausting. A real piece of anthropology of a half familiar, half strange world.

## PERSONAL WRITINGS

### Winter 1962 The Parks

The river carries its leaves, brown & yellow  
Underneath its weeping veils of willows  
And the warm air pours, thick with bird-song  
Around me. Each leaf is separate & precious  
Now, for they will go soon. One  
Can see each of them tremble in the golden  
Sunlight. The trees just turning,  
Mostly yellow, with tinges of fiery red  
Their firm shapes just beginning  
To show through. The holly trees  
Are half turned and seem to be  
Burnt brown around their patches  
Of flaming berries. I can hear a  
Distant bell for it is Sunday. There  
Are boys searching for conquers amidst  
The crackling leaves & throwing up  
Sticks to knock them down. The dace  
Rise for midges amidst the leaves.  
Young couples wander linked, stopping  
To gaze deep into the river or turning  
And kissing each other lightly for  
Sheer joy of this blue, calm, warm  
Autumn day. Undergraduates walk,  
Thinking of the term ahead, and old  
Men sun themselves like frail butterflies  
Before the winter falls. The season gathering  
To a last, fresh, glory, before the  
Winter comes.

### An Evening with Julie      9/10/62

The pangs, the stabs of self-pity, and the spaces of tense rest are gone, or almost, and I can't really recall why it was that I was so unhappy. Why is it Julie that when I am with you and only then, do I lose my self-confidence, feel myself an unutterable boor and hence precarious, resent any undue interest you have in others? I don't know, but there are many images of this evening which contributed – perhaps. The party we went to was an amalgam of everything I am trying to escape from – artificiality (esp in friendship), boredom, hypocrisy (pretending various likes & dislikes) waste, and the flesh. It was loud, rushed, a brittle-atmosphere metallic like the voice of 'Cliff' [presumably Richard] – I felt the whole thing was conducted under blinding, unpleasant, neon-lights. Perhaps I wanted to be in love, and wasn't; perhaps I was just rather tensed up after the tea-party, certainly I had a headache and was glad to be able to escape for a while into the cool night which was [sadly the card ends here and I have not found the next].

Another poem was clearly written near the start of my last year at Oxford and is dated 12th October 1962 [I sent this poem to Penny in a letter on 14th October, asking her to return it. She did so, having first copied it out and left a copy with the letter.]

Today I dreamt the world was mine,  
 That stars and moon and silver sands lay in my palms,  
 That glory streamed golden through my fingers  
 And the people of the earth sang for joy.  
 Deep sorrow's poisoned roots sprung into softest leaf  
 And autumn no longer scarred a darkening land.  
 I dreamt that through a thousand dusty streets  
 A silver dawn crept on sandalled feet  
 Powdering the old buildings with rose and gold  
 Wiping the shadows from her face  
 And filling each heart with peace.  
 I saw the stars draw close and the aching years  
 Grow small, I saw each bitter parting moving  
 Back into the joy of meeting and each  
 Willowed river winding back to its source.  
 I saw this sad, torn, city  
 Throw off its noisome cloak and stand crowned  
 Amidst its velvet fields as night  
 Drifted like the river mists.  
 I saw each separate, lonely, light  
 Where imprisoned souls yearned for comfort  
 Merge into the blaze of glory  
 That swept amidst the tangled fears  
 And hatreds that grew like thornèd briars  
 Choking and tearing at the weak hand of love.  
 But I saw lust walking the night in men's eyes  
 I felt their bodies twist and quiver  
 In agony of anticipation – their mouths dry,  
 Their hands moist, their bellies taught-wrenched  
 And their prey – the women – sleek-hipped  
 Sinuous, as cool and hot as dark forests  
 As easy and heavy as cats, asleep, in the noon.  
 And yet, inside, tortured by a thousand fears.  
 And I saw all this and my heart was torn.  
 For misery and joy, lust and love  
 Walked together, peace and desire  
 Mingled and melted in the shadows  
 And I knew not where to turn  
 But through it all I saw the thread  
 Of a total importance, I saw that  
 All was real and of utmost value  
 But that in the depths and heights  
 The battle was lost and won,  
 The conflict and the agony over,  
 The joy and grief finally joined  
 In one blended harmony of praise  
 That sustained every leaf, every minutest atom  
 In its resolved order and pitched man  
 Into the unfathomable mystery & love of God.  
 I saw all this and could not understand.

Psychology of a tortoise – etc 17/10/62 [I had moved into digs in Worcester Place,  
 next to the College, which were in between private houses.]

Possessive complex of a woman next door who spends hours watching, talking to and moving a tortoise. Follows its every foot step – occasionally intervening to put it in another place – clearly bored. Spends other times attempting to find weak spots in the wall – when she finds one gingerly pushes loose bricks into other garden.

Subject for story. An apple tree – with many ripe fruit – but hanging over two gardens divided by a wall – in a small back to back lower-middle class area where house divided by 75 yds of garden – and where lonely figures can be seen in lighted rooms in the evenings.

On 26 October 1962 I wrote the following, and accompanied it with some rather curious drawings, dated to that day, of ‘Abominable Snowman’, ‘Death of Idealism’, ‘Sir Boars The fisher-King’, ‘Weight’, ‘Vicious Circle’, ‘Peter the Wolf’, ‘Sex’, ‘Breasts’. May be worth scanning these in later!

Oxford: an autumn night, 26/10/62

Autumn wrings its wet leaves over Oxford  
And the traffic grinds thro’ wet streets  
Which blaze the myriad lights of the heavy city.  
In the clogged air there is a smell of marsh mist  
And the heavy lumbering of river-muddy cattle,  
Old dripping walls slant off into tolling darkness  
Where depths of sodden woods slap the lifeless ground.  
A mood is here – a medieval sleep, which turns  
And tosses in fitful wakening, trying to force  
The new life and bustle and light into the centre  
Of the town – watching it from the shadows  
With high-towered scorn and from beneath suspicious  
Doorways. Sad gloom of witchcraft inks the heavy  
Stone with dark watered blood, drawing flickering  
Fingers along the streets to draw the wounds  
Away from the light into lightless tunnels where  
It may sleep. Vacantly the empty, brightly chattering  
Shops speak to the streets, and the crowd  
Vacantly answers it. But below and behind  
The whispering curse of the city can be heard,  
A muttering call to the lingerer who  
Chances to look for a moment down a side-walk  
Who is fluttered like a leaf down some echoing  
Cobble-clattering street, to lose the noise and lights  
For the witching silence which is loud with  
Silent bells and prayer. Here the swelling  
River with its night smells of mole-like wet  
Seems to run close in damp of reeds and weeds  
And the strong buildings become rounded pebbles  
In the stream of years. An infrequent light  
Adds deeper gloom, a bubble of light toes on  
The heavy waves of shadows, a flickering  
Sightless eye in an enchanted dark. Old,  
Wet and slimy as some deep mud-floored prison  
The streets lie stretching out into the shelving  
Hills and the clouds move fast, uncovering  
For a moment a dripping moon, beneath

The unleaving trees, which scatter their bat-shapes

To the rotting paths. All is old and black,  
Crowding out the sprinkled drops of central lights  
Like oil crushes out water – and leaving the  
Night to its ancient, tossing sleep.

Another shorter poem is dated 4/11/62 is headed. [I was hospital visiting – with my guitar – and had written another piece not dissimilar to this.]

A few impressions: autumn walk & hospital

In the light of a child, as its face flares to smile,  
In the drift of the leaves on the lake of the trees,

[seven lines heavily crossed through and the above connected to the rest with an arrow and ‘expanded’ written in]

What wouldst though have me write?  
Of the long autumn avenues where the leaves  
Crunched like thick snow under my feet,  
Where down the hills a row of poplars looked  
Like some grey-green church ruin,  
Where I discovered a large-black beetle  
Making its cumbersome way, ungainly, over the  
Mountain-jungle of the leaves? Shall I  
Tell thee of the rain in my face  
And the bird-song in my ears the  
Drifting smoke of the willow-veils and the  
Fur-green mould on the grey tree trunk?  
Or of the bleak, angular, man-made concrete  
Hospital with its humming nerves of pain  
And arteries of agony, its septic smell  
And its nightmare of jangling sorrow – and  
In its wards a thousand frightened, uncomprehending  
Humans – one of them a little girl – like Alice –  
Long hair, serious eyes, solemn and unafraid,  
Mischievous and timid – not knowing why the rack  
And the beating, sawing, rubbing, clashing, jangling  
World, poised between the beauty of  
The natural world, and the pulped agony  
Of the artificial keeps its reeling course.

Knowledge – thoughts while reading Coleridge (Willey) 23/11/62

True knowledge is to know a fact emotionally – to “feel it in the blood” and to let it change one’s personality. Our receptivity is largely in proportion to a) our experiential maturity & b) our previous ‘knowledge’. Thus experience – which is outside events modifying our character (the most obvious channels for such action are extremes such as suffering & love) has a direct relation to our ability to understand abstract ideas. The ability of ideas in themselves to modify and increase our experience is much less powerful. Thus over-long academic study is wasteful for until we have matured our personalities much of our study cannot be absorbed.

Like a sponge however – once the initial dryness has been overcome the absorbing power increases more rapidly [sic – rapidly] – till saturation point is reached.

[Thinking about this 50 years later it all seems true. It explains why my academic achievements at Oxford, despite very hard work, were limited – I was immature. And it applies to Confucian educational systems around the world.]

Another poem was written on 18th December 1962

‘Sunlight & cloud’

[Written in Martin’s coffee bar. Written on Worcester College, Oxford, headed notepaper]

In the cloud-reflecting-window barred  
Thunder sunlight a man moves on  
The hillside & the rock rhythms of  
The juke-box move into significance with  
A sliding of sea-gull wings and cigarette  
Smoke. The strong-barriers of the mind  
Slide into an ecstasy of unity and  
The world’s insistent voices of experience  
Brighten to a blur, like conversation.  
The breath of joy blurs the mirror  
And for a moment we turn out from  
Ourselves and feel every chair move  
And every growing twig against the  
Mountain sky. Slow drifts the clouds  
And for a time slows to a barely  
Perceptible ticking, the heart is  
Poured into the bucket of beauty  
And in its naked streaming rush  
It feels every steaming coffee-cup  
And the weak Christmas tree lights  
Dull in the sunlight catch fire  
And burn a pattern thro’  
And then it is gone

There is another poem dated 14/12/62 and headed ‘Warrington’  
[It is written on Worcester College, Oxford, notepaper]

Lights burst, surfacing on the sticky  
Blue evening. Over the houses the  
Smell of carols slides like tea-leaves  
Round a cup; dreams, saunter  
Into coffee-bars, rubbing nylon lips  
Against the swinging doors and  
Leaving lipstick.  
Coffee-cups and the drift of  
Scent and smoke. Nostrils of  
The night breathes out used air  
Through the factory chimneys – but  
Warm through the blackness  
Love springs with the lights –  
Breaking into a spangling glory –  
Beating the brackish water back

To the sleepless eyes in the  
Alleys.

[there are several short pieces of music drawn in on this]

There is another piece of writing clearly written about the same time, in the same style on the same paper. Possibly the same day.

I stood naked before the fire of God,  
And Truth commended with her  
What is your love? And I hung my head -  
For the years and the seas & times,  
That moved thro' the depths of me,  
The rhythms and tunes and rhymes  
That swayed my thoughts and dreams  
Were strong and bitter and ???  
And my life was weak and wild  
And knew my self as a man,  
But loved my love like a child.  
And the world spun strange  
That my eyes could not see,  
How to know me from you,  
Or to know if I loved only Thee,  
And the ecstasy and the vision  
That the wind I thought would bring  
Hard the drift of far-off seasons,  
But the salt brought its sting.  
The iron entered the dove  
And the fire burnt the rose,  
And I saw my love wept  
And I did not know my love.  
If the tender night is gone,  
What of the brittle day?  
Where will shadows hide?  
Where can the darkness play?  
Where the sunlight in the garden,  
Which lifted the swallow-rose  
Against its setting of softness  
Which the lichen wall-moss throws.  
If you and I together  
Are to explore the starry deep,  
We must weave a world together,  
Whose secrets, once gravely keep,  
Out over the bitter conflicts  
This sharpened field of thorns,  
We must lay a heart-wrung carpet,  
Soften than bare-foot lawns.

On a small card is written the following.

'To Xmas(?) / (God?) (Penny?) 22.12.62

When will I see the flaming Xmas  
Stars, singing thro' the soft night,  
Echoing down the frosty fields?

And shimmering out over the ice-lakes – like  
 Stones groaning over the ice? Broken, brittle,  
 Reeds freeze in the solid mud and the  
 Crusted sheep trail sprays of thorns.  
 Every tingling spray of every branch is  
 Shot through with cold, the birds are drugged  
 With it in the trees. One aches  
 To think of the thin fish in their black holes  
 In the snow-water streams. And through the  
 Bitter purity and cleanness, the agony  
 Of unity, is born our Saviour. In this  
 Intense sadness, in the suffering of the  
 World, where homeless & clotheless children  
 Crouch over railings in Naples – clutching at the  
 Breath of soup, their stomachs torn by hunger.  
 Or men lie raving of this world's hate –  
 Their eyes blind with pain – their brains screaming  
 With the skinless lashes – the World's Saviour is born.  
 The dream and warmth is born indeed, through the  
 Dirtiness and squalor, the impurity of human hatred  
 A pure voice is heard 'Come unto me' – and the  
 World turns away, carrying a lightless lantern  
 Out into its desert dark.  
 The jollity and glory of Xmas is spun  
 Through with the richer black thread of suffering  
 Mocking the cheeriness – standing pale-faced.

[The reference to Naples arises from the fact that I had read a book about Father Borrelli's work there, had heard him talk, and was for some time a subscriber – I have the Xmas cards – to his charity.]

#### Cacti & blood (23 or 25/12/62)

Beryl when in hospital – slept in cacti-strewn waiting room. Saw cacti were flood [sic] with dishes of blood. On enquiring of nurse of this was so was told that one of them was fed with blood from husband's chest.

The two following pieces were written on 1st January. That evening Penny would arrive for ten days, driven up by my Uncle Richard. Perhaps these poems are connected to that imminent event in some way.

#### Self-pity

To feel the sickness rising within one – to know the cruelty  
 Of self-pity, the desire to hurt the loved one so that she will be kind,  
 To feel no joy when Spring comes, to feel emptiness when  
 The longed-for hour comes, to feel the inner loneliness,  
 The stretching snap of all communication, is to feel the  
 Nothingness of death. The sour taste is soon gone – but the  
 Shadow is always behind the sun and one day will  
 Drown it. The uncertainty moves deep in one and one  
 Cries out for the land, and thorns are on the branch.  
 The eager hope dies in your eyes, and all the



While you despise your own meanness, your own  
Intense ache crushes all that is fresh, all the wonder  
And joy and you know that another thread of  
Darkness has bound the light that was in you  
And you rise again torn and weaker, trying to forget  
Knowing you have betrayed...  
This was the agony of self-pity on the cross.

### Snow & Sunset

It had snowed and there was a sunset. The sky was  
Clear blue, the ridge of hills on my left were dark, except  
The farthest end which rose to a peak of golden  
Bracken, very richly red with the glory of the sun, and  
Yet dark against the far-off mountains; this was rough, as  
Dry and broken as withered bracken, rocky and pine-plumed  
And throwing into relief the sweep of the pink mountains -  
Where the snow was like milk stained with the sun's  
Blood, sliding in a broad flood over the breasts and  
Shoulders of the firm rock. Nearer, the fields were swelling  
Green and dark, the hedges black and the birds sleeping,  
But the light lingered on the snow and seemed to  
Fill the sky with morning, electrifying it  
To a deeper blue, luminous and glittering with unfallen  
Silver. My mind moves - up over the dark ridge on my  
Left, through the stone-walled lanes, across the frosted fields  
Through the first and down to the lake.  
Here the sun's last blood is caught, very pale and  
Orange in this iced chalice among the hills. For  
A few seconds the Grail is here - burning with light  
Deeper than the imagining of man - burning and smoking  
Among the surrounding pines, streaming along the ice,  
Warm with wonder and reflection, and then the  
Sun sinks and the sky is blue and the moon  
Rides pure over the black mountains and the  
World is dark with sorrow at its loss.

## ACADEMIC WORK

### ACADEMIC WORK WINTER 1962

From various accounts and notes of this term, from Penny's letters and scraps of my own, it is clear that I was working very intensely – about 8 hours a day – and this and the following terms were the most hard-working of my time in Cambridge. I was coming towards my finals and really wanted to do well, but was only of mediocre ability. My Collections, or start of term exams, were still showing poor results. For example a set which I probably did at the end of this term, or perhaps at the start, were marked by Harry Pitt. My first essay on 'Did the Restoration Church Settlement attempt too little or too much?' was given a Beta gamma. 'You haven't the knowledge in sufficient detail for a good answer – see Ogg on the steps of the settlement & most important Whiteman's article in the THRS 5th series, vol. V. The next was on 'James II's policy was a revised version of the programme his brother had attempted after 1670'. For thesis I got a Beta Beta Alpha. 'Nicely turned essay – but thin on foreign policy'. The next on 'Was the religious life of England 1660-1714 on a higher level than the ecclesiastical history of the period would lead us to expect?' this was apparently dreadful – gamma minus minus. 'You know very little about the Church before 1714. The big Sykes book is little help. Look at his later books & read Ogg "Charles II" vols. You don't even mention the Cambridge Platonists. The next essay was 'How far is it possible to explain the financing of industrial expansion in the C18?' for which I got a Beta. – 'more difficult than you think. Your essay shows no connection between the new wealth & better credit facilities & industry. ... and so on. There is another page of stringent criticism, ending. 'A disappointing paper – you have tackled two deceptively easy religious questions and only disclosed that you are not equipped to answer them – & a third very difficult econ qn – difficult because no one knows the answer. You do much better on a 'straight' question where your fertility of style pays off.' The sum of all the marks was a Beta – a lower second. I must have been somewhat depressed by this – but perhaps it spurred me on to the Herculean efforts I made over the next six months.

The term seems to have been split between English history from the late C18 to the later C19, and my special subject, which was Oliver Cromwell. In terms of English history it is difficult to be sure what I did, but the first essay I have is one which really intrigued me. The title was 'What does one mean by the term 'The Industrial Revolution'? This was one of the essays I most enjoyed and put a huge effort into. It was nearly fourteen pages long (foolscap, by hand) replete with tables etc. It laid out many of the thoughts and questions which I would return to over the following years – particularly the unresolved problem of whether the rise in population of the eighteenth century was a cause or consequence of industrialism. For this essay I took almost 60 pages of notes, many of them typed, from forty books and articles.

#### What does one mean by the term 'The Industrial Revolution'?

[I have split up some of the longer paragraphs]

For this essay a purely arbitrary division has been drawn between causes and results of the Industrial Revolution – a division which is patently artificial since such factors as population growth, agricultural change, standards of living were both cause and result of Industrial Growth.

Beales' 'historical revision' of 1929 has warned us of the danger of placing an isolated emphasis on the events of 1760-1840 by showing that neither was 1760 a starting point nor 1840 an ending to the period of economic growth. All the fundamental characteristics of the so-

called revolution – capitalist relationships, division of labour, technical innovations, increasing population and so on, were present before 1760. Further, Coleman's article on 'Industrial Growth and Industrial Revolutions' shows that if measured by growth curves, rather than by absolute production graphs, the classic 'Industrial Revolution' was no more a Revolution in the paper Industry than the application of water-power to the rag-beating processes. He does go on, however, to defend the use of the term and says "the term should not be applied to certain technical or economic innovations in particular industries etc. It is necessary to go beyond the curves of industrial growth & beyond mechanization to the vital conjuncture of changes in which population growth, large scale and extensive industrial investment, and the remarkably pervasive effects of the application of science to industry are amongst the most important in producing industrialization. In this usage, the industrial revolution means the "take off" into industrialisation, a use which avoids the danger of equating industrialisation itself with industrial revolution, and which reserves the term for the comparatively sudden and violent change which launches the industrialised society into being, transforming that society in a way which none of the earlier so-called industrial revolutions ever did." It is in this sense that the term 'Industrial Revolution' is used here.

Before considering the major causes of the economic growth of this period there are several factors which should be dismissed as not fundamentally contributing to the process. Ashton includes the exploitation of colonial peoples, protective tariffs and war. The last of these undoubtedly acted as a short-term stimulus in several industries – such as silk, cloth and iron, – and Dr John has shown the stimulating effects of war on coal, glass, paper, textile and other industries. But Chambers' detailed study of the Vale of Trent 1670-1800 "gives no great evidence either way", while Ashton's study of the number of patents taken out each year shows that – for instance in 1782 when a disastrous war was drawing to an end and only 39 patents were taken out as opposed to 64 in the following year of peace – war, bringing higher rates of interest and government borrowing, not to mention insecurity – could have a harmful influence on industry. War therefore might have been stimulating in short bursts – but Nef believes that, since there was little to choose in the rate of growth in industry and population in England in the 1760's as compared to France, it must have been the French Revolution and Napoleonic Wars, in which England was less directly involved than the Continent, which helped G.B. to gain a tremendous lead over continental in industrial development. War, moreover, was a major factor in producing growing industrial discontent in the Luddite years by cutting off the supplies of timber and hence preventing an adequate supply of houses in the growing towns.

Various factors played a role in encouraging the industrial revolution in England earlier than in the rest of Europe. Religious toleration played a part – attracting Huguenot workmen to England – and so did religious dissent. The Society of Friends, for example, were predominant in the development of corn-milling, brewing, pharmacy, and banking as well as in the iron and steel industries with such families as Darbys, Reynolds & Hunstmans. The 'Protestant Ethic' and 'Tawney thesis' may explain this connection to some extent, and more obvious factors such as the superior education of nonconformists and their greater solidarity which, in days of primitive borrowing facilities, enabled them to raise capital more easily than others, also contributed.

England had certain social advantages over continental Europe. Ashton claims it had a more mobile society which allowed every class to contribute its share of talent and ideas. Inventors and entrepreneur's came from every class and a family like the Peel's could rise in three generations from small Lancashire yeomen farmers, through a great industrialist, to a Prime minister. Connected with the social hierarchy were legal relationships and perhaps most important of the effects of the laws of England was the fact that, since the sub-soil was the property of the landlord, men like the Earl of Bridgewater were directly interested in mining expansion.

Other factors included the close relationship between land and industry in the ruling families and, further, that these families ruled the country. There were no stifling royal regulations. But here we must remember that Nef's study of C16 & C17 France and England showed that government interference could not stifle industrial expansion entirely, tho' it might

delay it. Perhaps most fundamental of all, was the complex of political, economic and social factors which had made England into a 'middle-class' nation. For tho' there is a danger in using such a term of the C18, it is true that the national wealth was more widely divided than in France and that, as a result, more was spent on manufacturable and utility products than on relatively wasteful luxuries. This process, as we will see, was increased during the first half of the C18 by the profits gained by the agricultural workers from the agricultural depression.

England had other advantages – one of them being geographical. Habakkuk in his article on the 'Basic conditions of economic progress' stresses the importance of trade in providing the initial capital for industrial expansion – and says of England 'English trade, both internal and external, was exceptionally favoured by geography, and less impeded by destructive wars, disorder and political instability than the continent, this', he continues, 'may well be the crucial reason' (for England's industrial leadership). In this context it is important to remember that unlike France, England had no internal customs barriers. The breaking down of internal customs barriers', says Thomas, 'was the prelude in Italy and Germany to the industrial revolution in those countries.'

Finally England had certain mineral advantages. In 1754 Sir John Dalrymple pointed out that "among all the known countries on the surface of the globe it was in Great Britain alone that the coal beds, the iron ore and limestone, which [are] the three raw materials of the iron manufacture, were frequently found together and moreover in close proximity to the sea." This was an essential condition of development, but in what way may coal have caused the industrial revolution? Wrigley, in a 'Conference on the Origins of the Industrial Revolution' argues that 'as long as the chief raw materials of industry are animal & vegetable in nature (wool, wood etc) there must come a time in a small country like England, when there is competition for land between food and industries', this puts a break on economic expansion – witness the battle between sheep and men in Tudor times'. 'Once, then,' he continues 'the change over from wood to iron had taken place, great expansion could begin.' Prest denies the implication that the Industrial Revolution was a mere accident following a timber shortage, but stresses that it was the superior advantages of coal as a fuel which attracted manufacturers.

Whatever the cause the results were certainly to be momentous. Not only was greater power provided and the future of the steam engine made possible but, as Wrigley points out, it encouraged heavy capital investment in improving transport facilities, for this was justified in moving large volumes of mineral materials, whereas it had not been when collecting animal or vegetable raw materials together from over a wide area, since only a small volume will move over any one route. A warning, however, against placing too much emphasis on cheaper fuel as a main cause of the Industrial Revolution is provided by Nef's studies which have shown that both fuel (& labour) were probably cheaper in France than in England in the period 1540-1640 (without any appreciable result on industry in that country) – and also by the surprisingly small expansion in the coal industry in the C18, relative to that in the C17 and C19s. In the C17 it increased fourteenfold, in the C19 twenty-three times and in the C18 – only threefold.

Such were, what may be called, the 'natural' advantages of England. How did these energies find an outlet in economic activity?

The study of two C18 figures gives us an introduction to the problem of how economic expansion was financed. Adam Smith outlined the need for capital accumulation in his distinction between "productive" and "unproductive" labour. Investment (spending on "capital") sets to work productive labour, and luxury consumption (spending on "revenue") merely employs unproductive labour. "The proportion between capital and revenue" he continues "seems everywhere to regulate the proportion between industry and idleness. Wherever capital predominates industry prevails; wherever revenue, idleness." Thus the age of expansion was forced to be one of self-denial and re-investment and we see this process clearly displayed in the career of "Parsley Peel & his son."

A small excerpt from Norman Gash's book will demonstrate the C18 phenomenon of the growth of the industrial entrepreneur from small beginnings, illustrating both the small amount of capital needed and the methods used to get it, and also illuminating Charles

Wilson's article on the importance of the entrepreneur – the man who combined many functions.

“The Peels, like many farmers and cottagers had intermittently combined wool-weaving with agriculture. Peel's brother-in-law Haworth (the son of a ‘chapman’ or dealer in woven fabric) had been sent to London to learn the mysteries of calico-printing with a Dutch firm in Spitalfields. On his return he proposed to Peel that they should jointly set up a print-works at Blackburn. Peel raised a mortgage on his small freehold estate; further capital was provided by Yates – whose father kept the Black Bull Inn; and about 1760 a factory was established ... tho' the original intention was only to print Blackburn ‘greys’ the enterprise soon developed into a more ambitious organization embracing all the processes of carding, spinning, weaving and printing ... his son was sent to London to enlarge his experience before returning to the family business. In the early years when capital was short and tho' competition of the London calico printers still formidable he worked unceasingly.”

Ashton outlines several methods whereby capital was harnessed, of which the growth of the country bank – mobilizing the capital of agriculturalists for the benefit of industrialists – was one of the most important. He emphasizes that banks did not often hold shares in business but played their part by holding mortgages and bonds for would-be industrialists. Interconnected with this was, of course, the rate of interest which fell and was stabilized at between 3-5% in this century. It was still high enough to attract a large amount of foreign capital into England – especially from Holland (according to Lord North about 3/7ths of the National Debt was in their hands) – but its fall during the years since 1685 had certain beneficial influences on industry. Mortgages, as we have seen, were the usual method of raising capital for small family concerns – often they were mortgages on the factory buildings themselves – and as the return on investment in public funds fell, a mortgage at 5% became an increasingly attractive security for the neighbouring landowner, solicitor, clergyman or widow. Likewise falling interest rates would encourage investment in capital works – especially large concerns such as turn-pike roads and canals. Thus, indirectly, industry was benefitted, for instance there was less capital tied up in goods in transit. Both Charles Wilson and Ashton warn us against placing too much emphasis, however, on a direct effect on industry for, as the former points out, the fall did not prevent the decline and virtual extinction of many well-established industries, since firms obtained their resources largely by reinvestment of profits; and the amount ploughed back, it seems likely, was influenced very little by changes in the rate of interest.

Professor Nurske is quoted by Chambers as saying “in England in the C18. Everyone knows that the spectacular revolution would not have been possible without the agricultural revolution that preceded it: and what was the agricultural revolution? It was based mainly on the introduction of the turnip...” This opens up a new field of causality – how far did agricultural changes – perhaps by creating a hungry, increasing, expropriated, proletariat, possibly by providing an expanding, increasingly wealthy and manufacture-consuming tenant-farmer population, stimulate the Industrial Revolution? The demographic factor will, of necessity be excluded for a while, tho' it was, of course, crucial to the answer to this problem.

Among the problems which this question set is – how far was the enclosure movement of the late C18 – for the first time directed by Parliament – a direct and successful attempt to expropriate the peasants and hence provide a labour force for the growing factories? Such an interpretation is inherent in M.H. Dobb's ‘History of Capitalism’ which is summarised by Tawney as follows – “A proletariat emerged on the scale required, not primarily as the natural consequence of a growing population, but as a work of political art, manufactured with the aid of peasant evictions, the corporate egotism of exclusive guilds, and the control of indispensable financial and marketing facilities by commercial middlemen.” Was this true of the late C18 and early C19?

It seems, emphatically, that it was not. Lavrovsky concludes that “The English peasantry as a class disappeared before these extensive parliamentary enclosures.” He stresses that the decades from 1640-1720 saw the disappearance of the peasantry. E. Davies (“The Small Landowner 1780-1832”, *Economic History Review*, 27-8) agrees and goes further in saying that parliamentary enclosures after 1780 “led to an increase in all grades of occupying owners” –

and Lindsey supports this with figures – for instance that the average per village of occupying owners in 18 parishes enclosed 1790-1830 was 10.1 in 1790 and 27.3 in 1830. Not only was this so, but the number of men employed per acre after enclosure probably increased – Chambers ('Enclosure & Labour Supply in the Industrial Revolution', *Economic Hist. Rev.* 1953) points out that as well [as] the increased need for labour during the work of enclosing, the lag between new agricultural practices and the technical devices for dealing with them meant that, until the methods of ploughing, reaping and threshing were substantially speeded up in the 1830s and 1840s more men were employed on the land. The Industrial Revolution was not supplied with a labour force drained from a depopulated countryside. Another related problem is what was the economic position and relationship of farmers and labourer? (omitting the self-supporting peasant who, as we have seen, was by 1780 a relatively unimportant figure.)

Miss George in her article 'Some causes of the Increase of population in the C18 as illustrated by London' says that the "Bills of Mortality" show that London shared in the general prosperity from 170-1757/65, which is considered to have been one of the chief periods of English working class prosperity." If this is true it may well have been an important factor in the Industrial Revolution for it would have the double effect of allowing earlier marriage and hence increased population (as well as better nutrition contributing to longer life etc) and of creating a larger market for the new industrial goods. Others support Miss George's conclusion – Chambers in the 'Vale of Trent' suggesting that "during the long period of low prices, the generality of the population became accustomed to the good things of life, and when prices began to rise, and the population also, the people still expected the better conditions to which they had grown accustomed to continue." He goes further than this even and suggests that "from 1782 the outdoor labourers were obtaining allowances in aid of wages to settle married labourers, so that some of the gains by landlords and farmers were channelled off in support of labourer's living standards."

Conclusive support is given to the theory that agricultural labourers enjoyed a period of increased real wages, in the years before 1750 by Mingay's article on the 'Agricultural Depression 1730-50'. He shows how the symptoms of the depression was "a slight tendency for rents to fall, the occurrence of heavy arrears of rent, and the granting of various concessions by the landlord or to the tenants" and concludes that "apart from London, where they were rising, money wages tended to be stable in the 1st ½ of the C18 – thus there was an improvement in real wages in an era of low prices which would have a beneficial influence on the standard of living of the labouring poor. A good harvest increased both agricultural and non-agricultural employment, money wages improved, and the incomes of exporters of agricultural produce rose." This may be, as we have seen, a partial explanation of the population increase – but its direct significance for industrial growth is limited in that it was offset by the serious effects of continued depression among the farmers and landed interest. For Mingay points out that "it may be significant that the quickened pace of industrial development in the later decades of the Century had as its background a farming community that was enjoying prosperous conditions after a lapse into depression of 20 years.

Finally, agriculture's failure to continue its early expansion during the second half of the C18 – due to varying factors such as the ease with which agricultural profits could be made with older methods, the frequency of bad harvests, and the rise in English agricultural imports during the period 1763-76 – a failure which was perhaps one of the main reasons for the rise of prices, since agricultural output failed to increase in proportion to population (as Jon (24) points out, may well have been an important factor in persuading me to devote their resources to industrial and commercial rather than to agricultural expansion.

At this point we arrive at a crucial problem in relation to the Industrial Revolution – was demographic expansion a cause or result of the Industrial Revolution? From the answer we give to this is likely to spring our whole ethical evaluation of the Revolution – for if we conclude, with Ashton and others, that population was expanding rapidly anyhow and that hence England was only saved from the fate of Ireland by its economic growth we may be prepared to forgive many of the horrors of the charge to industrialisation – but if, with most C19 historians we see the population increase as a response to industrial labour demand, we

are likely to view the Revolution as an unparalleled tragedy, even if we admit that statistical tables show that real wages of factory workers, were as high or higher in the C19 than farm labourers had been in the C18.

As this is a long and complex subject and this essay is already overlength I will confine myself to the following approach to the question. Firstly I will give the general answer of the leading modern writers to two basic questions, and then give my own conclusions in outline.

The first question is – was it increase in the birth rate or decrease in the death rate which cause the population explosion – and (if they suggest an answer) what was the cause of the change? It is evidence that, since it is fairly certain that whatever improvement there was in medical or nutritional standards in the century this had little part in the fall in the death rate, [in margin, in pencil, ‘no – also death rate – thro’ more food etc’] only the birth rate could have been affected by industrialization – so those who decide for a lowered death rate exclude the possibility of industrial expansion causing the rise. Here are the conclusions of the authorities.

#### Rising Birth Rate:

Krause 1958 – ( a 50% rise in deaths 1781-1815) no cause given

Chambers 1953 – higher marriage rate = better standard of living

Kitson Clark 1960 – Absence of plague & war. Natural process – see Ireland

Connell 1951 – Earlier marriage. Changes in habits of lice (rats)

Krause 1959 – Higher marriage rate

#### Falling Death Rate

Ashton 1948 – higher health & living standards

George 1922 – Improvement in medical & social (Hanway’s work) amenities

McKeown & Brown 1955 – Prob’ due to reduction of incidence of disease – perhaps living conditions (no evidence)

Trevelyan 1937 – Better nutrition; advance in medicine

#### Both rising birth rate and falling death rate

Helleiner 1957 - Disappearance of plague (rats) & mitigation of subsistence crises, but birth rate rose as result of this.

Saltmarsh (on plague) – Change in habits of rats & improved living conditions cause plague to disappear from 1680 – also affects birth rate

Habakkuk 1958 – Increased marriage failure of births to fall soon, and death rate did fall due to change in virulence of disease

Habakkuk 1953 – Better economic developments, better nutrition etc, a definite fall also in death rate due to change in age composition due to earlier crises & raised birth rate – cycles of population

Marshall 1929: Main factors; increased marriages etc – birth rate kept up by economic factors

Marshall 1936 – Fall in death rate in C18 due to better hygiene etc – not better nutrition.

Question 2 is simpler and evolves from the first – was economic growth a cause of or response to population growth?

A cause of population growth:

Krause 1959 – greater wealth caused greater amount of marriages

Habakkuk, 1953 – one cannot reject evidence of Malthus etc

A response to population growth:

Ashton 1948 – tho' not a necessary response cf. modern India  
Chambers 1953 – tho' in turn it offered inducements to increasing population  
Kitson Clark 1960 – England prevented from fate of Ireland.

Necessarily this is a bald summary of these author's conclusions and most of them emphasize the complexity of a problem in which there is so much interaction between cause and effect.

My own conclusion is based on a negative approach. Although it is statistically obvious that during these crucial years there was a fall in deaths and a rise in population, there is no satisfactory explanation of either. As far as falling death rate is concerned there is no strong evidence for improved medical faculties or improved living conditions either existing or – if they existed at all – having much effect on a fall in the death rate. On the other hand there are no obvious reasons why birth rate should rise – for it, too, was governed by these factors. The only explanation seems to be a much more problematical one – to which there were two aspects. One was the long-term population cycle suggested by Chambers in which a period of disease and crisis was followed by a rapid increase in births, a lowering of the age composition of the country leading to a lower morality rate, leading to population expansion. This suggestion is strengthened by comparison with Ireland and the continent where this process was in motion. But there were two special factors which applied at this time. One was the change in the virulence of disease hinted at by Helleiner, Kitson Clark, Connell, McKeown and Brown and elucidated by Saltmarsh – this aggravated the population increase. So far, it seems, England would have shared Ireland's fate – tho' different social and political conditions might have restrained it from going as far as her. Thus we can see the population increase as divorced from industrialization, and even from the economic expansion of the previous centuries – and therefore as a dynamic cause of the industrial revolution. Though here again one must remember that in C19 Ireland or C20 India population pressure does not necessarily result in industrialisation.

Such a view, a conclusion which sees the population growth as largely caused by other than industrial factors is emphasized when we remember that during the steepest period of population growth, 1780-1815, industry still produced, compared to agriculture, a small amount of the country's population. It seems to have been, since country districts were not depopulated as we have seen, a surplus agrarian population which industry employed. But even here we have to be careful to see too close a link between population pressure & industrial growth – the pioneering work for the revolution was done in a period when inventions were made largely because of a shortage of labour. When all this [is] said, however, it is still true that industrialization was a major factor in continuing the expansion of population during the C19 by employing and even enriching the already increased workers. Comparison of Ireland and England in the 1840's shows the value of industry as a factor in maintaining population increase.

Recent evidence, as Beales in his historical revision points out, has tended to minimize the evils accompanying the revolution and, as he carefully points out, "it is old evils which the industrial revolution was constantly making conspicuous." A statistical and factual reaction has set in against the romantic interpretation of the Revolution and Hammond, in his "The Industrial Revolution and discontent" is a voice crying in the wilderness. But, while admitting that much of the C19 approach is overdrawn and that, as we have seen, the revolution may have saved England from being another Ireland, yet anyone who has been in the most backward parts of an underdeveloped country – India for instance (where the standard of living of a labourer is three times lower than that of a pre-industrial English peasant according to Habakkuk) and also to the slums which still exist in a northern industrial town can hardly fail to admit that statistics give as false a picture of life as did the Romantics. What, then, were the effects of the Industrial Revolution?

As we have seen, industrial growth was not the main cause of agricultural crisis in the years 1780-1830. There was no great rural depopulation – in fact Chambers shows that the



number of families engaged in agriculture rose from 896,000 in 1811 to 961,000 in 1831. If there was a redistribution of labour it took place gradually, men no longer dividing their occupations but coming to work full time at the loom or coal face, without, often, moving their households, the surplus population moved gradually to industry, as the young people tended to go into industry. Halévy shows that the real wage of country labourers after 1810 went through a decline this does seem to have been the result of industrial competition to some extent for small farmers could less easily supplement their wages by home weaving etc. Kitson Clark argues that though conditions were growing worse in the country this was relieved by industry which was absorbing the increasing population. But he fails to underline the fact that some of the reasons which he gives for worsening conditions were caused by growing industrialisation – among them that a subsistence economy was being replaced by a money economy” and that there was “a decline in rural industry”. As Halevy point out “once Wiltshire and Somersetshire had been like an enormous manufacturing town scattered over a wide area; but now the iron industry had been transferred to the centre and the West, and woollen manufacture deserted the south for Yorkshire”. Taking everything, especially population growth, into account, however, industry probably did have a predominantly beneficial influence on agriculture.

Hutt and others have shown that factories were not an unmitigated evil and this trend has gone so far as to suggest that ‘factory hours’ acts, by preventing children spending up to 18 hours in ‘light work’ at the factory both crippled their parents economically and increased evil, home, influences. A comparison is made with pre-factory, conditions and it is shown that conditions in pre-factory workshops or garrets were often worse than in factories – it was in Nottingham, where hosiery was still a home-manufacture, that rioting was worst in the early C19. Again Hobsbawm’s article on the machine-breakers demonstrates that it was often not the machinery itself which the Luddites attacked, and that, when they did, they often had the sympathy of the industrialists themselves. As Halevy points out, as factories began to be made of iron instead of wood and introduced steam-power and expanded in size, conditions improved. It is noticeable, however, that no significant defence of the early mining industry has been made!

What broadly were the social effects of the industrial revolution? Ashton claims that there was a rise in the position of women and girls who were now economically independent. Again, tho’, as Williams points out the revolution widened the gap between employer and employee for a while, early in the revolution there was more opportunity for social advancement – witness, once again, the progress of the Peel family. But, more specifically, what were the effects on the standards of living?

Ashton in his article ‘Some Statistics of the Industrial Revolution’ shows that the real wages of factory operatives rose considerably in the period 1806-1835 (proportion 74:108). From this he concludes that the Industrial Revolution is considered such a calamity largely because “there has been a generalization of the worst instances and a failure to realize conditions in cottage or garrett”. A.J. Taylor *Progress & Poverty in Britain 1780-1850* supports Ashton’s statistics – saying that the purchasing power of the industrial worker rose some 70% in 1790-1850: but he is prepared to admit that the progress of the working class lagged behind that of the nation – but explains this largely by factors outside the control of the much-maligned capitalist exploiters.

Again Ashton emphasizes that there are other factors which would have caused misery anyhow – the movement of prices, exaggerated by the Napoleonic wars, bad harvests and interest fluctuations. Again Kitson Clark points out that the largest two groups of working people “were relatively unaffected by industrial changes” being involved in farming and domestic service and emphasizes that only 219,000 were involved in coal in 1851. He also stresses the pressure of Irish immigrants in adding to the misery. Finally an attempt has been made, for instance by Ashton in his article on ‘Statistics’ to put the blame onto other shoulders, in this case blaming the shortage of buildings (due to chronic shortage of timber) for the obvious misery. All the above is true, but among the facts that must be remembered are that Kitson Clark’s attempt to exclude, for instance, the domestic servants from the evil effects of the Revolution is unrealistic – for as Hutt himself says and Hammond endorses, it was not the

working conditions but the crowded houses, lack of sanitation, lack of any amenities or occupations and so on which were the preponderant evils of the revolution. These may not be a necessary result of industrialization – but one cannot get away from the fact that the first effective sand filter was only discovered in 1829, or the first Manchester reservoir started in 1848. To quote Hobsbawm's conclusion in his article on the 'Standard of Living, 1790-1850' written 5 years ago, 'The classical view has been put by Sydney Webb (i.e. that living conditions positively declined from 1787-1837. It may be that further evidence will discredit it; but it will have to be vastly stronger evidence than has so far been adduced.'

[There are a couple of comments]

\*

I then wrote an eight page essay, based on very extensive reading (typed extracts from 37 books and articles) on 'English Radicalism 1760-1830'. Unfortunately there are no marks or comments on this or any these English history essays.

I suspect there may be one or more other essays on nineteenth century politics which I have lost. But the longest and most enjoyable essay I wrote as an undergraduate was undertaken at the end of this term.

Unusually, I comment on this essay in four of my letters around this time. In a letter on 22nd November to Penny I wrote:

*At the moment I don't feel like doing any work for a little while as I wrote another essay this morning – getting up at 6.0 to do it. But now for my final essay I have been set the absorbing topic 'Victorianism' which includes a study of Victorian literature (including reading 'Middlemarch' which my tutor thinks the best novel in English literature) Victorian art & architecture & Victorian morality & religion – fascinating.*

Three days later, again to Penny, I wrote: *I am just about to embark on 'Victorianism' (after another 3 days on Cromwell) and already my mind has been filling with preconceptions which will distort my findings. I am convinced that the only binding element in 'Victorianism' was fear. What else binds Arnold and Swinburne, Newman and Kingsley, Carlyle and Peel, Victoria and Browning and of course Tennyson & Geo Elliot, with their seriousness, their strict morality (even Swinburne & that post Victorian D.H. Lawrence had this), their energy & love of work, and their ornateness? It was a fear of chaos – the spiritual chaos which was left by the findings of science (which turned man into an evolved animal) and the material chaos produced by the industrial revolution. The constant stress on morality and hard work and the anguished search for God, by men like Newman and women like Elliot was the response. But more of that when I have read something about the period.*

I seem to have written the essay around the week-end at the start of December, for I wrote again to Penny on Sunday 2nd December: *I will have to purge myself with this 'Victorianism' essay & I will use it as a distraction by pretending that I am writing it for you (I will type out & dedicate it to you if it is any good) & I will thus distract my energies.*

That same day I also wrote to my parents: *At the moment I am writing an essay on a fascinating subject 'Victorianism' which means reading all my favourite writers like Tennyson, Hopkins etc.*

Then on Wednesday 5th I wrote again to Penny, explicitly explaining how the essay was linked to my own doubts, as follows:

*... I thought these four days would never pass, but the agonies and delights of giving birth to my shapeless essay has distracted my thoughts. How are you sweetheart? Happy, I hope, and – oh, all this writing seems so trite after reading the Arnold poem [Dover Beach] which I quote. You must know it already, but its melancholy beauty, arising from Arnold's spiritual loneliness seems to capture that emptiness and sadness which filled the latter half of the C19th. Beneath the brash optimism, the vulgarity and the belief in progress; men were string into the void and going sick with fear. The great minds of the later Victorian age were pessimists – George Eliot, Tennyson, Arnold, Darwin. And we still live in their shadow. As you will realise when you see my essay, I have externalised much of my own doubt into it, and for me as for Arnold the last stanza (of the poem) is especially true.*

The essay is very long indeed, some 28 lengthy paragraphs of text, over seven thousand words in all.

## “VICTORIANISM”

“Ah, what a dusty answer gets the soul  
When hot for certainties in this our life!”  
(Meredith: ‘Modern Love’)

“The English”, Treischke once said at Berlin, “think Soap is Civilization”.

It is now a commonplace that “Victorianism” does not mean a definable set of opinions, a united moral attitude, or a framework of accepted institutions. The scorn or laughter of critics has turned to admiration, or at least to an attempt to break down the rigid over-simplifications of earlier writers. Young asks – “Who are these Victorians? By what mark are we to know them? What creed, what doctrine, what institution was there among them which was not at some time or other debated or assailed? I can think of two only: Representative Institutions & the Family”. Take any mark by which one might be able to unite the subjects of Victoria & one will find exceptions. Was it an age of hard work & ‘self-help’? It was doubtless a time when official encouragement was given to persuade people to work. “Properly speaking all work is religion” declared Carlyle, “Labour is not a devil even while encased in Mammonism; labour is an imprisoned God, writhing unconsciously or consciously to escape out of Mammonism”. But Carlyle & Smiles exhorted not because they smugly approved but because they saw work as one answer to the chaos around them. As Briggs has pointed out, the four main elements of the ‘Victorian’ gospel, the gospel of work; ‘seriousness’ of character; respectability & self-help – were often proclaimed, not because they were conspicuous, but because they were absent. “Self-Help” was designed to re-inculcate old-fashioned but wholesome lessons which, in the words of its author “cannot perhaps be too often urged”.

Was it then an age of optimism & belief in progress? To a certain extent it was. When the Prince Consort spoke at the Mansion House, a few weeks before the opening of the great exhibition, he used it as the symbol of the forthcoming unity of mankind. “We are living”, he said, “at a period of most wonderful transition, which tends rapidly to accomplish that great end to which all history points – the realisation of the unity of mankind”. In Macaulay & others there is a confidence that there was in motion a movement towards greater happiness, justice & liberty, an optimism of Godwinian flavour & having a factual basis in a real advance in national wealth & scientific knowledge. Tennyson versified the prosaic dream of Cobden & others &

“... Saw the heavens fill with commerce, argosies of magic sails  
Pilots of the purple twilight, dropping down with costly bales;  
Till the war-drum throbbed no longer, & the battle flags were furled  
In the Parliament of man, the Federation of the world.”

But, as Eliot points out, Tennyson was in fact filled with doubt & George Eliot & J.S. Mill were only two of the minds who revolted against this kind of optimism. The disillusionment cannot be dated, though it seems to increase after the turn of the century & is epitomised in two remarks of Ruskin in the “7 Lamps of Architecture” – “the stirring which has taken place in our architectural aims & interest within these few yrs, is thought by many to be full of promise: & I trust it is, but it has a sickly look to me”. In the 1880 edition he added – “The only living art now left in England is bill-sticking”. Arnold’s ‘Culture & Anarchy’ is yet another example of an anti-Macaulian reaction. Yet deeper than this reaction lay a belief in human progress, a confidence in the ultimate value of individual effort which does seem to underly all Victorian thinkers before 1880. It is likely that George Eliot approved, as Morley approved, of Mill’s belief that “All the grand sources of human suffering are in a great degree, many of them entirely, conquerable by human care & effort; & though their removal is grievously slow ... yet every mind sufficiently intelligent & generous to bear a part, however small & unobtrusive, in the endeavour, will draw a noble enjoyment from the contest itself.” Even the critics assumed certain values so to be good in themselves & criticism to be worthwhile.

To read too much doubt & underlying unhappiness into the age is as dangerous as to see it as an age of exuberant self-confidence. As Young remarks, the Englishmen knew that in the essential business of humanity – the mastery of brute nature by intelligence – he had outstripped the world, & the Machine was the emblem & the instrument of his triumph. Further, he has compared the man-sided curiosity & competence, its self-confidence & alertness of Late MidVictorian culture to that of Greece. When one becomes absorbed in the underlying tensions of the age it is well to remember that for most of the upper strata of society it was an age of unprecedented enjoyment.

Finally – what of their ethics in its application to art & architecture & life? A picture of Mrs Grote, who “sat with her red stockings higher than her head, discomfited a dead party by saying “disembowelled” quite bold & plain, & knew when a hoop was off a pail in the back kitchen”. Or a recollection of the exploits & views of Misses Nightingale, Martineau & Charlotte Bronte will warn us not to generalise about Victorian women. Victorian intolerance as regards sex was only felt by the public figures, & even then the aristocracy were exempt from criticism: Hartington had numerous mistresses, yet Gladstone admired him. St John’s Wood was built for mistresses. It was because J.S. Mill was a public figure that he suffered as a result of his irregular private life. The Victorians admired manliness, & hence we find despots like Barrett of Wimpole St, who, as a demonstration of his manhood, cd have as many mistresses as he liked. [note in pencil in margin “Adultery = theft”] But it would be false to dismiss their ‘respectability’ as a legend. Miss Mitford was publicly reprov’d for calling a pudding a ‘roly-poly’ & a Parliamentary Cmtee, who asked a factory woman if she had ever miscarried, brought on themselves the anger of the Times for violating the principles which shd preside over such inquiries – “a dread of ridicule & an anxious avoidance of indecency”.

Nevertheless, before an age which covers its shop-window dummies while their clothes are being changed mocks as “typical of Victorian gentility” the clothing of a Cupid on a Valentine of 1840, it might ask why, in an age when the family was the only stable unit and when families were far larger, stricter discipline should have been enforced. Further, Young, quoting from Gogol’s “Dead Souls” has shown that much that we think of as “typically Victorian” & English was, in fact, part of an European movement. If English prudery was noted as “Englanderie” as early as 1805, 2nd Empire furniture & American manuals of business, as Young also points out, represent much that we consider ‘Victorian’. In fact there is a case for saying that the terms “Victorians” and “Victorianism” have become “masked words droning & skulking about us”, to use the words of Ruskin.

If we are to seek for any meaning for the words we must go deeper, catching at various strands & chance remarks as indications of the “Spirit of the Age”. As an indication of such an approach, I quote once again two examples from Young – “When Bp Wilberforce was killed, Mr Gladstone passed some hours in silent depression; then he observed, “He was a Great Diocesan”, & recovered his spirits at once. This impulse to say the right, the improving thing, is most characteristic of the Victorian temper. Once a servant was sent to meet Sir Bartle Frere at

the station. He asked how he was to know him. "Look for a grey-haired gentleman helping some one". And, of course, the Proconsul was duly found lifting found lifting an old woman's basket out of the carriage."

A certain unity & value can be given to the term "Victorian" if it is regarded as the reaction to certain fundamental problems – economic, social, political, mental & spiritual. On one side the Industrial Revolution, on the other the scientific, were shattering the old framework of society & "Victorianism" can be viewed as the attempt to assimilate & order the new elements in society.

In 1801 the population was roughly 9m, by 1851 it had doubled & in another twenty years increased by four more millions. Arnold knew that the old world had been killed by the French & Industrial Revolutions, & in the vast, sprawling democracy which had succeeded he could see no centre of control, no sense of direction, little in fact but the worship of Mammon & machinery, supported by a faith in the virtue of "doing-as-one-likes" & often a complacent belief in material progress. So he wrote "Culture & Anarchy". Dickens saw the horror in which thousands of families were born, dragged out their ghastly lives & died: the drinking water brown with faecal particles, the corpses kept unburied for a fortnight in a festering London August; courts where not a weed would grow, & sleeping-dens afloat with sewage. He did not need statistics to tell him that the mortality was twice as great in the East End of London as in the West & that in adjacent streets it varied from 38 to 12. Within sight of the Houses of Parl't there were streets where no decent person, except a doctor perhaps, or a Sister of Mercy would venture. If he chanced to pass Deptford on a Saturday night he might easily see under the glare of a gin palace a ring form to watch two women, stripped to the waist, fighting with broken bottles. This "undercurrent of brutality" as Kitson Clark calls it explains many aspects of Victorian life. For instance the Temperance Society was dealing with a very serious evil & an emphasis on a rigid sexual code was necessary when women were not safe in the streets & the life of the miserable poor was, as House says, 'soaked in sex'. In the 1830s only about half the children went to school & even of these few learnt anything. In Hull a close investigation revealed that of 5,000 children who had been to school, 800 could not read, 1,800 could not write & just half could not do a sum. From the marriage registers it would appear that in the thirties about one-third of the men & two-thirds of the women could not.

Nor had there been much progress in the last thirty years. Society was itself being dissolved & the "gentleman, nobleman and yeoman" which had constituted Cromwell's "good interest" was splitting "into a hundred aristocracies & a hundred democracies, button-makers & gentleman button-makers" as Young calls them. Social stratification, particularly the emergence of the middle class obviously explains much of the Victorian respectability philanthropy. "The middle classes know", Ld Shaftesbury once said, "that the society of their lives & property depends upon their having round them a peaceful, happy, & moral population". To induce, therefore, some modicum of cleanliness & foresight, to find some substitute for savage sport & drinking, to attract the children to school & the parents to church, to awaken some slight interest in books was more than pure altruism. Up to 1848 at least there was a real fear of social revolution. Looking back, Kingsley wrote of the years 1815-1848 when "young lads believed (& not wrongly) that the masses were their natural enemies & that they might have to fight, any year or any day, for the safety of their property & the honour of their sisters." Bertrand Russell tells us that his grandfather, lying on his deathbed in 1869, "heard a loud noise in the street & thought it was the revolution breaking out". Even Macaulay predicted a time when "either some Caesar or Napoleon will seize the rein of govt with a strong hand or your republic will be as fearfully plundered & laid waste by barbarians in the C20 as the Roman Empire was in the 5th". Though the pressure of fear subsided after 1848 as economic conditions improved any challenged to the order of society – especially to religion – continued to be interpreted as a social danger. Darwin, in the review of his "Descent of Man" (1871), was severely censured for "revealing his zoological conclusions to the general public at a moment when the sky of Paris was red with the incendiary flames of the Commune". As internal tension died away with the economic boom a new type of worry appeared – the challenge of Germany & America. Soon after the turn of the century the "Economist" remarked that Americas's eventual world

predominance, tho' it might take time, was assured; & those who went to the 2nd World Exhibition at Paris in 1867 were no [t] so convinced as to the length of the delay. Soon the Prussian invasion of France (1870) was to lend force to Arnold's prophecy that well-meaning amateurism & individualism was not enough.

The disruption of the social hierarchy & the awesome realization that no class had an absolute claim to any position – leaving men to scramble for themselves – is paralleled by another development which also destroyed established &, assumedly fixed, relationships. This was the growth [of] the autonomous personality of woman. The fundamental issue of feminism was growing clearer all through the century, as women, no longer isolated heroines, but individuals bent on a career, drew out into the sexless sphere of disinterested intelligence; a process which Young claims may truly be named 'Victorian' if only for the horror with which Victoria regarded it! "I want", said Bella Rokesmith to her husband in Dickens, "to be something so much worthier than the doll in the doll's house". Often this movement met almost hysterical opposition, as in Florence Nightingale's youth, for it could be viewed as one more challenge to the old, male-dominated world. Some critics have even seen in the frequent beards & whiskers of the mid-Century a flaunting masculinity, an "excessive hairiness" which was perhaps reflected ideologically in Kingsley's "Muscular Xianity" & was a reassertion of male domination.

The importance of the Victorian family can hardly be overstressed. Here the old hierarchies & values could be preserved; it was increasingly found to be the centre of virtues & emotions which could not be found in completed form outside. Here at any rate was something firm to stand on. In the home so conceived, man could recover the humanity he seemed to be losing. The Victorian home was not only a peaceful, it was a sacred place. As outward religion lost its hold – the living church became more & more the "temple of the hearth". For the agnostics also, the home became a temple. For them the family was the basic source of those altruistic emotions they relied upon to take the place of the Xian ethic. Houghton goes as far as to say that "it might be said that mainly on the shoulders of its priestess, the wife & mother, fell the burden of stemming the amoral & irreligious drift of modern industrial society." The family was also, of course, the vehicle of an increasing class-consciousness – fostered by the increasing stratification of society which we have already noticed. Respectability in 1860 is the dividing line & the sign of respectability is family life & cleanliness. Young observes that as you go downwards into the mass of poverty & wretchedness the home counts for less & less, until it breaks up altogether. The great gulf was between the households where the children are cared for & where they are not. As a channel for self-respect it played an indispensable part.

"Narrowness of education, pride in possession, fascination with ingenuity, & a hankering after 'sublime display'" says Briggs "led most of the mid-Victorians to prefer the ornate to the simple, the vast to the balanced. They liked imposing public architecture with 'pretensions', wanted it to demonstrate wealth, to abound in decorations – even in polychromatic effects & to incorporate the elaborate symbolism of an age of free trade & material progress." The love of detail & ornateness is displayed in the religious symbolism of Worcester chapel & the desire of a new class, made by wealth, to display its superiority is exemplified in Leeds Town Hall. Certain features in the art & architecture are considered to be 'Victorian' – the ethical aim of art being one of the most-noticed features. Hunt, in his "Hireling Shepherd" sought to express by a crowd of intellectual symbols the moralising intention which had supplanted his original lyrical idea. His "Light of the World" was immensely popular & this is explained by its ethical overtones. But it becomes slightly more difficult to account for the worship of the "Monarch of the Glen". It is not so easy now to blame "didacticism" & "puritanism" for the artistic uncertainty of the middle-Victorians. As Young points out, Puritanism could be looked on as one of the prime inspirations of the artistic excellence of the C18 – with its taste for simplicity, its purity & its subordination of inessentials for essentials. In fact, Young concludes that "in so far from making Puritanism responsible for the anti-art bias of the C19", I am inclined to look for the secret in a quite un-Puritan delight in unrestrained extravagance, to which the new development of mechanical ingenuity powerfully contributed" & we would add, with Pevsner, an extra delight in accumulating facts which made this an age of statistics & rapidly growing

factual knowledge. Pevsner also points out that the artistic position was not very different abroad, & notes that English architects won both the international competitions for St Michael's, the principal church of Hamburg in 1844 & for the new cathedral at Lille in 1855. It is perhaps significant that the Gothic revival was, outside England, strongest in Germany, where, as we have seen, the old religion was being undermined fastest. Perhaps in the uncertainty, the wavering between different styles, the search for authority in the imitation of old styles, we see another aspect of the growing doubts which underlay permanent truth to be found & what was the style which should convey this? The leaders themselves were uncertain & as we have noticed Ruskin was pessimistic about the attempt. Instead of blaming ethical preoccupations for the supposed failure of Victorian architecture, it might be fairer to see this as another symptom of a deeper uncertainty. As Clark has said in "The Gothic Revival" – whenever aesthetic standards are lost, ethical standards rush in to fill the vacuum." [in margin '& vice versa'] People liked pictures with titles not because they were largely a new & aesthetically untrained class, but because their whole conception of what is absolutely good or valuable was being undermined.

Many of the Victorian movements, though obviously not all, can be interpreted as a reaction to a growing uncertainty as to where real value lay & to where intellectual speculation was leading. It seems paradoxical that as the Bible lost authority the Churches became fuller. The Oxford Movement & the fuller churches (often filled with an aristocracy who had thirty years earlier flaunted religion), the new idolatry of men of letters – epitomised in Comte who attempted to found his own secular priesthood, & finally the willingness of the average Victorian to defer to the opinions of his "elders & betters" rather than to question them or think them out, are all aspects of a recoil to authority from the anarchy which seemed to be opening before their feet. The anti-intellectualism of Carlyle is well-known & this found a more practical outlet in the common disparagement of theory in the name of practice – the preference of amateurism to professionalism. Throughout "Self-Help", genius, talent or native intelligence are minimised & the moral qualities of hard work & persistence are exalted. "It is also to be borne in mind" we are reminded "that the experience gathered from books, though often valuable, is but of the nature of LEARNING; where the experience gained from actual life is of the nature of WISDOM". Macaulay was the great apostle of the "Philistines" & argued that poetry would inevitably decline in a soc' more enlightened & more aware of the nature of "reality as revealed by observation". Other signs of this anti-intellectualism are the democratic theories in both political & religion which exalted natural shrewdness & the virtues of the heart against arid intellectualism & acquired knowledge. Even in the most honest of writers there was a certain reserve, & certain "incapacity to follow any chain of reasoning which seems likely to result in an unpleasant conclusion" as G.M. Young says (rather unfairly I believe) of Tennyson & which we have already noticed in Morley's failure to apply historical relativism to himself.

Victorian dogmatism was, to some extent, exorted not by confidence but by doubt. Carlyle may well have been so raucous & positive because he was so aware of the precariousness of his ideas, perhaps not in his own mind, but in the mind of his age. If we apply this approach too far, for instance to Macaulay's confidence in progress we will be guilty of over-subtlety, but the desire to hear great sages pronouncing their dogmatic assurance is nevertheless a feature of the age. Underlying the whole age is the belief that dogmatism can be justified. They believed that truth, tho' it may, as Coleridge & Mill & Eliot saw, have many mansions, is at least one truth, that it is not only absolute, but that it is attainable & should be pursued &, when found, asserted. When we accuse the age of rigidity & intolerance, often arising from a narrow religion, we have to start making exceptions – Mill, Arnold & Eliot being the most notable. But their flexibility of mind was maintained by a tense balance between conviction & tolerance, & this earnestness mixed with an ability to appreciate other points of view did not last much beyond the 1870s. Hero-worship, patriotism, imperialism, & medieval revival, from the extraordinary popularity of Greek myths, mediaeval legends, Kingsley's heroes & Tennyson's Idylls, as well as the other volumes of Golden Deeds & Ages of Fable, the Gothic revival in art & architecture & even the encouragement of a belief in progress can be seen, in part, as a sort of escapism. Though an oversimplification of such movements to fit into a pattern is dangerous, it is true that this age could revive its faith in man, if not as an intellectual conviction, at least as an emotional

attitude, in the contemplation of the supposed serenity of Iseult, or the purity of Arthur. In the Middle Ages, it was thought, though morality was far inferior, "individuality was strong, will was energetic. The spirituality & altruism which were seeming to disappear in the advancing tide of mercantile & social ambition are lamented by Hopkins -

"Generations have trod, have trod, have trod;  
And all is seared with trade; bleared smeared with toil;  
And wears man's smudge & shares man's smell: the soil  
Is bare now, nor can foot feel, being shod." (Hopkins)

Arnold felt the mysterious mediaeval charm of Oxford, in her moonlit fields - & Hopkins once again finds words for its permanence

Towery city branchy between towers;  
Cuckoo-echoing, bell-swarmed, lark-charmed, rook-racked, river-rounded;

(& longed for the serenity of Duns Scotus' age -)  
...these weeds & waters, these walls are what  
He haunted who of all men most sways my spirits to peace;...'

The desire for permanence found another outlet in what G.M. Young calls an "almost nervous craving" for natural beauty. Delicate observation of nature & the power to convey its unchanging, unhasting, unartificial, purity was the prime reason for Tennyson's popularity. Young suggests that this craving was at its deepest level an almost biological necessity.

"Tennyson's public was becoming, in spirit, suburban; a country-bred stock, entangled in a way of life which it had not learnt to control was instinctively fighting for breath. And for sixty years its poet was there, flashing on it, in phrases of faultless precision, the "jewels five words long" of the Princess for instance, pictures of the world from which it was exiled & in which it yearned to keep at least an imaginary footing. To take but one example of the peace which the C19 often found in the contemplation of natural beauty we can study Hale White - or Mark Rutherford as he was known to his public. Though like Pascal he knew that we cannot base religion upon Nature alone - he retained a sense of kinship with the "wisdom & spirit of the universe". Speaking of Wordsworth he said - the real God is not the God of the Church, but the God of the hills, the abstraction Nature, & to this my reverence was transferred. Instead of an object of worship which was altogether artificial, removed, never coming into genuine contact with me, I had now one which I thought to be real, one in which literally I could live & move & have my being, an actual fact present before my eyes..." In Nature, especially the "lovely asunder star-light", he found a force which lifted him clean out of his morbid introspection, finding there "for this uneasy hear of ours, A never-failing principle of joy, & purest passion." Willey has pointed out that the Lake District was part of the C19's religious creed. The Lakeland mountains, linked heaven with home & spoke intimately to the disturbed heart. Throughout that "iron time of doubts, disputes, distractions, fears" they remained, for the dweller on the darkling plain, a silent & constant symbol of sublimity. Even without Wordsworthian associations, he suggests it would have had immense importance as a region owing nothing to human contrivance & undesecrated by human hand, which could symbolize permanence, grandeur & joy..."

If anything, the intellectual & spiritual problems were even graver. Nothing 'absolute' was left in the social sphere of society except the family, & when men turned to their minds for comfort & order, for real values with which to harmonise & direct their swiftly changing world they must have often [sic] have cried with Hopkins -

"I cast for comfort I can no more get  
By groping round my comfortless, than blind  
Eyes in their dark can day or thirst can find



Thirst's all-in-all in all a world of wet."

Many of the intellectual & spiritual crises with which the Victorians were faced were operating before Victorian times. Evangelicism & the Romantic movement had been largely reactions against the neutralisation of nature & the relegating of God to a first cause by Newtonian physics. In the battle to retain spiritual values Coleridge had prepared much of the ground for the struggle between religion & science. The emotional implications of C17 science have been described by Prof. Burt thus "... Newton's authority was squarely behind that view of the cosmos which saw in man a puny, irrelevant, spectator of the vast mathematical system ... The world that people had thought themselves living in – a world rich with colour & sound ... speaking everywhere of purposive harmony & creative ideals – was crowded now into minute corners in the brains of scattered organic beings. The really important world outside was a world, hard, cold, colourless, silent & dead – a world of quantity, a world of mathematically computable motions in mechanical regularity..."

Descartes & Locke joined in this world view & it was against such a conception that Romanticism protested. Coleridge was convinced that the C18 had "untenanted creation of its God", & this, later, was to be the protest of the arch-Romantic of our own century Lawrence, who avoided the problems of sciences, by claiming that the "... two ways of knowing, for man, are knowing in terms of apartness, which is mental, rational, scientific, & knowing in terms of togetherness, which is religious & poetic", & on these grounds announced triumphantly that the "universe isn't a machine after all. It's alive & kicking & in spite of the fact that man with his cleverness has discovered some of the habits of our dear old earth ... the old demon isn't quite nabbed." Coleridge's preoccupation between a living whole or organism on the one hand & a mechanical juxtaposition of parts on the other, became the increasing preoccupation of the more sensitive of the Victorians. And in important ways he anticipated two fundamental answers of the age. Like the Tractarians he discarded all evidential support & laid the foundation of religion in the specific religious experience, in man's need for a God who comes to meet & to redeem him, & like Arnold or Kingsley he insisted that the alleged invulnerability of the bible was a dangerous & rigid superstition, untenable in the face of modern criticisms, & that the way to deal with criticism was not to offer blind resistance but to deepen one's understanding & see the spirit behind the words.

One of the two main challenges to Victorian belief came from the theory of historical relativism, especially in the works of Germans. So fundamental are these to an understanding of later Victorian thought, & especially as a formative influence on George Eliot that a survey of at least Strauss, Hennell & Feuerbach is necessary. In the C18 men asked of an opinion or belief "Is it true?" Nowadays we ask, "How did men come to take it as true?" We are more interested in tracing the history of an idea than in judging its goodness or badness. But a belief which has been historically explained, whose origins & growth have been traced, tends to lose its authority over the mind. Morley, one of those who, like Eliot, realized some of the implications of the "principle of relativity in historical judgement" said of it "The greatest intellectual conversion of this era, as Renan not any too widely put it, transformed the science of language into the history of languages; transformed the science of literature & philosophies into their histories; the science of the human mind into his history, not merely an analysis of the wheel-work & propelling forced[s] of the individual soul. In other words, the .... Substitution of becoming for being, the relative for the absolute, dynamic movement for domative immobility ... (as Mark Patterson said) ... what is important for us to know of any age, our own included, is not its peculiar opinions, but the complex elements of that moral feeling & character in which, as in their congenial soil, opinions grow." But it is worthwhile noticing that Morley did not take this to its logical conclusion. For him it did matter very much indeed which side one took in the great struggle between "truth" and "error", & it horrified him to realize that his own sort of "truth" might, on the same principle, be explained away as yet another "think-so". He agreed with Pope Paul's remark to the Council of Trent "that belief is the foundation of life, that good conduct only grows out of a right creed, & that errors of opinion may be more dangerous even than "Sin". A belief in absolute value, which George Eliot held to the last, marks the Victorians.

When thinkers ceased to search for certitude, to accept relativity, we can say that the 'Victorian' age was over.

This historical revolution can be best studied in three books: Hennel's "Inquiry concerning the origin of Xianity" (1838), Strauss's "Life of Jesus" & Feuerbach's "Essence of Xianity". Hennel's book swept George Eliot off her feet, for it turned Jesus into merely a 'great man'. But Hennel is not out to show the Gospel writers as wilful impostors, his whole drift is to show how "naturally" & spontaneously the myths grew up. Strauss's book has been accused of "saving Xianity by turning it into an unchristian doctrine". For though he claims that he is "well aware that the essence of the Xian faith is perfectly independent of his criticism...", he finally identifies the 'substance' of Xianity with entirely human values. Man is the true 'Incarnation'; the world in him returns in reconciliation to God. For 'Christ', substitute 'Humanity', & you have the ultimate meaning of the great myth. Feuerbach took the process even further stating that "The divine being is nothing else than the human being, or rather the human nature purified, freed from the limits of the individual man, made objective - ie. contemplated & reversed as another, a distinct being. All the attributes of the divine nature are, therefore, attributes of the human nature." He attempts to show that "God" is an ideal substitute for the real world, a wish-fulfilling symbol, which we worship, because we find that easier & more satisfying than improving the real world.

Marx expressed these views as the basis of his dialectical materialism & they found musical utterance in the words of Swinburne's 'Hymn of Man'.

"Thou & I and he are not god man men for a span,  
But God, if a God there be, is the substance of men which is man.

...

Thou art smitten, thou God, thou art smitten; thy death is upon thee, O Lord.  
And the love-song of earth as thou diest resound the wind of her wings -  
Glory to Man in the highest! For Man is the master of things."

Not everyone shared Swinburne's or Comte's joy, however!

It is recorded that when Charlotte Bronte had read the Atkinson-Martineau "Letters of the Laws of Man's Nature & Development" she exclaimed "If this be Truth, man or woman who beholds her can but curse the day he or she was born". Well-might the Victorians be horrified by the scientific discoveries of the time. It has been well said that "time was expanding & space contracting". While the laying of the Atlantic cable in 1865 & the yielding of up earth's most mysterious secret (when in 1856 Speke stood on the shores of Victoria Nyanza & saw the Nile pouring northward) made the earth smaller & less strange, growing full of the "light of common day"; men on the other hand found himself increasingly alone in a waste of years. In 1845 John William Burgon [a Worcester man] could sing of Petra as: "A rose red city, half as old as time". For, like most of the Early Victorians, he believed that time had begun less than 6,000 years ago. But in 1857 the 1st remains of Neanderthal man came to light & Darwin's publication of the "Origin of Species" in 1859 put the finishing touch to a movement which had started with Lyell's "Principles of Geology" in 1830 & the "Vestiges of Creation" by Chambers in 1844, which together completely overthrew the Mosaic cosmology, & took away for many the last refuge of the God of Wordsworth & the C18 - 'Nature'. After Darwin, no longer could a relation between science & morality be drawn. The theory of spontaneous "natural selection" seemed to substitute accident - or perhaps mechanism - for intelligent purpose in the world of nature. Sedgwick, once an ardent admirer of Darwin, wrote of him that he had "demoralized understanding" and had done his best to plunge humanity into a "lower grade of degradation".

From a conception of man as a special species, created in a day, & only some few thousand years old, the Victorian mind had to assimilate a picture of the earth as being inhabited by vermes some 450m years ago, jawless fishes some 400 million years, birds 140 million years, marsupials 80 million years & man as a late developer possibly less than half a million years

ago. The shock to human dignity & conception of a benevolent providence, in whom all things 'work together for good' can be most clearly seen in the torture of 'In Memoriam'.

        'Shall he....  
        Man, her last work, who seem'd so fair,  
Such splendid purpose in his eyes,  
Who roll'd the psalm to wintry skies,  
Who built him fanes of fruitless prayer,  
  
Who trusted God was love indeed  
And love Creation's final law -  
Tho' Nature, red in tooth & claw  
With ravine, shriek'd against his creed -  
  
Who loved, who suffer'd countless ills,  
Who battled for the True, the Just,  
Be blown about the desert hills [dust]?  
Or seal'd within the iron hills?

No more...."

Many others could echo his desperate cry -

I falter where I firmly trod,  
And falling with my weight of cares  
Upon the great world's altar-stairs  
That slope thro' darkness up to God..."

This struggle which Young calls the problem of the "standing of personality, the finite human personality, in an age of flux" was the central one of the age. How did the Victorians react to this double challenge, physical & spiritual? In the practical sphere an indication can be gained from a remark of G.M. Young. "On one side of it, Victorian history is the story of the English mind employing the energy imparted by Evangelical conviction to rid itself of the restraints which Evangelicism had laid on the senses & the intellect. But the Evangelical discipline, secularised as respectability, was the strongest binding force in a nation which without it might have broken up. "Sweet are the ties that bind" chanted a contemporary hymn, sweet indeed in an age when everything seemed to be in flux. Two of the most important of these ties were the Church & the family. In 1818 £1m had been granted for the building of new churches - as the only social measure in an age of unrest & incipient revolt. For a long time after the Revolutionary wars religious orthodoxy & the stability of society were held to be closely interrelated. Thomas Arnold was one of the many who saw the Church as foremost a moral institution - he called it a society "for the putting down of moral evil ... for edification, devotion, consolation & the like are ... means, not ends in themselves." Naturally he deplores the Oxford Movt as tragically irrelevant for in it, it seemed, the 'social character' or religion has been lost sight of, & the ministry has been corrupted into a priesthood. But as Victoria's reign progressed & alarm to some extent died, rigid orthodoxy was allowed to break-down. It dissolved under the influence of new doubts as well as under the relaxation of social pressure & the survey of 1851, showing that 7m could go to church, & that 5 million of these did not, & revealing that the bulk of the potentially most anarchic elements had not, for a long time, been touched by religion, finally made it clear that religion could no longer be used as 'social cement'.

As a final glimpse of the age no better picture could be obtained than a study of three of its central thinkers - Arnold, Tennyson, & George Eliot. All three were pre-occupied with the re-interpretation of the faith of their parents in the light of new scientific criticism - the problem voiced by Mark Rutherford "a childlike faith in the old creed is no longer possible, but

it is equally impossible to surrender it” – or in Mathew Arnold’s own words –At the present moment two things about the Xian religion must surely be clear to anybody with eyes in his head. One is, that men cannot do without it; the other, that they cannot do with it as it is.” In intention they were optimistic, but in conclusion their message was one of sadness, though without bitterness, & resignation, without hopelessness. As Eliot has pointed out ‘In Memoriam’ is religious not because of its faith but because of its doubt. The melancholy beauty of Dover Beach, like ‘In Memoriam’ clothed in natural imagery, betrays the weariness of the later Victorian age:

“.... ..... the world, which seems  
To lie before us like a land of dreams,  
So various, so beautiful, so new,  
Hath neither joy, nor love, nor light,  
Nor certitude, nor peace, nor help for pain;  
And we are here as on a darkling plain  
Swept with confused alarms of struggle & flight,  
Where ignorant armies clash by night.”

And lastly the ‘Mercian Cybil’ – George Eliot – who epitomizes the century, staring from evangelical Xianity, passing through doubt to a reinterpreted Christ & a religion of humanity: beginning with God, she ends in ‘Duty’. In her life we may see the outstanding attempt to effect a synthesis between the new knowledge & the old & indispensable ethics. “The ‘highest calling & ethic’ is to do without opium, & live through all our pain with conscious, clear-eyed endurance” – she once wrote. She is an outstanding example of what Willey calls the new C19 phenomena – the religious temperament severed from the traditional objects of veneration, & the traditional intellectual formulations by that Zeitgeist. It was the attempt to turn from God to each other for help & sympathy. “Heaven help us! Said the old religion;” she once said “the new one, from its very lack of that faith, will teach us all the more to help one another.” Like all true Victorians she still searched for certainty, for universal values & for absolute truths – because the old traditions were gone all the more reason to build up the new, but this time on an entirely human basis. “Pity & fairness” she once wrote, “embrace the utmost delicacies of the moral life”. Like other Victorians she still believed that a cultural synthesis would be made which would harmonize apparently inconsistent truths & have absolute & not merely relative value.

“Oversimplification of the human personality” one of the descendents of a man who did much to shake the Victorian age to its foundations has warned us [in margin ‘Aldous Huxley’] “is the original sin of the intellect” & if this attempt to find the Zeitgeist, the coherent thread which holds the years 1830-1880 together has led to overemphasis on the doubts & uncertainty of the age I refer the reader to the first paragraph again. But it does seem that a craving for certainty in age of unprecedented change is the central core of the age. Young remarks that “Psychologists say that one of the characteristics of the child mind is the capacity for holding contradictory ideas simultaneously. Another I think, & one that lasts longer, is the craving for certainty. The child loves speculation, but when his meditations have issues in a question he wants definite answer[s]. We do not often think of the early Victorian age as primitive. But in many ways it was. It could hold with undisturbed conviction a religious & an economic faith which were incompatible, & it wanted to be sure...” This comparison to the growing child, if it is not presumption, seems valuable. Idealism, romanticism, bursts of self-confidence mixed with periods of morbid self-introspection & even a growing pre-occupation with the relationship of the individual to sex & to society & his concept of duty all seems to be characteristics of youth. Perhaps the change from this search for “ultimate truths” which Briggs describes as mid-Victorian, to a period of flirtation with every form of historical & moral relativism & above all by sheer indifference to the issues raised by both Huxley, Wilberforce, marks the waning of adolescence & a temporary compromise. Tho’, as Young points out, man has a troglodyte mind & immediately sought an inerrant system of economics in Marxism, yet

the change from absolutism to relativism seems to have been the achievement, if that I the right word for it, of the Victorian era. A change which had started long before & is defined in these words by Christopher Dawson.

“The Western mind has turned away from the contemplation of the absolute & eternal to the knowledge of the particular & the contingent. It has made man the measure of all things & has sought to emancipate human life from its dependence on the supernatural. Instead of the whole intellectual & social order being subordinate to spiritual principles, every activity has declared its independence, & we see politics, economics, science & art organising themselves as autonomous kingdoms which owe no allegiance to an higher power.”

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The other main area of work this term was my special subject. I had chosen to do the Oliver Cromwell special subject (‘Commonwealth and Protectorate’) and have a very thick file of papers related to this. The special feature of the special subject was that it gave us, for the first time, the opportunity to go in depth into original documents. In this case we used sets of Commonwealth and Protectorate papers, and I have several hundred pages of notes from the Clarke Papers, the Letters & Speeches of Oliver Cromwell, Burton’s Diary, Thurloe on Anglo-Dutch Relations, Gardiner’s Constitutional Documents, Guizot, the Somers Tracts, Ludlow’s Memoirs, the Nicholas Papers, the Thurloe State Papers, ‘The Case of the Army Truly Stated’ from Wolfe’s ‘Leveller Manifestoes’, and many other miscellaneous notes from various sources. As well as this there were extensive notes from various secondary sources and lectures, some 155 pages of typed and hand-written notes on about 80 books and articles.

The subject, as I recall, was taught in a seminar with a dozen or so undergraduates. As yet I cannot recall who was our tutor. Each of us presented one essay at one of the seminars. Mine was on ‘Financial and Commercial Problems & Policy under the Protectorate’. I remember getting really involved with this and feeling for one of the first times that I was discovering something new, making an original contribution to knowledge. The essay was nine pages (foolscap, hand-written) long, accompanied with seven diagrams. I seem to remember that it was commended, but there is no comment on it.

In preparation for our final exams, we were tested in two ways. One was a series of Gobbets, where we had to comment on extracts from original sources. I wrote about ten pages on various gobbets, and there are quite extensive notes at the bottom of each, though no mark, to indicate we had personal feed-back on them. Either at the start or end of the term we had a set of collections. Here I did a little better than in my English history collections. For “‘Cromwell .... Endeavoured to put the whole Baltick sea into the Swede’s hands.” Is Slingsby Bethel’s criticism of Cromwell’s policy in the Baltic justified?’ I got a Beta plus. For ‘Did the Protectorate enjoy the confidence and support of the commercial classes?’ I received a Beta Alpha. For ‘Does the expedition to the West Indies mark “the decline of the spiritual extasies [sic] of Puritanism and the rise of the mundane spirit”(Gardiner)? I got a Beta plus. And finally for ‘How did finance affect the constitutional history of the Protectorate?’ a Beta minus. There are quite a few comments on the papers and overall the mark was beta plus question mark plus.

## ACADEMIC WORK: SPRING 1963

My plan was to work up to a crescendo in the last Michaelmas and Spring terms – I talk about doing 9 hours a days, with a half day on Sunday – a 60 hour week. I then relaxed somewhat in the Spring vacation, with perhaps seven or eight hours a day, and even more so in the Summer term, with six hours a day, and a few days off before the exams.

In the Spring term we continued with English history into the nineteenth century. We also tackled one new field, namely a second special subject, in my case being ‘English Economic History Documents, 1485-1730’. I did this with the noted Tudor economic historian, G.D. Ramsay and vaguely remember the seminars and supervisions in Teddy Hall .

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A few extracts from the down to earth economic history documents teaching provides a good balance the intense emotional life I was leading, though the two extracts hardly give an indication of how hard I was working. I have three or four hundred pages of typed (and some handwritten) pages of notes (foolscap), extracted from several hundred books and articles on economic history. An immense labour for one paper.

I have four surviving essays in relation to economic documents.

Essay 1: To what extent was the production of wool determined by the progress of enclosures in the C16 & C17?

Essay 2: With what aims and what success did governments attempt to control industry during the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries? (on 12th February)

Essay 3: Might it be argued that Co. organization was more a hindrance than a help in English overseas trade in the C16 & C17?

Essay 4: To what extent did the problem of poverty change in character from 1485-1730? (A typed essay).

We were also taught by answering ‘Gobbets’, of which there are four remaining sets.

So each week we would have been either doing an essay or gobbets. There are no marks for any of these attempts – but quite copious notes from detailed feed-back.

I have chosen to include just the third essay I wrote, presumably around the middle or end of February.

‘Might it be argued that Co. organization was more a hindrance than a help in English overseas trade in the C16 & C17s?’

Many contemporaries did consider Co. organization as a cramping force. Some of the commonest arguments of those men against monopolies in trade are set out in the complaint of the Jt Stock monopoly of the Muscovy Co. in 1604. It is accused of allowing all its business to be conducted by one factor, of constricting the trade so that the unregulated French [crossed

out – Dutch] are swiftly overtaking the English, that it keeps the price of Russian commodities artificially high – for instance the price of cordage has quickly gone up from 20/- to 30/-, and that young merchants within the Co. have not the capital to “forbear their stock” for as long as the Co dictates anyhow wish to manage their own affairs. More contemporary arguments against Co’s are to be found in the Arguments against incorporating the Barbary Merchants in 1582, most important of these are the allegations that the Governor & his assistants in London will be too remote from Barbary to have any practical control and that “this Corporation will not bring any possible advantage – it can only limit shipping.” If we add to the above the protest of Gypps in 1582 at being arbitrarily excluded from the Barbary trade in which he has already invested heavily because he is not a “mere merchant”, and if we remember the complaint of Hull in 1575 against “Merchants united into Co’s, whose heads are in London, who make ordinances benefitting themselves, but hurtful to the local merchants, which C’s draw all the wealthies[t] and most talented to London thus helping to precipitate the decay of provincial ports,” the arguments against Companies seem formidable.

Secondly if we look at the actual progress of trade in the second half of the C16 with its periodic crises and occasional over-production and then turn to the minutely detailed regulations of the Co’s (in which I intend to include the M.A.’s [Merchant Adventurers]) it is tempting to see the link of cause and effect. This is the conclusion of Unwin. Basing his case largely on evidence from the M.A. activities where he sees restrictionism and stints, limitation of numbers by Grasham in 1564 and the attack on the Hanse, or safety valve for English exports he concludes that “the question whether the M.A. were an organ for the expansion of English trade must clearly be answered in the negative. The same, he says, is true of the provincial branches of the M.A which sprang up in Exeter (1557), Chester (1553), Newcastle (1547) and so on. They exclude all but “mere merchants” and thus restrict fluidity of capital and enterprise. More generally he sees trading Co’s as branches of the M.A, indulging in harmful pirating activities and closing huge areas of trade to enterprising activity – thus these new Co’s “did not open new channels of exportation or of importation”, and like the M.A. their parent they interfered with internal production, putting pressure on the government to carry out acts like that against country weavers and the Act of Artificers which Unwin sees as one large, concerted, act of restriction. He concludes “the prevalence of privateering, the restriction on banking and international credit, the interference with the wool-dealer and clothier, the suspension of the Hanseatic trade, the closing of one region of foreign trade after another by the erection of monopolistic companies, and finally, the attitude of the M.A towards the attempted expansion of their own branch of trade leaves us hardly surprised that the latter half of the decade (1580-90) was a period of great depression for trade in general, and especially for cloth export.”

Unwin argues on general grounds and may be attacked with specific arguments. But it must also be remembered that Elizabeth’s reign was a bad time for trade for reasons quite unconnected with the M.A. The Low Counties were gripped by Revolt, and the Eastland trade bedevilled by the Hanse. There was piracy in the Mediterranean and Russia’s demand was precariously dependent on the Tsar. Wheeler’s argument was based on the assumption that foreign markets were strictly limited, and remembering the absence of technical improvement in the cloth industry and the unlikelihood of a rise in the standard of living and hence consumption per head, it was not such as[n] ‘astounding’ (Unwin) view. The reign of Elizabeth was a period of transition from an almost single-lane trade to multifarious one, and in this transition, it can be argued, the M.A’s and other trading Co’s played an important and helpful part.

The arguments used to support trading monopolies were usually repetitions of three or four central views – that trade to distant and difficult markets needs skilled merchants; that those who discovered a new trade should have some advantages and so on. We find one of these arguments employed in the request for a monopoly of the Barbary Co in 1574 which claims that Englishmen, often unskilled, have started trading haphazardly and are so unskilful that they often omit to come back in the ships that they sent their goods in and so are forced to remain stranded in Morocco for several years. More plausibly they argue that these new men

carry arms to the infidels often take treasure instead of cloth out of England – charges which we will examine later. The account of the beginnings of the East India Co in 1599-1601 shows perfectly reasonable grounds for starting a Co – the need to raise a large amount of capital for a difficult new trade. More arguments are put forward against dispersed and unregulated trade in the petition from the M.A. to the P.C. to suppress Interloper in 1584. It points out that dispersed trade through Hamburg inland to Germany and Italy leads to foolish bargains being struck inland when cloth is sold at a loss, shoddy foreign wares bought, and friction created with local German merchants. Negotiations with the Hanse have been undermined by such unregulated trade they maintained. Also English subjects ship cloths and other commodities to Calais, Gravelines and Dunkirk as well as food, which all help to sustain Parma.

An examination of trading Companies throws even more light on the pressures behind the formation of Companies. The highly privileged position granted by the Emperor of Russia to the English merchants in 1555 was based on the assumption that the merchants were acting as a concerted group – they had been incorporated two years earlier. This need to act together can be seen even more clearly in the foundation of the Eastland Co. It seems to have been founded largely so that a united attack could be made on the Hanse and also on the piracy which was increasing in the North Sea. The immediate cause may well have been the long and expensive negotiations which preceded the move from Danzig to Elbing. Hinton is fairly certain that the privileges offered by the Company more than compensated for the restrictions it imposed. Thus the appointment of shipping times, the strict rules about the toll-bill were all beneficial in the end. He dismisses the accusations that the Co was an oligarchy as “probably not of much importance” and points out that the Company were bound to admit any mere merchant and that a young man could obtain admission to the Eastland Co without payment if he were the son of a member or if he graduated by apprenticeship. He also justifies the exclusion of all but expert merchants, pointing out the difficulty of the trade and argues that the Co were probably right in saying that more competition would have led to a diminution of cloth exports. Again he shows that the ‘exorbitant impositions’ – e.g. on a short Suffolk cloth in 1618 – worth perhaps £10, the King took 6.8d & the Co 8d, “seem not excessive”. He concludes that before the age in which the State could provide these things, the Co ensured that merchants abroad had rights of warehouse, freedom from taxation and security of property, and that “tangible benefits such as these chiefly justified their discipline & impositions.” For lack of space, Hinton’s arguments must be used to justify the Muscovy, Levant and Guinea Co’s, but a swift look at the formation of the Barbary Co shows other considerations at work.

Most of the usual arguments were used for and against its incorporation in 1567, 74 and 82 but Willan has shown that here is a case when the incorporation can be seen as against the wishes of the majority of the merchants. It was true, as Elizabeth admitted to the Portuguese ambassador, that arms were shipped to Morocco, though Willan points out that the allegations about bullion cannot be proved either way. But he decides that “the Co itself seems to have been imposed on the merchants rather than to have been created by them in an attempt to solve the difficulties in Morocco.” The pressure for incorporation, he decides, came from Leicester and a section of the merchants who “having entred into contractes with the kings of Barbary to furnish him with iron and other metals, and dowtinge lest he might be prevented, if the merchauntes trading thither were not of such thynges restrained, cawsed the shippes then laden with your suppliants gooddes, by your Honors order, to be stayed.” This explains the enormous power given to Leicester & Warwick in 1585 and also the rather contradictory arguments used in 1576 & 1582 by the same people for incorporation. It also shows us that a Co could be just as harmful as any other monopoly.

It is well to remember two other facts. One is that we do not know how effective the Co’s and the M.A’s were in restraining interlopers and smugglers, on this we can only conclude with Willan that “a consideration of interloping & of the Staple suggests that Elizabethan trading companies were much less monolithic in structure & much less monolithic in practice than their charters & ordinances imply” he supports this with a figure showing that in 1598 that an equivalent of 7.9% of the total London short cloths were carried out by interlopers, and



pointing out that the provincial branches of the M.A do not seem to have always traded with the current staple.

Secondly it must be noted that the Co was a useful instrument for the government, both in its dealings with other nations and in its growing struggle against smugglers. It provided loans, like those of the M.A at Antwerp, and maintained embassies abroad. Further it was a means of preventing the growth of Dutch imports which can be seen as a serious threat from 1615 on – for instance in 1615. Considerations of defence and the desire to encourage the exportation of English cloths led the gov't to believe up to the late C17 that England's interest would, on the whole, be best served by trading Co's. They seem to have been right.

At the end of the essay there are half a page of notes of other points and other articles I could read on the subject.

The other way we learnt and were examined were through 'Gobbets', where we commented on various texts. These are not wildly exciting, but to give a flavour, let me reproduce part of the second set of Gobbets.

There are six answers and I shall reproduce the first three.

viii) Until a man growe unto the aige of 24 yeares, he (for the moste parte, though not always) is wilde, without judgement, and not of sufficient experience to governe himself. (Memorandum on Statute of Artificers, 1573)

Though it seems likely that the apprenticeship clauses of the Statute of Artificers were usually enforced – witness the administration of these clauses in the North Riding quarter sessions in 1607-8, this memorandum was called forth by a fear that enforcement was growing lax. The original Statute had said that any householder over 24 might have an apprentice and that anyone owning ½ a plough land might have an apprentice aged between 12 & 24. In fact 24 seems to have been considered the 'age of discretion', just as 21 is the age of legal responsibility now. Thus this memorandum, in its attempt to stabilize society, in its avowed attempt to provide fully skilled apprentices, in its aim to prevent a surplus of semi-skilled independent artificers who would swamp their elders & betters says that the master of an apprentice must be at least 24 and, in the above example, must serve apprenticeship until he is 24, which will prevent his falling into idleness & licentiousness. An example of the clause is given in the proceedings at the North Riding quarter sessions, already mentioned, against a defendant for trading "he being a very young man, unmarried, which is contrary to the statute".

There are a couple of copies in my hand, which suggest I had verbal feed-back on the gobbets.

ix) The Spanish wool usually brought out of Spain into Flanders and there dressed is now carried over to Alicante ... and from thence transported into Italy, Venice & those parts. (Arguments for maintaining an English agent in Turkey 1587-8)

The purpose of this remark is to refute the wishful thinking of those who argued that if the trade with Turkey was cut off other markets for English cloth could be found in the Mediterranean, especially the Venetian one. It is here pointed out that the Venetians were in fact buying merino wool from Spain & turning it into cloth themselves – and even putting heavy duties on English goods going to the Levant so that their own goods would have an advantage in that trade. This was indeed a serious threat to English markets in the Mediterranean region, but it was bypassed by the growing production of the 'new draperies', brighter, lighter and cheaper than anything that the Italian and Venetian factories could produce, and even at the time that

this argument is put forward the Italian cloth centres. At the time that this document was written, the Levant market was of fast growing importance, for the slump in the mid C16 had shown the danger of restricted, one-track grade to Europe & had turned Englishmen's eyes outwards, to Russia, Barbary, the colonies, as well as the Levant. This growth is shown by another argument put forward in the same document – that over thirty ships specially built recently will be wasted.

xii) Such a private exercise & use had not been within it, for every one may work in such a private manner, although he has never been an apprentice in the trade.  
(Case of the Tailors of Ipswich, 1615)

The Master and officers of the Guild of the Tailors of Ipswich accused Wm Sheninge of breaking guild rules is not presenting himself to the Master & Wardens and they claim they can fine him also for breaking the Statute of Artificers in not having served an apprenticeship. This may be seen as a test case both for the power of a guild and also as to the strength of the Statute – although it would be absurd to generalize from it and deduce that guilds and the Statute were henceforward were of no power for clearly such restrictions were only broken down gradually, but like Tolly's case this is a definite indication of a trend, coinciding as it does with the long hostility to monopolies and more especially with the attack on the Merchant Adventurer monopoly by Cockayne and his colleagues. More generally the judges find Sheninge innocent saying that “at the Common Law no man could be prohibited from working in any lawful trades & sciences ... and therefore the law abhors all monopolies ... of he would undertakes upon him to work is unskillful, his ignorance is a sufficient punishment to him...” (cf. St of Artificers attitude) and more particularly on guild ordinances that the “are against the liberty & freedom of the subject, and are a means of extortion ... (tho') ordinances for the good order & govt of men of Trades & Mysteries are good...” Sheninge pleaded that he was only working domestically, and in the above the judges uphold his claim, & by so doing leave a loop-hole to individual and practically unrestrained activity.

There are several lines of cross references and comments at the bottom of the Gobbet, in my hand.

The other three Gobbets, which I answered at equal length were:

xiii. The Clothiers at their will have made their work extreme hard, and abated wages what they pleased. (Petition to fix wages addressed to Justices by textile workers of Wiltshire, 1623)

xx) Gloucestershire must not be pass'd over, without some account of a most pleasant and fruitful vale which crosses part of the country ... and which is called Stroud-water. (Defoe: Tour)

xxii) Here is a curiosity in trade worth observing, as being the only one of its kind in England, namely, a throwing or throwster's mill, which performes by a wheel turn'd by the water. (Defoe: Tour)

There are a few more notes by me at the bottom of the Gobbets, noting comments by the supervisor and further references.

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As well as economic history, I was continuing my British history into the middle and later nineteenth century. I have an immense number of notes on Peel and an essay of over 7 foolscap pages on 'What was "Liberal Toryism"; why did the Conservative

party stay together so long?’ There is an essay plan and some comments on the essay, but no mark on it.

The second essay is titled ‘The Economic Background to English Imperialism 1870-1914’, some six pages of writing.

The third essay, was on ‘Consider British Policy in Africa as a test case of “Imperialism”, 187-1902. The notes for this, and the essay itself, were shorter than for the others, but the contents interest me, given my imperial past.

Finally, there was a typed essay on 8th March on ‘Examine & account for the impact of the Irish Question on English politics 1870-1890’.

### Consider British Policy in Africa as a test case of ‘Imperialism’, 1870-1902.

In 1893 the leader of the party which was supposedly the more opposed to imperialism said these words:

“It is said that our Empire is already large enough, and does not need extension. That would be true enough if the world were elastic, but unfortunately it is not elastic, and we are engaged at the present moment, in the language of mining ‘in pegging out claims for the future.’ We have to consider not what we want now, but what we shall want in the future ... we have to remember that it is part of our responsibility and heritage to take care that the world, so far as it can be moulded by us, shall receive an English-speaking complexion, and not that of other nations...” It was a speech of Roseberry, the successor to Gladstone, the man who alone could have led an opposition to Chamberlain’s policy and it reveals several assumptions which we consider to be constituents of imperialism – the view of expansion as enlarged by Seeley, of the superiority and responsibility of Englishmen, chanted forth by Kipling and lying at the heart of Rhodes’ desire for the federation of S. Africa and finding expression in many of his conversations –for instance his remark that “history had taught him that expansion was everything, and that the world’s surface being limited, the great object of present should be to take as much of the world as it possibly could”. Chamberlain echoed the above sentiments frequently, a clear example being found in his words “I believe that the British race is the greatest of governing races that the world has ever seen ... it is a gigantic task that we have undertaken when we have determined to wield the task of empire. Great is the task, great is the responsibility, but great is the honour.” These were the views of some of those most deeply involved in S. African politics. They expressed, often, but not always pressures, economic, popular & jingoistic, political & strategic, which came from within England, from Europe, and, as Gallagher & Robinson rightly stress, from the actual situation in Africa. In the light of events and in Africa what was the relative responsibility of each of these factors in producing the annexation of vast areas of tropical Africa, in producing intervention in Egypt, and in causing the clash in South Africa?

The very differences of the areas within which British interests were operating in the 1870s on suggests that no single and coherent theory will explain events. As Gallagher & Robinson point out “It seems unlikely that the motives in regions as dissimilar as Egypt, the Niger and S. Africa can be fitted easily into a simple formula of imperialism.” Thus if we try to apply any single thesis to Africa it soon becomes untenable. For example if we seek unity by using the Hobson-Lenin view of the necessity for new centres of investment and new markets for English goods we immediately fall flat. “The basis for the hostile attitude to other powers seems to have been the extension of European power politics to the African scene; it was apparently not fear of economic competition” declares Wilde and gives as an example the fact that “Chamberlain in no case indicated on the minute sheets any concern for special economic interests”. It was politics which dictated economics in S. Africa. There is no proof that Chamberlain & Milner were ‘used’ by financial interests & Rand ‘capitalists’ in an attempt to bring in a laxer government. Neither Milner nor Chamberlain had any sympathy with “stock-jobbers” – the “money-bags” as Chamberlain called them. To see more than a coincidence between gold and the Rand the aggressive policy of the government though attractive cannot be

proved – except in the sense that increasing Boer wealth increased an otherwise impossibly rapid growth of independent nationalism. This is not to deny Rhodes’ own financial interests in the Transvaal, nor to suggest that economic motives were completely absent from Chamberlain’s mind. But the government had too much faith in A/Saxon superiority to want anything more than fair dealing; given that the British would come out on top.

Again if we turn to other parts of Africa, apart from the major consideration that Africa as a whole played a very small part when compared to the rest of England’s formal & informal empire, we see no direct link between economic expansion & government activity. West Africa seemed to offer better prospects of markets and raw materials than east Africa and the Upper Nile; yet it was upon these poorer countries that the British government concentrated its efforts. Finally Egypt is hard to square with a purely economic or financial interpretation of imperialism – even with the interpretation of Gallagher & Robinson stressing the varying methods used by the imperialism of free trade”.

In their book on the Victorians in Africa the above authors stress that “Ministers only listened to the pleas of missionary, imperialist and financial groups only when it suited their purpose”. On the whole this seems to be borne out by events in Africa. For long African colonies, especially in S. Africa, had been the least popular of British acquisitions. Rhodes’ was disappointed in the 1880’s at the lack of enthusiasm and interest in imperial expansion. They had colonists, but produced little trade or revenue, attracted no capital and few immigrants. Such a view was expressed by James Stephen of the Colonial Office in the 1880’s. “If we could acquire the Dominion of the whole of the continent it would be but a worthless possession”. At the time when public opinion was scarcely interested – indeed when it was believed by many ministers to be radical & anti-imperial, great chunks of Africa were won and mapped out. Chronology alone disproves the simple connexion between popular pressure and African expansion, the enthusiasm for Jameson arose largely after his Raid. Politicians had to lead the ‘people’, and even if it had been the other way round it is unlikely that popular pressure would have changed the policy of the aristocrats in Whitehall. Nevertheless there are exceptions to the immunity from pressure-groups.

One example of this was the reluctant annexation of land on the Niger to protect trading and missionary interests.

Again no one can deny that British opinion in the Cape colony was imperialist or not interested in finance, and it is clear that such opinion did sway the government to a considerable extent. Whitehall officials made the decisions, but they depended exclusively on their information on men in Cape Town. Milner’s power is stressed by Gallagher & Robinson and Wilde has shown the immense influence misinformation – in the case of the mistaken view that the Uitlanders outnumbered the Boers in the Transvaal which this author calls “the greatest single factor in the complex of events leading to the South African war” – could have on Downing Street. The broad outlines were imposed by ministers – thus Chamberlain wished to turn South Africa into another Canada say Gallagher & Robinson, but within that framework it was believed that so long as London kept in line with colonial opinion and Britain’s collaborator’s were upheld in South Africa would eventually turn itself into another colonial dominion. The final exception to the remark about Ministers not being determined by imperialist groups is that they themselves were often ‘imperialists’, if that word is to have any meaning at all. That is, they believed, as we have seen, in the mission of the A/Saxon empire; they believed that the imperial net-work should be strengthened and so on. But even such a generalization belies the situation, it may be true of Chamberlain’s, but not of Gladstone who, nevertheless annexed large territories to secure large territories for the Cape Colony, to keep the Transvaal Republic encircled and to seal off the imagined German challenge. Here we find another broad factor entering into the policy towards Africa, a factor on which recent historians, for instance G & R and Fieldhouse, lay their emphasis as the determining one in late Victorian aggressive ‘imperialism’ – the strategic and international considerations.

Put crudely this view is summed up in G & R’s words that “if the papers left by the policy-makers are to be believed they moved into Africa, not to build a new African empire, but to protect the old empire in India.” This stress on the importance of the Indian lifelines,

threatened mostly by internal developments in Africa, the weakness within Egypt, the crumbling of Turkish rule and the growth of an independent Transvaal is very different from Fieldhouse's thesis that "until the end of the century, imperialism may best be seen as the extension into the periphery of the political struggle in Europe" which therefore stresses Bismark's action in 1884-5 in announcing the formal control by Germany over parts of West and South Africa and of New Guinea as beginning the new phase of political imperialism. The latter point being contrasted to Gallagher & Robinson's view that it was in the collapse in the Khedival regime in leading them on to say "From start to finish the partition of tropical Africa was driven by the persistent crisis in Africa". Neither view can totally explain African developments; an examination of just one example of African politics shows a failure to account for events.

Events in south Africa cannot have been wholly dictated by the need to protect the route to India in 1895 on. There was another route, and the invasion of the Transvaal cannot possibly be wholly explained by a desire to safeguard Capetown. As for Fieldhouse's view of the influence of German intervention, tho' superficially the Kruger telegramme, German capital on the Rand and the hasty annexation of Bechuanaland seem to support such a suggestion a closer examination of the documents & vies of Rhodes or Chamberlain hardly lend evidence to support such a view. As Gallagher & Robinson have concluded, after Gladstone's annexation "the German challenge was no longer an important factory" in S. African politics.

In general, then, what light does an examination of African policy show? Above all it demonstrates that the great imperialists, men like Chamberlain, were not following a systematic, predesigned policy of expansion. As Wilde says "Chamberlain & his staff were apparently intent at all times upon solving particular problems and did not reflect upon philosophies with which their acts might or might not be consistent." Again the evidence demonstrated that non-economic factors played a considerable part, in Egypt the canal, in tropical Africa missionary protection and strategic considerations, and in South Africa a vague sort of belief that the whole of the area was a unit and should be federated which might possibly be called "imperialistic spirit" when it finds forceful expression as in Rhodes.

There are three notes on facts and references at the end.

## ACADEMIC WORK - SUMMER 1963

The last summer term was, of course, peculiar. Firstly it was effectively only half a term, since we started examinations at the start of June. Secondly, because we were being examined on three years of work, there was a lot of revision to bring three years of essays and readings back into the memory. For both these reasons we did not take on any new topics, except, perhaps rather informally and indirectly, prepare the General Paper. This was the nearest we got to a theory paper, and was a chance to reflect on more general issues, particularly in historiography. So I think that we were encouraged, alongside revision, to read some more general books.

I have a printed Lecture List for Trinity Term 1963 which has a number of lectures. I also went to some final lectures on 'Economic and Social History of England 1000-1300' by Miss B. Harvey; 'The government of England 1066-1307' by H.E. Bell; 'The Post-Restoration Church of England 1660-1800' by Dr. E.A.O. Whiteman; 'Government and Society in France in the Reigns of Henry IV and Louis XIII' by Mrs M. Prestwich and 'Aristotle, Hobbes, and Rousseau' by Mr. K.V. Thomas.

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In a sense I continued this more general reading course into the Long Vacation, and since none of my notes are dated, I am not clear as to which of the following I read in the weeks before the exams, and which during the ensuing summer. But for the moment I shall lump them all together, just to show the kind of general reading which I was engaged in alongside the specific history work. Much of this overlaps with comments in my letters, and I copied bits and pieces into my letters.

The file of the materials groups them into certain themes, so I shall use that as a guide to the materials, and put the notes under themes.

Literature and poetry: I became a big fan of Basil Willey and took over fifty pages of notes from his volumes 'The Elizabethan World Picture', 'The Seventeenth Century Background', 'The Eighteenth Century Background' and 'Nineteenth Century Background', which gave me a context for many of my favourite thinkers. I also read and noted Leavis's 'The Great Tradition' and an article on 'the Line of Wit' and on 'Milton's Verse' in 'Revaluations' and on 'Mr Eliot & Milton'. I also noted from T.S. Eliot, 'Poetry and Social Criticism' and 'The Sacred Wood' as well as pieces from his 'Selected Essays' (for example on the Metaphysicals and Andrew Marvell) ; Graham Hough 'The Last Romantics' and Edmund Wilson's 'Axel's Castle' both on W.B. Yeats. 'Poetry and Social Criticism: The Work of W.B. Yeats' by L. C. Knights. L.C. Knights, 'Bacon & the Dissociation of Sensibility'. Still on poetry, I typed out a page and a half of notes on Wordsworth by Helen Darbishire. C.S. Lewis, 'English Literature in the Sixteenth Century', and 'The Anthropological Approach...'; Lewis 'Donne & Love Poetry in the C17' in Essays to Grierson ( and the reply by Joan Bennet) and an article by Hutchinson on George Herbert in the same volume; C.S. Lewis, 'Preface to Paradise Lost' - extensive notes; Tillyard, 'Introduction to the Poems of Sir Thomas Wyatt'. Helen Gardner, introduction to 'The Metaphysical Poets'. Grierson, 'the Metaphysical Poets'. George Williamson, 'Mutability, Decay & Jacobean Melancholy' and certain essays from his 'Seventeenth Century Contexts'; Bush, 'English Literature in the early C17'. R.G.Cox, 'The Poems of John Donne'. F.W. Bradbrooke, 'The Poetry of Andrew Marvell'.

It is clear from my letters and writings that I was going through a D.H. Lawrence phase at this time. Alongside one or two of his novels ( I typed out six pages of notes from 'Sons and Lovers'), I was also reading his 'Selected Letters'. I typed out a good deal from Aldous Huxley's introduction to the letters, and five pages from the letters themselves. I also typed three pages of extracts from his poems, especially love poems. With actual poetry, I copied out parts of T.S. Eliot's 'Four Quartets' and the poetry of W.B. Yeats.

There is a section on 'Legends and Myths', a subject I later contemplated working on when I returned to do a D.Phil. at Oxford. There are notes on ten articles and books relating to Robin Hood.

More directly relevant to my history work were a series of books and articles, from which I took extensive notes, relating to history and philosophy. On history, there was quite a wide variety of reading and note-taking. Namier, Macaulay, Gibbon, Bede, Tocqueville, Acton, and Anatole France 'On History' and Trevor-Roper on E.H. Carr's 'What is History?'; Trevelyan, 'Bias in History' and 'History & Literature', Coulton 'Two ways of History', Powicke 'Some Observations'. Hayek 'Capitalism and the Historians'; Tawney 'Religion and the Rise of Capitalism'; Hoskins 'On the Writing of Local History'; Holloway, 'Sociology & History'; Johnson 'The Mechanical Processes of the Historian'; L.C. Knights 'Notes on a Marxian View of the C17'.

I also took extensive notes from a series of studies of historians by Ved Mehta, which were just coming out in the new Yorker, titled 'The Flight of the Crooked Taloned Birds' (and which would be re-printed as half of Mehta's book 'The Fly and the Fly Bottle'. I also cut out and annotated the version of the Ford Lectures being given by Christopher Hill on 'The Intellectual Origins of the English Revolution', which appeared in the Listener in 1962.

On philosophy there was Isaiah Berlin on 'The purpose of Philosophy', and Aldous Huxley introduction to 'The Perennial Philosophy'; Croly on 'Individual Responsibility. Some observations on Intellectual Freedom'; Popper 'Open Society & Its Enemies', Oakeshott, 'Systems of Philosophy', a talk by my friend Dick Smethurst on 'Language, Logic & God'.

On sociology and social responsibility, there was J.R. Hicks 'The Social Framework', Sir Charles Darwin 'World Population', Riesman, various extracts from 'Individualism Reconsidered'; George Orwell, 'The Prevention of Literature'; Stone on R.H. Tawney, Dolci & Huxley, 'Report from Palermo'.

It may also have been around this that we were given some reading on wider issues of history and philosophy of history by Harry Pitt – and remember discussing them over a pint of beer in his charming rooms at the end of the old cottages in Worcester – but perhaps that was in the summer. I particularly remember that on the recommended reading list were 'The Education of Henry Adams', which I only read many years later, and 'Individualism Reconsidered' by David Riesman, which I read parts of (several of the essays) and later became a huge fan of 'The Lonely Crowd' when I went on to London in late 1966.

### **Revision and preparations**

I thought carefully about how to prepare for the exams and used various methods. One was to start to compile a collection of quotations, statistics and other 'facts' onto five by three inch cards cut in half. I had learnt this method from Brian Harrison, and it later became one of my chief research methods during my D.Phil. and in later years in various ways, so that I finally ended up, for example, with over 60,000 such small slips of paper.

For the purposes of the exams I typed out some hundreds of small cards, and over the last term I would carry them round with me and try to learn them off by heart – sometimes also reciting them before I went to sleep. The idea was that my essays would be attractive because they had specifics – facts, quotations – rather than just being run of the mill generalities. It may have helped to pull up my marks a little, as I finally did better in the exams than I had done in my essays and collections over the three years.

A flavour of the sort of thing I was abstracting can be seen from three small samples.

### **Ten 'quotes' from Political Philosophy small cards (out of about 200)**

#### **PLATO AND ARISTOTLE**

##### Rousseau on Plato's Republic.

'The Republic is not a work written on politics, but the finest treatise on education that ever was written.'

##### Plato realises that his Republic is an ideal.

'The city is founded in words; for on earth I imagine it nowhere exists.'

##### Plato's hatred of individual is every evident in his 'Laws'.

'Nobody, whether male or female, should ever be without a leader...he should teach his soul, by long habit, never to dream of acting independently, and to become utterly incapable of it.'

##### Sabine: Plato - underlying theory, that virtue is knowledge.

'From Socrates he gained this proposition..."which implies that there is an objective good which ought to be realized not because men want it but because it is good..." (hence the philosopher-kings of the 'Republic'.

##### Popper on the contrast between Plato and Aristotle.

'Instead of Plato's flashes of penetrating insight, we find dry systematisation and the love, shared by so many mediocre writers of later times, for settling any question whatever by issuing a "sound and balanced judgment that does justice to everybody; which means at times, by elaborating and solemnly missing the point." (i.e. the 'mean' doctrine of Aristotle)

##### Popper attacks Aristotles method of 'definition'.

'Every discipline, as long as it used the Aristotelian method of definition, has remained arrested in a state of empty verbiage and barren scholasticism.'



Aristotle's slavery argument was not an argument from logic, but an argument from experience, and Hobbes said of such arguments... 'An argument from the practice of men is invalid.'

#### Indoctrination.

'The citizen should be moulded to suit the form of government under which he lives - for each government has a peculiar character which originally formed and which continues to preserve it.' (Aristotle?)

#### Barker: the justification of the state, why it is natural.

'The state is therefore natural, when, or is so far as, it is an institution for that moral perfection of man to which his whole nature moves... There is only one end - moral perfection which can only be attained in the polis and that is the measure of all things... the end justifies... condemns... is sovereign.'

#### Barker: Aristotle and economics.

'As there was no distinction between state and society, Aristotle's "economic theory subordinated as it is to political theory, which in turn is subordinated to... ethics, admits of no isolation of the economic motive... wealth, on this basis, is a means to a moral end; as such a means it is necessarily limited by the end... it is a line of thought inimical to capitalism (which involves the unlimited accumulation of wealth).'

## **ENGLISH II: (1307-1660)**

### **Ten out of about 150 cards.**

#### Acts of the Henrician Reformation were not revolutionary but declaratory

The Act of Supremacy declared that the king "is, ought to be, Supreme Head" & 'so is recognized by the clergy in their convocations'.

#### Gardiner on obedience to the state & king (1535 & 1542)

"princes ought to be obeyed by the commandment of God; yea, & to be obeyed without exception."

"All Christian princes have committed unto them, immediately of God, the whole cure of all their subjects in things spiritual as well as civil" (1542)

#### The state of the monasteries on the Eve of Dissolution

Evesham abbey - Knowles.

The letters of Robert Joseph of Evesham Abbey ... show no glimmer of foreboding on the eve of Revolution. He and his friends feel no foreboding, no urgency... "They are not the bucolic earthbound creatures that visitations sometimes suggest but there is something fundamentally amiss socially as well as spiritually, when a community of 50 or less, men & women, vowed to the monastic life, administer vast estates and draw large revenues which are not used for any spiritual purpose.'

#### James I on the Roman Catholic church

"I acknowledge the R C to be our mother church, altho' defiled with some infirmities & corruption". (1st speech to parliament)

Words of Pope Pius V condoning tyrannicide (1580)

“An so if these Englishmen (Dr. d & Tyrrell) decide actually to undertake so glorious a work, your lordship can assure them that they do not commit any sin.”

Success of the Jesuit mission (1580-1)

A despairing Lancs J.P. said “We strive in vain, we hoped that these papistical priests dying, all papistry would have died & ended with them, but this brood (the seminarists & Jesuits) will never be rooted out): it is impossible ... to extirpate the papistical faith out of the land.”

Campion proclaims the non-political nature of his mission on the scaffold.

“We are dead men to the world; we travelled only for souls; we touched neither state nor policy; we had no such commission”

Francis Bacon in 1591 on Elizabeth’s view on the sanctity of private views.

“Her Majesty, not liming to make windows into men’s hearts & secret thoughts ... tempered her law so as it restraineth only manifest disobedience...”

Elizabeth’s religious aim

The lord keeper expressed her Majesty’s wishes at the opening of the first parliament when he declared that “her Majesty’s desire was to secure and unite the people of the realm in one uniform order to the glory of god & to general tranquillity, to avoid such words as “heretic”, “schismatic”, & papists” as causes of displeasure & malice, enemies to concord & unity & the very marks at which to shoot at”.

Southwell’s dying speech (159?)

“We have sung the canticles of the Lord in a strange land & in this desert we have sucked honey from the rocks & oil from the hard stone ... It seems to me that I see the beginning of a religious life set on foot in England, of which we now sow the seeds with tears, that others hereafter may with joy carry in the sheaves to the heavenly granaries.”

**A few other abstracted quotations on 5x3 inch cards:**

“In every human soul there is a socialist and an individualist, an authoritarian and a fanatic for liberty, as in each there is a Catholic & a Protestant” (R.H. Tawney - Religion & Capitalism, p.212) - November 1961

Philosophy - The Soul

One Nature, perfect and pervading, circulates in all natures.  
One Reality, all-comprehensive, contains within itself all realities.  
The one Moon reflects itself wherever there is a sheet of water,  
And all the moons in the waters are embraced within the one Moon.  
The Dharma-body (the Absolute) of all the Buddas enters into my own being.  
And my own being is found in union with theirs ...  
The Inner Light is beyond praise & blame;  
Like space it knows no boundaries,  
Yet it is ever here, within us, ever retaining its serenity & tallness.  
It is only when you hunt for it that you lose it;

You cannot take hold of it, but equally you cannot get rid of it,  
And while you can do neither, it goes on its own way.  
You remain silent and it speaks; you speak, and it is dumb;  
The great gate of charity is wide open, with no obstacles before it.  
Young-chia-Ta-shih (Perennial Philosophy – November 1961)

#### Philosophy – The soul

When a man follows the way of the world, or the way of the flesh, or the way of tradition (i.e. when he believes in religious rites and the letter of the scriptures, as though they were intrinsically sacred), Knowledge of Reality cannot arise in him.  
Shankara (Perennial Philosophy) November 1961

#### Systems of life Philosophy

“It requires great energy of mind to create a system, it requires even greater not to become the slave of a creation. To become the slave of a system in life is not to know when to ‘hang up philosophy’, not to recognise the final triumph of inconsequence; in philosophy it is not to know when the claims of comprehension outweigh those of coherence. (Oakeshott, introduction (xv) to Hobbes Leviathan)

## **HISTORY FINAL EXAMS**

Although it may be only of specialist interest, and perhaps only a few elderly historians may be able to read between the lines, I will give what I can recover of that intense experience of the all-important history finals. We worked for three years, but almost everything depended on the ten days or so at the end of our third year when we sat all the papers.

There is one comment in a letter to Penny about what I was going through, written precisely in the middle of the exams:

Postmarked 9th June (Sunday)

*I have pile of letters beside me from you – thank you so much darling, they have cheered me up immensely as I awake into another day of exams. ... I know you’ll forgive a short & dull letter. I’ve been scribbling madly too much recently & have the worst to come. ...*

*I enclose the English II paper which might interest you – I did those with rings round them – quite well I hope. I can’t make any guess at how well I’ve done – pretty badly I suspect on English I when none of my prepared questions came up – alright, I hope, on the rest. Everyone is fairly cheerful and the questions have been pretty fair and at least it is a relief to find 6/11 gone. I had a gift question on English III paper – “how did the religious conflicts of the time reflect themselves in Victorian literature” – so that I could waffle on about Tennyson, Mathew Arnold, George Eliot, Wordsworth etc. The only slight catastrophe has been muddling up the order of the papers & hence doing no revision for the first general paper. I enclose the General Papers – though I’m not sure you’ll find them of great interests. Could you return the English II paper by Wednesday as Lady Clay wants to see it.*

As for how I did on the papers, here are the results, as I received them from my tutor, James Campbell, later in the summer, in a letter dated 8th August from Worcester College:

[A = Alpha, B = Beta]

*Dear Alan,*

*Thank you for your p.c. Your marks were good.*

*English I, B+?+/B.?+,*

*English II, AB/AB,*

*English III, B-/B++*

*Documents B++/AB*

*General I, B*

*General II, B+*

*Political Theory, AB*

*Special Subject I, B+?+,*

*Special Subject II, B++*

*General AB*

*As you see they marked a lot of your papers twice & viva'd you for a first. All told very creditable, though I'm sorry you didn't quite make it, Yours sincerely, James Campbell.*

The papers were sat, usually twice a day, from 9.30 a.m. - 12.30 p.m and 2-5 p.m. I have most of the papers, and also my working notes/plans on a number. In the plans, I divided each answer into four parts, with timings written at the top as to when I must finish that answer. I shall put under each answer what appears in each section/box of my plans. I have expanded some of the short-hand.

On Thursday 6 June, we started the exams. The first paper was English History in the morning. The instructions were:

Candidates should complete four answers, including at least one from each section. They should illustrate their answers by sketch-maps where appropriate.

I answered three from section A as follows:

3. Why is Theodore of Tarsus important?

Bede on; Situation in Britain; Celtic \* - Roman; King - Church

Situation in 664; Whitby & aftermath; plague; Wilfred; power of Canterbury

Theodore's character and reforms; penitential; synod & Hertford; bishops & clergy; later history of Church; power of Canterbury

4. In what ways did the authority exercised by the West Saxon kings after Alfred differ from that of earlier Anglo-Saxon kings?

Alfred - A/Saxon kingship; Mercian & Northumbrian Kingship; Church; Economic; Financial - geld etc - divisions; local government; central administration; divisions

Ealdormen; unity; military

Personal; kinship/lordship; Joliffe

### 7. Can a case be made out for starting a history of Feudal England in 1066?

Introduction; Stenton's view

Institutions; Church; Law; Central Administration; Landholding – Oswaldslor;  
Military; Financial

Personnel

Synthesis

### 11. 'The king was the source of justice and the guardian of order, but he neither created the law nor imposed a system of order'. Discuss this comment upon the government of England in the twelfth century.

Meaning – i.e. he was fount of will; not struggle – e.g. Henry I;

Order – e.g. Stephen;

Law – innovations; Henry I & Stephen

These look pretty thin, and I was probably rather despondent – and realized I had not done well, which I hadn't.

\*

I have the notes for the English II paper, which I did well on, but am not sure when I took it as I do not have the paper itself. Perhaps I never got it back from Lady Clay.

\*

The only other paper of that week which I have is the French Translation paper, sat on the afternoon of Saturday 8th June. I have the draft of my translation which might indicate to an expert how woeful was my answer, but I am not sure how this translation paper was marked as I am not sure where it fits in the marks I received.

\*

By the end of the first week, I had done 6/11 of the papers, as I mentioned. My retention of the papers and plans for the second week was much better, as I have all five papers.

The first was on the morning of Monday 10th June. This was 'English Economic History from 1485 to 1730.

The paper was divided into parts:

Question 1 asked us to comment on various passages, some seven passages in all, which I duly did. We then had to do two essays. It is not absolutely clear which essays I

did, since I seem to have changed my mind – there are plans for three essays. As a special subject, I received a medium mark it seems.

\*

On the afternoon of Monday 10th I did the General Paper. Along with political science, this was my most successful paper. The detail of my plans suggest I enjoyed doing this paper. In this paper we had a little more time, an hour per question, which helped. As did my general reading outside history.

3. What part did the discovery of nature play in the Romantic Movement?

J.S. Mill on C18?; definition of Romantic movement; both more general & more specific; idea of growth; Lawrence & nature

Challenges which Romantics sought to face; religion; artistic; social etc

Weapons (a) Style (b) new objects (c) 'Nature' in C18 (d) the new 'nature'

E.g. of romantics: Wordsworth, Keats, Coleridge – poets; Politicians, J.S. Mill, de Sade etc; Novelists etc , – Scott, Macaulay

6. Does history throw any light on the problems presented by under-developed countries?

Tawney & China

Similarities & differences – dangers; corruption, payment & civil service

Landholding; Process of industrialization; Opposition to change – vested interest, superstition; change

11. Were people in general more superstitious in the Middle Ages than in the modern world?

Attempted definition of superstition; extent of superstitions, difficulty of measure; explanation of phenomenon which cannot otherwise be explained; e.g. Chaucer, astronomy

Witchcraft – obvious; 'Sophisticated superstition' – religion

'Country' superstition; Organized religion; 'Open Society theory'

\*

The other paper which I did best on, with another leading Alpha, was Political Thought. This was done the next morning, on Tuesday 11 June.

The paper was again divided into two parts. In the first we had to comment on four passages, at least one from each of the prescribed authors. I chose the following:

1 (a) A husband and father rules over wife and children, both free, but the rule differs, the rule over his children being a royal, over his wife a constitutional rule (ARISTOTLE)

(c) For, as I must repeat once and again, the first principle of all action is leisure.  
(ARISTOTLE)

(e) Feare, and Liberty are consistent (HOBBS)

(g) La geurre n'est donc point une relation d'homme à home, mais une relation d'État à État, dans laquelle ne sont ennemis qu'accidentellement. (ROUSSEAU)

Then I did three essays.

### 3. What did Aristotle consider to be the connection between education and politics?

Cf Plato on education; cf Rousseau, Hobbes

The over-all of political phil & state, "states originating in the bare existence for the sake of the good life leisure, happiness, virtue

Distributive justice

Function of education – stability, cf. re. vol 6, it is not the property but the desires of men that need to be equalized ... only by State educ'n : the legislator must mould to his will the frames of new born children", "mass of men amenable to compulsion rather than reason", "states become in time what their leaders make them"

The good life – nature, custom, reason

No division of state & society

### 6. With what success did Rousseau solve the problem he set himself in the Contrat Social?

"such a form of association must be found in which each will surrender to all yet retain all his liberty; cf. Aristotle, Hobbes.

R's definition of liberty & alienation; "liberté consiste dans un loi qui on s'est prescrite' – cf 2nd line S.C. – cf on Inequality – cf. Hegel :dependence outside him" – Kant

His solution – "l'obeissance a la loi qui son prescribe c'est liberté

### 14. What moral assumptions do you find in the political thought of Marx?

Marx & Hegel – rejection of complete materialism

Alienation & the worker

Inherent value

His criticism of capitalist society

Dialectic.

On the back of the sheet are written:

“l’homme est né libre est partout il est dans les fers. On croit les maîtres d’autres qui est plus esclave qu’eux ceux croient”

“subject one one’s appetite is slavery”

“he who gives himself to all gives himself to none”

\*

On Tuesday 11 June afternoon I did my Special Subject paper one, Commonwealth and Protectorate 1647-1658. On this and the second paper I did only moderately well, though I had put a huge effort into them.

The first paper was a matter of commenting on a number of quotations from our set documents, and I have marked those which I did. The second Special Subject paper, which may have been my very last, consisted of writing four essays.

3. How much political importance would you assign to the land sales of this period?

Cf. with the Reformation – type of sales – Habakkuk, Thirsk; sale of Iris land; sales of Church lands; sale of Crown lands, sale of royalist lands, Philips to Nicholas – vested interests – amount, effects

Financial; Relations – King-army-parliament; army-people; officers as opposed to men

4. How effective was the use made of sea-power by the governments of the Commonwealth and Protectorate?

Thurloe; Background – uses under Charles – central issues, Baltic, Mediterranean, North Sea, trade & diplomacy, ship-building

Power & safeguard; (a) vs King etc (b) Sweden (c) France (Colbert’s desire for T eg) (d) Spain – San Domingo

Trade: (a) Baltic (b) Portugal (c) Med’n; (d) France & Flanders (e) Dutch.

Financial solvency – West Indies, Navigation acts, Portugal

9. In what ways did financial problems affect Cromwell’s relations with the parliaments of the Protectorate?

General financial position in 1654 – debts, resources, cf. Charles I. Barebones.

Instrument of Government

First Prot Parliament – Assessment



Major Generals

2nd Prot Parl - 2nds session. De B's belief

Indirect ways - Foreign Policy, relations with recusants etc. Carlyle, Burton - Decimation. Loans & London.

10. What obstacles stood in the way of complete religious toleration under the Protectorate?

"opinions are only hurtful to those who hold them"; Cromwell's views

The Jews & the governments mission to preach Christianity

Roman Catholics & royalist opposition

Sectarians - Tithes; the attack on property & government. Vavasor Powell "Lord wilt thou have O. Cromwell or J. Christ to rule over us?" Quotations - Naylor

How much progress? Zealots & persecution - individualism.

## APPENDIX: PARENTAL FINANCES DURING MY TIME AT OXFORD

These notes should perhaps be placed separately under the years. I shall put them here for the moment, and will no doubt find more.

### **Parental Finances during my time at Oxford (1960-3)**

There is quite a lot in my mother's letters, and a certain amount in mine, about the difficulties my parents were having in part-financing me through Oxford. They also had the costs of my sisters, which I shall need to guess at – depending on where they were.

The story of financial difficulties goes right back to their earliest days together. It is a running story in 'Indian Infancy', in 'Dorset Days' and 'Sedbergh Schooldays'. This is just the latest chapter of an inability to live within their means.

An added dimension here is that to try and survive, my father was borrowing from a local contractor, who was also a contractor to his tea garden. This led to his being severely reprimanded and losing the opportunity of being made General Manager, which would have sorted out his financial problems. I heard vague rumours of this, but other details are given in the Tea Company records which we have recently seen.

For the purposes of this account, I shall just include extracts from the Tea Company records relating to his finances. There are numerous letters in an argument which my parents had with the Company where they tried to get the company to pay for my sister's passages out to India. The outcome was that the Company lent them money for this against future bonuses, but refused to pay for the fares. Clearly, from this and other evidence, my parents were fairly desperate.

My letters show that I was aware of their difficulties, about which they even wrote to the College about. I tried to be as economical as possible, but was clearly a heavy drain on them. I shall analyse all this in greater detail later. For the moment I shall just abstract relevant pieces from the Tea Company records.

From General Manager in Assam to Headquarters

### **Ms 11497 (21) 1960**

June 14 1960

Mr D.K. Macfarlane. Noted & I thank the Board for copies of correspondence. The relevant amount earned by Mr Macfarlane is £4,261 & I enclose a statement giving details in case this is required. I have taken this to the appropriate Indian Income Tax year which ends on 31.3.60 [not clear if this is an annual amount – in which case it is huge, or accumulated earnings in the Company until that date, in which case it is very small.]

### **(22) 1961**

No. P. 4/61 January 24

Mr Macfarlane advises that he has no standing debt in the U.K. other than his house mortgage but he has certain day to day expenses in respect of his son who is at Oxford University, i.e. clothing and holiday expenses, "battels" of £60 per term to his College and a small amount to supplement his County Council Grant. Mr. Macfarlane confirms that his debt to Mr. G. D. Lahoty is being paid off monthly.

Mr. Lahoty now owes the Company the sum of Rs. 1371/- but this amount is expected to be cleared within a month, at which time the Company will cease to do business with him.

No. P 50/61 August 29th

Mr Macfarlane writes as follows:-

"1. I wish for single passages back to England for my daughters, they did not have return tickets. My wife will of course, be coming back with me after my leave.  
2. As far as I am able to see ahead there is no possibility of my bringing my daughters out again before I retire.  
3. I have applied for a grant to the Lancashire Educational Dept, for my eldest daughter and have had no reply as yet. My youngest daughter will finish her education when she takes here G.C.E. examinations next year. She will then get a job. This will also apply to my eldest daughter if we cannot get a reasonable grant."  
I await the Board's advice.

#### **(24) 1963**

29th April 1963 Copy of a letter about the method of estimating commissions – interesting [DSCN2602.JPG]

The Manager who wrote it estimated that his commission for 1962 (the same for all others) when averaged would be £988.

10.5.63 – interesting detailed letter concerning the salary and costs of an individual manager and how hard pressed he is – to see later if needed. FROM BILL BEATTIE. Gross Salary is 1100, after all expenses (itemized) – only 50rs left.  
DSCN2604.JPG

20 May GM/J 4/2450/63

- Emoluments of Managerial Staff. 20 May 1963
- 
- Nett take home pay for top (European) Managers p.a. 25,084 RS
- As above with commission 32,084 RS [c. £2500 p.a.]
- (see rest of figures at DSCN 2605 and 2606)
- 
- The Company has a non-contributor Pension Fund which entitles an employee to a Pension of £900 per annum after 30 years of service.
- 
- 27 May – an interesting long letter about pensions, tax etc etc. see DSCN2607.JPG
- P. 36/63 June 18
- D.K. Macfarlane, President, Naziara Club – letter from – general - DSCN2609
- Oct 1 1963

- Salary Increments. The following increases of 75 Rs each are due on the dates stated. New Basic Salary.
- Mr D.K. Macfarlane 19.11.63 Rs. 2850 max per month [this was £33 p.m. or about £400 p.a. in current exchange rate]
- 
- P. 41/63 July 22nd
- Mr Macfarlane has advised me that his present indebtedness to Mr. J.L. Lahoty is Rs. 21,297/- (£1597-5-6) and I am accordingly making arrangements to pay this sum and to obtain a ‘full settlement’ receipt from the Banker. Mr. Lahoty did not charge any interest to Mr. Macfarlane but only required the re-payment of the Principal.
- 
- Calculations about new terms of service – illustrated with reference to D.K. Macfarlane
- 
- Taxable Income for a year, about Rs 51,476, income-tax Rs 20,049 (does not include commission).
- (DSCN2614)
- 
- New Terms of Service – detailed. – see DSCN2619 and following ones – INTERESTING – all types of allowance etc. servants etc. Minimum annual commission £500, maximum £2700
- 
- P. 60/63
- Debt. I have advised Mr Macfarlane and he wishes to thank the Board for their sympathetic and generous attitude.

### **Letters from London Office to General Manager in Assam**

#### **MS 11498 (21) 1961**

Letters to General Manager 1961.

No. PGM. 3/61 13th January 61

Mr D.K. Macfarlane (P. 74/60)

The Board would be grateful for details of the bills to which he refers before reconsidering his request since he assured the Board that his only debt in the U.K. was the mortgage on his house. The Board would also like confirmation that his debt to Mr Lahoty is still being paid off monthly, & that Mr Lahoty’s debt to the Company is also being paid off.

17th February.

Mr DK Macfarlane. The Board was unable to agree to defer payment as requested in your No. P. 74/60

5th May

G.D. Lahoty – Cherideo PT. We note with thanks that all money owed to the Company has now been recovered & that all business between him & the Company has been discontinued.

8th July. This matter will be considered at the next meeting of the Board and we will revert.

PGM.51/61 18th August

We write in reply to your letter No. P. 48.61

Mr D.K. Macfarlane. Pending a final decision on Mr. Macfarlane's request the Board wish to know what Mr. Macfarlane's future intentions and plans are in detail, for example, are the passages required single or return passages for Mrs. Macfarlane and his two daughters, did the daughters have return tickets when they went out to India, does he intend his two daughters to return to India again before he retires, and will his daughters be receiving Educational Grants for their training in U.K. and if so how much. The Board would appreciate detailed replies to these queries.

PGM 54/61 15th September

Mr D.K. Macfarlane. The Board agree to the Company paying for the tourist passages for Mr. Macfarlane's daughters, and recovering the cost from his 1961 Commission.

15th Sept – SEE PHOTO

### **MS 111498 (23) 1963**

General Board Meeting 23 April 1963

p.402

It was agreed that Mr D.K. Macfarlane should receive an allowance of RS 400 per month in recognition of the duties devolving upon him which the general Manager was absent in the U.K. in the current year.

Minutes of Discussion Held with the General Manager on 30 & 31 July 1963

p.415 Macfarlane's Debt (Rs 21297) It was agreed that the Company would pay one rupee for every rupee which Mr Macfarlane paid towards liquidating this debt; any balance remaining when Mr Macfarlane retired would be his debt alone. The General Managers was asked to inform him accordingly.

[Others had debts too: for example Romans had a debt of 2666.67]

p.374 Consolidated Minutes of Discussion between the Board and the general Manager on 8th & 14 August & 11 September 1962

iii) Messrs D.K. Macfarlane & R.G. Higham. It was agreed that the G.M. was authorized, if he thought fit, to tell both these Managers that unless they pull themselves together and carry out his instructions they would be requested to retire. A period of one year's warning was suggested.