Memories of 1945–50

Christ Church,
Northern Department in the Foreign Office,
Poland and Moscow

J P Waterfield

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I am writing this at Somerton entirely from memory, without reference to any official history or papers. It is indeed "memories" and in no way intended to be an analysis of foreign policy. I have, after constant encouragement by Tilla while she lived, at last become enthusiastic for trying to do this, partly because of the surprisingly warm reception by my friends of my two narratives of war-time, "Tunis revisited" and "Carinthia - return to Schloss Thalenstein". Now I feel my first few years after the war in the Foreign Office might provide some entertainment, and also astonishment at the way things were so long ago. Also as a memorial to some remarkable personalities and good friends.

I went up to Christ Church aged just twenty-four with a pre-war scholarship in Classics, straight from five years soldiering, in October 1945. I went indirectly from the 1st Bn of KRRC in Italy to stay and play poker with the 12th Bn in Hanover, and then from Ostend by boat. This was a highly irregular route back but my Colonel, Sydney de Salis, gave me, without any authority, and Leslie Mackay, who came for the ride, an all-embracing "Movement Order" to say we could go where we pleased, including the American Zone in Germany. We travelled in a White scout car with my servant Rifleman Harry Deane, and Rifleman O'Connor, who drove the Command White when I was Adjutant. I threw my captured Lugers into the sea from the boat, and found no porters to take my gear at Victoria Station. This was a shock after the Army where I had been spoilt by having riflemen to fetch and carry. That was the end of my soldiering.

Unlike some of my less restless contemporaries, I did not feel comfortable, either academically or socially at Oxford, though the majestic structures, and my rooms in Meadow Buildings, where my splendid scout, Percy Greenwood, lit a fire in the sitting room every winter morning, gave me great pleasure. On my father's advice I chose to read Politics, Philosophy and Economics, a comparatively new course which was thought to fit one for the modern world. I quite enjoyed the Politics with Frank Pakenham (later Lord Longford) who became a friend, and with whom I played golf at Frilford. I hated Economics, and had no feel for it, under Roy Harrod, a well-known exponent and author, of a slightly Bohemian character, but with whom I did not find myself in any personal sympathy. Philosophy was with a Canon of the House, whom I saw rarely.

I did not find it easy to make myself read or attend lectures. Although I made some friends in Christ Church, among them Francis Dashwood and Eddie Boyle (later Tory Minister of Education), who had not been in the Services, I tended to keep closer company with others younger than I but who had served in the latter years of the War, such as Andrew Mayes and Charles Wingfield, both Guardsmen, and wounded in N-W Europe. Eddie Boyle's mother, Lady Boyle, must have thought me worldly-wise because she made a point of asking me to "look after Eddie". She also had a nice daughter, Anne, with whom I sometimes danced at London balls, but with whom I lost touch, as with many others, after I went to Moscow in November 1947. I kept in warm touch with a group of 60th officers at Trinity, Stephen McWatters (who had been at Dragons with me), James Ramsden and Dick Hornby, and with other Old Dragons such as Tim Pearce, and two Carthusians, Denys Tanner and Michael Hoban, later Head Master of Harrow, and a good friend still, though sadly handicapped. At least three of the VIth form at Charterhouse in my last year had been killed flying in the War. Denys Tanner was a great footballer and led the Pegasus team who won the Amateur Cup at Wembley. He died sadly young as a Vice-

President of the Football Association, of motor-neurone disease. I also met some of my younger sister Jill's friends; Jill, after Cheltenham Ladies College, was in her first year at Lady Margaret Hall.

I saw a little of Dick Wood (now Lord Holdernesse), severely wounded in 2 KRRC at Nofilia in Tripolitania, and Billy Ednam (now Earl of Dudley) who had been Adjutant of the 10th Hussars in Second Armoured Brigade when I was Adjutant of 1 KRRC. Professor Lord Lindemann, a severe tall Germanic figure in bowler hat and dark suit, who had been Churchill's eminent Scientific Adviser in the War, had a set of rooms at the end of Meadow Buildings. He invited me to tea. I do not remember seeing much at that time of the famous R H Dundas, Greats Tutor, who occupied Lewis Carroll's set of rooms, high ceilinged and book lined (with a ladder), in Tom Quad. He had been my father's tutor (my father was his first pupil) at the beginning of the century, and invited me, just after I was commissioned in 1941, to dine at High Table and stay the night. He was very kind to me but had embarrassing and well known tendencies towards young men, which put me off! He took me for a drive to Blenheim Palace, and a walk round the park. He spent the vacations in lowland Scotland, I think Selkirk, with his sister, like himself unmarried. He spoke of his service in the Black Watch in the first War. When he invited me to dinner in 1941, I remember being awed by the glistening silver, soft candle lights and polished wood of High Table and afterwards in an adjoining room, for coffee, nuts, dessert and port. Then bridge began. I watched, with occasional conversation with other non-players, but riveted by the play, especially by the long and slim but strong games player's fingers of J C Masterman (later Provost of Worcester College) as he dealt cards. He had, I think, played hockey for England, and had spent the whole of the first War in a prison camp. Among other great Christ Church and worldly figures that night I remember the philosophers A J Ayer, small, dark and voluble, and Gilbert Ryle. All treated me with extraordinary kindness and courtesy, in no way patronising or contemptuous of my youth. Canon Mortimer, later Bishop of Exeter, even asked me, to my astonishment: "Mr Waterfield, when were you up?" I suppose my uniform deceived him. The atmosphere made me dream of becoming a Classics don! But it was probably due to the port. The only other career that ever crossed my mind was the Bar. However, I took no steps in that direction. I had a spare bedroom in my rooms and several friends from the War years came to visit me, another distraction from my reading.

Apart from some savings from my Army pay, I had no money or income at all. So I could not afford a car, but often bicycled into the Oxford countryside, and resumed my landscape painting which I had not touched in the Army. I once bicycled over to Bampton where my late Colonel Sydney de Salis had retired to farm. I was very fond of him and remained a close and admiring friend of his, when we had bought 5 North St in Somerton, and he had moved to Drayton, near Langport, after a spell in Ashburton. We regularly played golf at Burnham. Much later I arranged a large celebratory lunch for his 90th birthday at the Castle Hotel in Taunton. It was a splendid and bibulous, entirely regimental, occasion. Sydney, and his wife Daphne, were very insistent and selective in regard to whom we should and should not invite. We arranged for a Regimental Bugler from the Depot at Winchester, who changed into uniform with us, to blow his instrument outside Sydney's house, as a birthday gesture, at cock-crow. Sydney died not very long afterwards and is buried in Drayton churchyard. He was a brave and good man, with a twinkle in his eye, and courtly manners from the 19th century. He once told me he had never been in a pub in his life.

My father generously gave me a very small allowance. But it soon became clear that my tastes, and the life outside Christ Church in which I found myself, far exceeded my ability to pay the expenses thereof. I found myself being invited, initially by Sir Hereward and Lady Wake, whose youngest son Peter had been my best friend in the 1st Battalion, and then by a much wider circle,

to dinner parties, weekends, and coming-out balls in London and the country. Social life was being actively revived after the War. I needed a new dinner jacket, suits for country and town, a tail coat and a morning coat, none of which I possessed, as I had gone straight from Charterhouse, with six weeks interval teaching Classics to the top form at the Manor House prep school in Horsham, into the Army, initially as a private in the Queen's Depot at Guildford, in November 1940. Mr Welsh, an imposing avuncular figure of Welsh and Jefferies, Regimental Tailors, in Duke St, charged a little over single figures for a suit in those days, and not much more for a tail coat. But I did not have the wherewithal to pay, and did not like to run up debt, though I was told that was the thing to do. I gradually accumulated a supply of appropriate suits from Mr Welsh and continued to wear them for about forty years – they lasted well – until I could not get into them. So, although I had a happy enough social time throughout my year at Oxford, more in London (and there it was the habit after dances to go to "The 400" night club in Leicester Square, which produced further expense) than in Oxford, I realized I would have to make a start at earning my living. Of course I could have lived quietly in Christ Church and studied hard, as many others did. But five years independence and responsibility in the Army, much of it on active service abroad, had changed me, and I was caught up in a pretty intense social, and, to me, new and attractive, world. My eyes were opened, and I found it hard, if not impossible, to refuse invitations. It was a time, and the last time, when there were still live-in servants in even moderately large country houses. Maids came in to light fires in the morning in one's bedroom (no central heating and bitterly cold) and I remember at least once the butler coming in at Norton Hall (Ben and Lindy Pollen's house in the Cotswolds) to lay out my clothes and inquiring what tweed suit I would wear that day. I was ashamed that I only had one suit, for all purposes.

I think that early in 1946 my father, who, as a distinguished and innovating First Civil Service Commissioner, had set up a new method of post-war recruitment into the Foreign Office and Home Civil Service, imaginatively suggested that I should try for the Foreign Office. He explained that I might be more attracted to the supposedly glamorous Foreign Office than the Home Service. One did not need a degree, but a certificate from one's tutors that one would be likely at least to get a Second Class. There followed a written examination in English of a general nature, an essay, and a quite intricate arithmetic paper, and a sketchy oral in some foreign language. After that, for those who passed, followed two and a half days residence at Stoke D'Abernon, with individual and group tests, interviews with an 'observer' and a psychologist. There was an enormous number of applicants and the comparatively few who emerged successful from all this were subjected to an intense and long interview by the Civil Service Board in Burlington Gardens where my father had his office (now a Museum), under my father's Chairmanship. This, initially controversial, scheme was based on the sensible premise that those who had served in the Armed Forces, as in my case, for five years, away from their books, could not be fairly expected to sit an examination based on the specialist scholarship of First Class University Degrees. Recruits were urgently needed and there was a reformist desire to widen the field to include those who, if not currently intellectual specialists, had the experience and talents of, dare I say it, all round leaders, from the widest possible backgrounds. In those days the public service had a cachet which no longer exists, so the competition was huge.

I was attracted to this and decided that I would, despite the intense competition, try for the Foreign Office, and would finish with Oxford, albeit without a degree, after the end, in June 1946, of my first and only University year.

I sat for the Reconstruction exam, as it was called, in early 1946, but although I did well in most of the preliminary written papers, I failed the Arithmetic. It was disappointing, and troubling. While I had done well enough in arithmetic, geometry and algebra at Charterhouse for School

Certificate, I did not feel happy with mathematics. Perhaps that is why I never was able to play good chess or bridge or play backgammon. However my father was most supportive and took trouble to get me written coaching in arithmetic from a firm of crammers, and I did their papers for practice as studiously as I could. My tutors, meanwhile, had made no bones about stating that I would have got as least a 2nd Class, and I had two of my Commanding Officers, to whom I had been Adjutant, ready to act as my referees. I think Robert Birley, my Headmaster and, at the end, also Housemaster at Charterhouse, was another referee. I had got on the Kings' List for the 60th because Robert Birley, in my last quarter at Charterhouse in 1940, asked me 'Do you want to go into the best Regiment in the Army?' Of course I said 'yes' though I had no inkling of Army matters and no family connexions in my generation (as distinct from my many Indian Army ancestors of the 19th century) with the Services. Robert Birley said next 'Elinor's [his wife] uncle is General Tavish Davidson, formerly Haig's Director of Military Operations; he is a Colonel Commandant of the 60th and I will get him to place you on the "King's List"'. Such was the nepotistic and accidental way in which the 60th recruited its officers in those days.

Came the Summer term at Christ Church. The next Reconstruction exam was, I think, in about July. The term culminated in a splendid Summer Ball, for which I invited a party of about twelve. I can see my sister Mary, at about two in the morning, with her bare toes dipping in the fountain in Tom Quad with Dwin Bramall (now the Field Marshal) looking on. I had borrowed a car and as I drove Eve Leslie, my partner (we were all friends and romance was discreetly curbed) up the hill out of Oxford to the Rose Revived at Bablock Hythe, where I had arranged for her to stay, we saw, shining pink in the rosy light of the rising sun at about half past five in the morning, a troop of pink elephants. I thought at first I was dreaming, but they proved to be a group from a circus, taking morning exercise.

All this was carefree, not even troubled by serious romance, but I knew I had to earn my living, and I was not even half-way there. I left Oxford a permanent member of the House but not of the University, in June.

My kind father, who showed extraordinary faith in me, again came to the rescue, and somehow persuaded Roddie Barclay, then Head of the Foreign Office Personnel Department (he finished Sir Roderick, Ambassador in Brussels) to take me into the Office, as it were, 'on spec', immediately after I came down from Christ Church. It was understood that I would do the Reconstruction exam again as soon as possible but meanwhile would work in the Northern Department as a Third Secretary, the bottom rung of the Administrative (as distinct from the Executive) Class. I had no training, and uncertain qualifications. Roddie Barclay had worked with my father, on behalf of the Foreign Office, in the inter-departmental negotiations which led to the adoption by Parliament, amid considerable dispute, of the new Post-War Reconstruction examination system, which the Foreign Office had been the first to accept.

Roddie Barclay's generous readiness to take me on, gambling that I would pass the exams, was another remarkable act of optimistic nepotism, and a mark of his respect and admiration, shared by many, for my father. In fact the Office, when I joined, had a number of people working temporarily who, for some reason of health or otherwise, had not served in the War, and who could not pass the new examinations in the event, and there was a serious need of recruits at the lower levels to make up the gaps of the War years.

I was extraordinarily lucky that I was placed in the Northern Department, which was responsible for the Soviet Union, Poland and all of Scandinavia. I do not think we dealt with other Eastern European Soviet satellites; at least I never had to deal with them. I was to deal with Poland, sharing and sitting opposite John Roper, a Scots Guardsman, who had got a M.C for

S.O.E operations in France. He was older than I, and had passed the exam some months before I joined in June 1946. I cannot remember and have no record of what I was paid on entry. I think it was about £430 a year, well under £10 per week. Certainly when I came back from Tokyo to the Security Department in London in 1954, married, with one and soon to be two children, I still only got, as a Second Secretary, a salary of about £750 a year.

Northern Department occupied high ceilinged rooms with tall windows overlooking St James Park, similar to the room I had many years later in the Treasury Office block the other side of Clive Steps when I was Principal Finance and Establishments Officer at the Northern Ireland Office. Some half a dozen of us sat at desks in what was called 'The Third Room' working to the two 'Departmental Assistants' who each had a room of his own. Above them was Robin Hankey, the Head of the Department, who was the elder son of the famous First War Cabinet Secretary, Lord (Maurice) Hankey. And above Robin was the Under Secretary of State, Christopher Warner, whom we scarcely ever saw, though his minutes were sometimes seen on papers on their way down to us. At the top of the pile was the formidable Olympian figure of Sir Orme Sargent ('Moley'), the Permanent Under Secretary of State, to whom I spoke, and then in trepidation, I think, only once, when I had to take papers down to his corner office on the ground floor. We called everyone except the P.U.S by surname or first name. We were told to call the P.U.S 'Sir'. But the Secretary of State we would have always called 'Secretary of State' or Junior Ministers, 'Minister'. We were taught that, unlike the Home Civil Service, who ended all letters to colleagues 'yours sincerely', in the Foreign Office one was presumed to have gentlemanly social relations with all colleagues, even the Treasury, and one ended all 'semi-official' correspondence 'yours ever'. This became absurd when letters and reports, not worth despatches, were sent to the Office from posts overseas by the Chancery, as a collective cover, and not by an individual, when the letters began, eg to the Northern Department, 'Dear Department' and ended 'yours ever, Chancery'. But we were, most of us, eager to adopt Foreign Office rituals. In the Office we were told never to knock on senior officers' doors, but to open them and go straight it, and to withdraw only if plainly inconvenient. 'One would not knock, a vulgar habit, in a friend's house'. We had a lecture from Harold Nicolson, on diplomatic theory and practice. He said the object of diplomacy was to negotiate the exchange of ratifiable agreements between governments. In fact, *mutatis mutandis*, this remains the principal object still, though reporting and trade promotion also play their part. And now I hear arguments on the radio that, with globalisation, telephone and e-mail, treaties are out-moded and lead to more trouble than benefit. That lecture was our only training. One learned by practical trial and error. The only other written instruction I ever received was later in Tokyo when the F.O. circulated Marcus Cheke's Guidance on diplomatic behaviour overseas. Sounds silly but it actually contained wise and correct advice.

I remember Roddy Barclay taking me over from the Personnel Department personally, a kind act, to be introduced to Robin Hankey and then being taken by Robin into the 'Third Room'. No homilies and no instructions at all! I remember meeting Michael Warr, who, as a pre-War entrant, just, soon moved up to his own room to deal under Tony Lambert, one of the two Assistants, with Scandinavia. I also remember Willy Ewart, who soon left, as well as John Roper. Soon we were joined by Kit Barclay and Anthony Meyer, who have remained life-long friends, and others. It was the custom in most, if not all Departments, to have about fifteen minutes break for tea and biscuits in the afternoon, for which we all subscribed to the 'Departmental Ladies' (or secretaries) who provided it. All members of the Department came in. It was almost the only time we saw Robin Hankey in the Office, who was always immensely cheerful and affable. Business would be discussed informally, as well as idle office gossip or weekend plans. Office keepers came in with buckets of coal to keep the fire up. Despite this, it was often crampingly

cold in winter. We all wrote with pens of various kinds. There were ink wells for those who used, as I did, pens with nibs.

Robin Hankey was of medium height, strongly built, jolly in manner and vigorous, in an old Rugbeian style, and keen on adventure (he had been our last diplomatic officer in Poland at the outset of War and had a traumatic escape) and physical exercise. In the summer he led reluctant volunteers, I among them, on bicycles to swim at lunch time in the Serpentine. Kit Barclay has told me that Robin once in exasperation described Kit's hand-writing as 'like a lot of beetles knitting'. I remember Robin with great affection, as also his younger brother Henry who was Head of Chancery in Santiago, Chile, when I arrived as 1st Secretary (Information) in 1954. Both long dead.

When I first sat down opposite John Roper the first thing he did was pick up his phone and talk to his book-maker. This impressed me greatly. In fact I have never had a personal bookmaker, being averse to risk of that kind, though I had played a lot of poker for dangerous stakes in the Battalion.

I met next the Assistant for Poland, to whom I was to be answerable, Pat Hancock. He became a very close friend. Tall and languid, but with an immensely clear mind and a formidable capacity for handling paper and drafting on complicated issues, he wore a different and elegant tailor-made town suit from Mondays to Thursdays and tweeds on Fridays, as an indication that he was going to the country. One did not see the same suit again for about three weeks. His shirts were in the lead of fashion, from Hawes and Curtis or Hodgkinsons, broad coloured stripes, which I coveted and eventually copied for myself when I could afford them. At that time we all wore stiff collars, waistcoats (with watch chains) and bowler hats in London. Pat's ancestors made money from coal in South Wales and then moved to Somerset where his grandfather became Master of the Devon and Somerset Stag Hounds ('the D and S'). His father was killed after getting a D.S.O as a Subaltern in the Devons in 1914 (when Pat was born) and his mother married again, to a Kennard, a Dorset family. Pat, from a very early age, was strapped in a basket behind his mother to gallop over the Cattistock country out hunting. This may have accounted for his bravery in the face of physical and also moral crises. He never flinched. He was educated at Winchester, where, curiously, he said he was bullied, and Trinity, Cambridge. In my early time in Northern Department he was courting Beatrice, a beautiful and brilliant violinist from Australia, who had fled from a disastrous marriage to her much older and tyrannical teacher, and was cooking for a family in Devonshire Place. After dinners at the St James's Club, Pat sometimes walked me up through Mayfair and, pointing into a basement, said 'That's where Beattie is working'. They became very happily married and had two children, living in various comfortable houses in Belgravia and Chelsea, with finally The Old Vicarage at Affpuddle in Dorset. Pat's family seemed to inherit every country house in the South West. Every weekend in the season, Pat fished the Frome for salmon, invariably, in the local fashion, with a prawn. 'Best man with a prawn, I ever saw' ex-Corporal Jones, the water keeper, told me once. I went to the Frome with Pat on several weekends but, in those days, I had not learned to fish, and, instead, did several paintings of that sluggish river and surrounding meadows. Pat also fished in Iceland. He became Ambassador in Norway, Israel and Italy, and was Deputy Under Secretary of State in the Office when I returned from India to became Head of the Western Organisations' Department in 1968. He and Lord (Sammy) Hood were present in Luxembourg as Deputy Secretaries when John Robinson, Head of Western European Department, fired off a volley of telegrams before breakfast, which pre-empted all but perfunctory consultation even with Michael Stewart, Secretary of State, or anyone else present, to initiate a crisis with the French, and which became known as 'the De Gaulle Affair'. I, as a new arrival, and inexperienced in European politics, though I had been preferred for the job over several who were much more

experienced than I in that world, timidly kept my mouth shut. It was a coup but I felt and feel it was ill-judged. Pat was later deputed by the Foreign Office, as the only man who had the courage and personality to do it, to go to Paris and tell Christopher Soames, Winston's son in law, the Ambassador, who was pursuing a line of his own, in explicit terms, that the duty of an Ambassador was to carry out his instructions, however personally unpalatable. He did it. Pat was widely and deeply read in English verse and could quote from memory in pertinent terms on any subject. When I was temporarily Resident Clerk, sharing a comfortable flat, and housekeeper/ cook, at the top of the Office, in the summer of 1947, when John Beith (later Sir John, and Ambassador to Belgium) was away for an extended period, I once went out to dinner with Pat Hancock, (we were allowed out provided we left a telephone number) and after dinner we were playing snooker, when I was called to the telephone. I remember vividly that the voice at the other end said, flatly and without adornment, 'Attlee here', and then asked if I had by me 'FO telegram' number such and such. I had to cover my tracks and run back from Piccadilly, where the St James's Club then was, to the Office and answer the Prime Minister's inquiry from the Resident Clerk's flat. I also played a lot of squash at lunch time with Pat, but could not beat him; he was so determined. Pat always walked to the Office from Chelsea, armed with a wicker basket to buy groceries en route. Kit Barclay has recently reminded me that when he was in Baghdad in the latter years of the War, as an Arabist, after being blown up in his carrier in the Desert with the 2nd Battalion, the Rifle Brigade, Pat was serving also in the Embassy as a First Secretary. He says Pat had two selukis with whom he coursed jackals on horseback over treacherous desert and scrub. This was typical of Pat. It was also commonly believed that Pat took his honeymoon alone fishing for salmon in Iceland. He died of cancer, much too early, in a National Health Ward. He refused private treatment. He was a remarkable personality, a good and kind friend, a great influence on me, and I miss him and remember him still. When Polly was born, Pat and Beatrice took me into their house in Pelham Crescent. John William was cared for by my parents at Sotwell, near Wallingford.

The day began in the Office at 10 am, at least an hour later than elsewhere in Whitehall. This sometimes led to expressions of surprise and expostulation from the press or other Departments, which the Foreign Office ignored. The received doctrine was that 10 am was the earliest at which incoming telegrams from posts abroad could be deciphered and distributed. But, in truth, F.O. officials worked hard and fast and often kept late hours in the evenings. In the Northern Ireland Office, 1973-79, I also kept up the old F.O tradition by coming to the office, by tube from 30 Kelso Place, Kensington, at 10 am. No-one ever criticized this, though I believe eyebrows were raised behind my back, and I too worked very late in the evenings then. In his recent memoir, Bernard Burrows writes that when he entered the F.O well before the War, people came into the office at 11 am!

The first thing one did on coming into the Northern Department in the morning, and throughout my time in the Office, was to grab the pile of telegrams, already distributed to Departments, and printed on pink (outgoing) and other coloured papers. There were often a hundred or more each day, all numbered and signed, from the Office, in the plain surname of the Secretary of State, at that time 'Bevin', or by the name of the Head of the foreign post concerned. One picked out those of direct concern to the Department but there was scarcely time to read all but the most important, eccentric or amusing of the rest. Once Tony (later Sir Anthony) Lambert, when Assistant Head of Department for Scandinavia, who had a wicked sense of humour, managed to insert a hoax telegram from the Secretary of State in the pink papered distribution, for everyone in the Department to see. It was a time of a four-power Conference in New York. The delegations travelled by Cunard liner. I cannot remember the exact circumstances but the text, addressed 'personal' to perhaps Molotov or, as I recall, Lord Beaverbrook, who must have been travelling by boat on his own business, read, and I distinctly remember the text 'Stop monkeying about

with my wife. Bevin'. Perhaps Mrs Bevin was travelling ahead of her husband? We all guffawed at this daring jape. Tony Lambert denied all responsibility. But it became known that it was he, and we admired his enterprise. Many years later in New York, Piers Dixon recounted, in our apartment at 850 Park Avenue, the story of another amazing and witty hoax telegram sent in his younger days by his distinguished father (Sir Pierson 'Bob' Dixon) for some reason from Ankara. Alas, like Sir John Horner in the Zoo aviary, recalled in his anecdotal memoirs by Sir Laurence Jones ('Jonah') about the number of times Sir John had seen the lesser spotted woodpecker, I cannot remember the circumstances or content. Recently Andrew Palmer has told me of another brilliant hoax telegram, inserted into the distribution with the connivance of the Communication Department, which effectively pricked the bubble of conceit of a colleague, who was deceived into believing that he had been asked for by name as the only man capable of settling a disturbance in one of the Persian Gulf states.

Tony Lambert was tall and no less elegant than Pat Hancock. I remember him coming into the Office in an amazing grey morning coat, before going to Ascot races. He later became Ambassador in Tunis, Finland and Portugal. His 90th birthday was noticed in the Times as I write in March 2001.

There was another memorable, and probably the ablest, figure in the Northern Department. Although not ranked as an Assistant, Tom Brimelow had a room of his own, and from it handled, with accumulated wisdom, patience and skill, all relations with the Soviet Union. He had achieved a unique status as the fount of all knowledge on Marxist-Leninist-Stalinist man, after service in the Consulate in Riga and the Consular Section of the Embassy in Moscow from 1942-45. He spoke with a broad Lancashire accent, and once told me that his grandfather could neither read nor write. By sheer ability he had got into the Consular Service after Oriel College, from an unprivileged home, shortly before the War. His Russian was perfect and he also had an encyclopaedic knowledge of France and of plants, and much else besides. The Kolkwitzia in our Somerton garden was planted at his suggestion, after he had been Ambassador in Poland, probably in the late seventies, when he came to stay. It is a magnificent mass of pink flowers in May. Tom formed an abiding hatred of the Soviet system whilst in the Baltic States and Moscow, but wrote authoritative papers about its rationale, methods and aims, based on extensive research. These became standard doctrine in the Office. He had an endearing manner, a dry sense of humour, and a sympathetic smile. He did not laugh much, if at all, was not overtly 'clubbable', and was steel underneath. Uniquely at that time, he typed his own minutes and drafts. The only other senior official I ever met who did this was Sir Rob Scott, who had been interned in the War in great hardship, by the Japanese.

When I saw Denis Greenhill, PUS of the Foreign Office, and not entirely my cup of tea, for the last time, when Tom Brimelow was my Deputy Under Secretary and my supporter, and I was resigning from the Office, to everyone's surprise and the regret of some, to become Managing Director of B.E.A.M.A, I said 'I beg you not to send Tom Brimelow back to Moscow as Ambassador.' 'Why not?' asked Greenhill. 'Because,' I replied, greatly daring, 'he dreads the idea, and would hate it. He had a traumatic time when he was last there, as Minister, and loathes the regime.' I do not know if this, which clearly had not occurred to Greenhill, had any effect. But Tom did not go back to Moscow. He became instead Permanent Under Secretary in succession to Greenhill. When he first went up to see Callaghan, newly appointed Secretary of State, Callaghan, in his bullying way, said 'I know your sort...'. Tom answered, ' I have only one thing to say, the name of my successor.' On another occasion Callaghan, at a time of crisis, said to Tom 'But what about our pride?' Tom said 'You put it in ta' pocket.' But to be fair, I remember Callaghan, when Prime Minister, making an impromptu speech to the assembled staffs, N.I.C.S and U.K Service, at Stormont House in N. Ireland which was inspirational. Tom was also the

instigator for Lord Home's expulsion of 100 Soviet 'diplomats', all spies, when their behaviour had exceeded all bounds, and Tom felt the Soviets needed a lesson. When Tom died, as a Labour supporter in the House of Lords, with typical humility he instructed his two daughters that he should have no special ceremony or Memorial Service. He was, in my view, a great man, and I was very attached to him. He kept a picture of mine, of Merrow Down, which I had given him, in a prominent place in his and Jean's flat, until he died. His elder daughter Alison has told me that she still has it in Chepstow where she is Head of the Patents Office.

We all wrote in those early days in long hand. If we graduated to dictation, we sent for one of the typing pool upstairs, but it was hard to get them, and one had to queue up. We had two 'Departmental Ladies', one elderly and one younger, but they were fully occupied looking after the Head of the Department and the Assistants. Miss Paget was the older 'lady'. White haired and slightly bent, she had been in the Office for ever, and kept us all in order. She distributed all the Northern Department papers, up or down. When communications came into the Office for us, whether by telegram, diplomatic bag, inter-departmental correspondence, letters to the Secretary of State, or Parliamentary Question, they were all sent to Northern Department's 'Registry' upstairs for 'Entry'. It was prudent as well as kind to maintain some sort of personal relations with the Registry, whether at home or in a post abroad. The Registries were manned by members of the Executive Branch, whether young entrants, men or girls, or more experienced seniors. The Head of a Registry, often a repository of wisdom and confidences, had considerable power, like a good Warrant Officer in the Army. The ladders of promotion for the best sometimes led up to Consular or Administrative posts abroad, or, even, in the Office.

If, as even junior officers did, one received an official but personally addressed letter, unless it demanded instant action, which was rare, it was essential practice to mark 'Enter' on the top right hand corner, whereupon it was taken up from one's out-tray to the Registry, put inside a 'Jacket' with a brief summary of the subject matter on the outside, given an index number, married up with pink ribbon to previous and other relevant papers, and sent back to the desk officer, whose task it was to take the initial action. The system, unique in Whitehall, may have been confusing to an outsider but it was extremely efficient and thorough. It was much more rapid than commonly believed and it was always open to an official to take urgent action on, for example, a telegram before the papers were 'entered'. But it was essential to get the Registry's 'entry' as soon as possible. With experience one could take short cuts, eg by getting in personal touch with the Communications Department, who worked down below cyphering and deciphering telegrams in shifts for twenty-four hours, day and night, or by going up to see the Registry, or by taking papers to a superior or to a colleague in another Department, or even, as happened later when one was more senior, to one of the Private Secretaries in the Secretary of State's outer office. I remember, on one such occasion, seeing Guy Burgess, who was a junior Private Secretary, when I wanted help, and forming the instant view that he was a singularly greasy and unpleasant individual. Papers between Departments or for senior officers were normally despatched by the Departmental Ladies, but if we wanted to make haste, we had the use of red boxes (we each had a key) which were quite capacious. They were moved about the Office on trolleys by Office Keepers in frock coats. One rang a bell when one needed an Office Keeper. In addition there was an amazing system of pneumatic tubes, high in the ceiling, into which one placed one's cylindrical container, duly labelled, and locked it in, then pressed some switch, whose exact nature I forget, whereupon it would whizz away to the addressee with a hissing noise of someone sucking air. With luck one's communication would come back, helpfully answered, the same way. Highly secret intelligence was circulated by grey boxes. We had to be 'indoctrinated' (a short lecture on secrecy) before having a key for such boxes and their contents. Not much of that in my early days, but very much part and parcel of my life later especially when I was Head of the Western Organizations Department. In the evenings, all

papers were cleared from desks and locked in the safe. One had to remember the four figure combination if one was the first to come in the next morning.

We had to draft formally sometimes on behalf of the Secretary of State (probably a rare practice these days). Letters went like this: 'I am directed by Her Majesty's Principal Secretary of State to acknowledge receipt of your communication of such and such, about such and such, and to state etc etc.' One also learned to draft third person Notes to Foreign Embassies, and later, when abroad, from one's Embassy to the local Ministry for Foreign Affairs. In those early days all business by foreign Embassies in London, except defence liaison carried out by Service Attachés direct with the Service Departments (a unified Ministry of Defence did not come till the 60s), was conducted through the Foreign Office – this practice has long since gone by the board with 'Europe' and the proliferation of Attachés for agriculture, labour and so forth, and now 'globalisation'. We were in Northern Department always dealing with the Home Office and War Office (as it was then) on Polish matters – there were thousands of ex-servicemen Poles in the U.K who did not wish to return to a Socialist, soon to be Communist, Poland; we also had some business with the Board of Trade over compensation for U.K interests in Poland and, more rarely, the Treasury and Ministry of Labour. If we received a business visitor, even from another Department, we saw him (never her in those days) on a couch outside the Third Room in the corridor. It was thought that otherwise they might overhear confidential information. In fact though I do not remember any official female visitors, there were several young female entrants in the Office itself, most of whom had successful subsequent careers.

So faced with an in-tray full of 'entered papers' in their jackets, without guidance or training, what to do? We learned by trial and error, or sometimes by seeking help from a colleague or the Assistant. But the Foreign Office system was that initial action and judgement started from the bottom and we were expected to 'have a go'. Of course if this was seen to be nonsense, and the matter was likely to go up much higher, one's follies could be obliterated from the 'jacket', not so much as to spare blushes, but rather to make it easier for seniors to deal with the papers in a simple, tidy and orderly form. Initially one could either write a 'minute' (ie comments) or a 'draft' (eg letter or telegram for a superior to send) or a combination of both. It was generally held that a draft carried business forward more constructively than the simple recording of comment in a minute. Occasionally, if another Department of the Office obviously had an interest, one could mark the jacket, for example, 'Southern Department first for obs.' We were not at the outset expected to sign communications outwards ourselves, so most of our work consisted of the submission of drafts for the Assistant (Pat Hancock) to sign, or initial off himself, or to submit up the chain of command. I knew, from my service as Adjutant in the War, and writing essays in the Reconstruction Exams, for which I had got high marks, that I could write fluently enough. But in the Office I soon learned that I drafted inadequately; I was fluent, but too prolix, and it took time for me to find myself conforming to 'Office style'. The Foreign Office laid great store by succinct and orderly drafting, and my efforts were regularly, and for years to come, torn to shreds with corrections and crossings out, and this gave me an inferiority complex. Some senior officers verged on the pedantic and could not look at a junior's draft, even a simple letter of thanks, without changing it. Sir Hugh Stephenson, later my Consul General in New York and Deputy Under Secretary of State, when I was in the Permanent Under Secretary's Department in 1960, told me once that when he transferred from the Indian Civil Service to the Foreign Service after the War and Partition, as older than most but starting again at the bottom of the ladder, Milo Talbot (later Lord Talbot de Malahide and a friend of mine) had made his life a complete misery by rejecting or drastically altering every draft he submitted. Hugh Stephenson had effectively administered in the I.C.S vast tracts of India. But he nearly resigned in despair under the scourges inflicted on his drafting by Milo Talbot. Admittedly Hugh Stephenson did not express himself easily on paper, or, I must admit, orally!

If we were submitting papers, we signed our names in full eg 'Draft submitted (on the jacket) J.P.Waterfield'. It was accepted that, until we had experience and were fully confident, we did not 'initial off' papers ourselves. In terms of elegance of bureaucratic style, one sometimes saw papers of importance with only a series of signatures on the jacket – eg 'Draft P.F.Hancock'; 'RMA Hankey' (written in full below); 'CFA Warner' again below and then, in red ink, the Secretary of State's initials, 'E.B' in a sort of scrawl. It was my ambition to submit such a draft which no-one above felt it necessary to change. The Secretary of State alone in the Office and Ambassadors abroad used red ink. It made it easy to pick out what, if anything, they wrote. Lord Home's red-inked comments, once deciphered, were more frequent than most of the Secretaries of State I served, and helpful. So were Michael Stewart's. Antony Eden's gave the impression of irritation and petulance.

On a small but important matter of procedure the Foreign Office never, at home and abroad, used wire clips for attaching papers to each other. We all had punches, and papers were attached by what I think are now called, in stationery shops, 'Treasury tags', through the punched holes. This was a very sound practice as clips tend to come loose or to pick up other papers, causing loss, confusion and disaster. I have always continued this practice of tags in private. I remember Arthur de la Mare (later Sir Arthur and Ambassador in Thailand) when my Head of Chancery in Tokyo, and very tidy minded, as well as a friend, expostulating furiously if papers were not properly tagged, and where necessary 'flagged'. 'Flags' were small red cardboard rectangles, labelled alphabetically, of which we kept a store on our desks. We pinned them in tidy échelon formation to the relevant papers behind our submissions, where referred to in the covering minute or draft, to make it easy for seniors to turn to the appropriate reference in the pile.

An institution in the Northern Department, as recorded earlier, was Miss Paget, senior 'Departmental Lady' who 'looked after' Robin Hankey. We were all in awe of her. As an instance of her priorities, Kit Barclay recalls that she came in once to rebuke him for sticking the pins in the 'flags' on papers he had carefully submitted the wrong way round (he was left handed). 'What do you think would happen if the Secretary of State pricked his fingers' she exclaimed to Kit. 'Your career would be in ruins.'

One other convention I remember well. Sometimes an entered paper confronted one containing material of such a nature that it was obvious nothing could be done about it, and no harm would accrue, if indeed nothing was done. There were some subjects of this kind which recurred. The correct, and accepted, action was to mark the jacket 'b.u' (or 'bring up') on an indicated future date. This got rid of our immediate responsibility in a satisfactory manner. The 'b.u. date' was recorded in the Registry and we hoped not to be faced with the problem again. Of course there were some, shorter term subjects where action could be foreseen in a few weeks or months, where the 'b.u.' system served as a practical insurance. But it was the apparently insoluble long-term problems which tested us, as well as making us laugh. One such was the 'Lena Goldfields' where H.M.G. were still seeking compensation, in the face of obdurate refusal, and indeed inaction, by the Soviet authorities, for British interests in those mines, situated in some remote part of the Russian east, on the river Lena, which had been confiscated by the Bolsheviks in the Revolution, years ago. The papers were very thick but recorded nothing but increasing frustration on our part; no progress had ever been made, year after year. All sorts of distinguished officers' initials recorded a succession of 'b.u.s'. There did not seem to be any recent pressure for action on the part of the British interests concerned. Perhaps they were all dead! In the summer of 1947, as someone was on leave, I found myself sharing with Kit Barclay, seated across the room, responsibility for papers on the Soviet Union. Down came the Lena Goldfields file, occupying, tied up with pink ribbon, the whole of my in-tray. I saw that Kit

himself had marked on them 'b.u 3 months, 6 months etc' in the past. We had a light-hearted exchange across the room. One of us said, 'put b.u 1 year'. Then we upped the period, and one of us finally said, and we agreed on, 'b.u 3 years'. We would certainly not see those papers ourselves again. I have no idea what, if anything, eventually happened to compensation for the 'Lena Goldfields'.

The next Civil Service Selection Board exams were in, I think, July 1946, by which time I was earning my keep and settling down in the Northern Department. I do not remember being over anxious about the exams, but I certainly should have been. My memory may be at fault but I believe there were several thousand candidates of which I learned later the Foreign Office were due to take only eight. I rashly did not opt for the Home Civil Service as an alternative. This time I passed the written papers, including the dreaded Arithmetic, and then went to the Board's place at Stoke D'Abernon for two nights to compete in the oral and practical (but, unlike the Armed Services, not physically arduous) tests, with interviews by the psychologist, 'observer' and Chairman. I told my father I felt it was all thorough and fair, but I felt that one could get through the psychological tests and interview by saying what they wanted to hear! This was probably nonsense, but I had no mental worries or 'hang ups' from the War, and felt generally at ease. Some people attributed this to 'cockiness' but I really think it was rather an absence of introspection or psychological anxieties. The only person I remember from Stoke D'Abernon was John, later Sir John, Killick, who became Ambassador to Moscow and at NATO, and remains a good friend. He was in one of my 'syndicates'. I passed, and then was summoned to the Final Interview in Burlington Gardens, where my father stood down from the Chair, and dear Sir David (Montagu Douglas) Scott, the Foreign Office Board Member, came out above us on the stairs, as my father and I were going to lunch, and put his thumb up with a cheerful smile, as a signal of success. Lunch must have been happy for my father, as well as myself, but curiously I have no memory of it. Probably we went to the Atheneum, my father's club.

There were three principal features of our dealings with the Poles in the Northern Department. The first was our relations with the post-war Government in Poland, where an initially fairly moderate Socialist Government under Mikolajczyk was bullied by the Soviets, who increased their domination all the time and inserted their own puppets into power at all levels until a Communist Government took over. The position of Victor (Bill) Bentinck, who had been Chairman of the Joint Intelligence Committee in the War, and was clear minded and outspoken on the evils of the Soviet manœuvres, became increasingly difficult. As a corollary the unfortunate, and, with hindsight, ill-treated remnants of the Polish Government in exile in London, gallant and pathetic in their ineffectualness, remained a blot on H.M.G's conscience. Robin Hankey spent a lot of time holding their hands, but with no capacity or intent on the part of H.M.G. to further their political interests.

The second feature was the very large number, I think over a hundred thousand, of Polish ex-Servicemen in England, who had no wish to return to a Communist dominated homeland. Most had been in the Polish Corps under General Anders which had fought with the utmost bravery for the Allied forces in Italy. There were also airmen, and, no doubt, some naval personnel, though I do not remember the latter. All deserved our gratitude and respect, but, because of Soviet devilry, were in fact a serious problem for H.M.G, politically and socially. After anxious consideration the policy of H.M.G which emerged was that the Government considered that all Polish nationals should return to Poland and hoped they would do so, but in case of adamant refusal we would do our best to resettle them gradually in the U.K or overseas. Very few took the advice to return to Poland, and, I believe that most of those who did so, suffered.

In the exercise of this policy, a 'Polish Resettlement Corps' was formed in the U.K, under command of their own Generals, and under the general administration of the War Office. My responsibilities were gradually increasing, and I found myself handling most of the Office business in relation to the Resettlement Corps. Ever since I have felt admiration and affection for the gallant, romantic and put-upon Polish people. The Resettlement Corps servicemen were housed in hutted camps, many of them in Scotland, while the War Office, Home Office and Foreign Office did their best to find employment for them or resettlement abroad, a far from easy task. On one occasion I accompanied Christopher Mayhew, a junior Minister in the Office, to call on Mr Calwell, the Australian Minister for Immigration, at Australia House. We were overjoyed to persuade the Australian Government (which was still operating a restrictive immigration policy), to accept even about one hundred Polish servicemen.

My opposite number in the War Office was an able and distinguished Coldstreamer. Lt-Colonel Victor Fitzgeorge Balfour, with whom I had most cordial relations. He became a full General, and, with Major-General Dick Lloyd, who became a close friend in 1964/65 (and thereafter), when I was Chairman of the NATO Special Intelligence Committee set up by Mr MacNamara, U.S Secretary of Defence, was the only Etonian Colleger of his time to become a General Officer. Dick Lloyd was D.M.I when he was appointed to be my 'watch-dog' on the NATO Committee and we had great fun commuting to Paris and Washington, and, with the very able co-operation of Lt-General David Burchinall, Director of Staffs for the American Chiefs of Staffs (later a Four Star General and Commander of the U.S Forces in Europe) we produced a good, short document called 'The Waterfield Report', which was accepted by all NATO Governments, for crisis management in the Alliance, and which, I believe, remained standard doctrine for many years. I cannot help recording that I believe I was, and probably remain, the only British official to have acted as Chairman of a meeting in the American Chiefs of Staff Committee Room in the Pentagon. Dick Lloyd and his family continued to be close friends until his death and his widow remains so. I appointed him to work in the F.C.O as the specialist expert on 'Mutual and Balanced Force Reductions' between East and West, and he continued as such, with increasing respect from all, until his final retirement. He had an incisive mind and a warm, if dry, manner. I went sailing with him and his wife, Gill, both cruising experts, at St Malo and up the Rance, and Lee and I sailed with them, luckily in sunshine and calm, off the Isle of Wight and into Beaulieu.

One other footnote to Polish soldiers. Our faithful and much loved 'daily' at Somerton, for now, 30 years, Mrs Freda Wisniewski, born in a cottage across our walls, six to a room and no running water, is the widow of a former Polish soldier, who worked on the land and later drove big machines for the Council until his untimely death from cancer. He never went back to Poland. We were great friends in New York 1957-60, by accident rather than design, with several Americans of Polish origin. One in particular whom I remember well was Count Janusz Ilinski. He came from a landed Polish family with estates by then in Soviet territory. So he could not ever return. He became General Manager of the luxurious and elegant Carlyle Hotel (still luxurious and elegant) on the upper East Side, just round the corner from our own apartment at 850 Park Avenue.

But back to the Northern Department in 1947. The third feature of our relationship with Poland was what was called 'Compensation for Nationalized Industries'. There was a large number of British-owned factories, other enterprises and properties in those parts of Eastern Germany which were acquired by Poland under the peace settlements, and which the Socialist Polish Government had promptly expropriated and nationalised without any sort of compensation. The Council of Foreign Bondholders in London, led by Leonard Ingrams, who had a formidable reputation, pressed H.M.G to seek recompense from Poland. Jack Beevor, a senior partner in Slaughter and May, acted for the Council of Foreign Bondholders, and I found myself dealing

regularly with him. He was married to a distant Waterfield cousin of mine, Kinta, beautiful and intelligent, whom I had not met before. Together I thought them an ideal and brilliant couple and I admired them greatly. Jack had been a Colonel in S.O.E, stationed in Bari, during the War. Although I had been in hospital with jaundice in Bari, S.O.E and its world was not a part of my regimental world, and I had not known Jack at that period. But he gained a high reputation. Looking back on it, he treated me in our formal and informal dealings with extraordinary consideration. I thought he was the acme of sophistication and charm, apart from his clear legal mind, and deep knowledge of our subject matter, which was a completely new world to me, and one which I had to work hard to understand. Jack and I were once in Piccadilly, I suppose after some meeting, when he suddenly said 'Let's have a glass of champagne in the Ritz.' The bar in those days was downstairs, but I would never have gone there. Jack was evidently entirely at home. In such ways I learned London 'style' from him. It was sad when he left Kinta later and went off with an admittedly very nice and attractive woman who was, I believe, Social Secretary to Lew Douglas, the then American Ambassador. Before she died Kinta, who never re-married, wrote an enchanting memoir of growing up before the War in her parents' two residences in Italy, Poggio Gherardo in Florence and a castle at Aulla. Before her, her mother, Observer correspondent in Italy, also wrote a successful memoir called 'Castle in Italy'. Her son, Anthony, has written two brilliant books about the war, in Crete, and at Stalingrad.

At some time in 1947, after much preparation of our case in London, I found myself the 'Secretary' of an *ad hoc* British Government delegation to Warsaw to seek satisfaction from Poland for the highly indignant Council of Foreign Bondholders' lost assets. The other members were Francis Vallat (later Sir Francis, and the Office's very distinguished Legal Adviser) who was then second Legal Adviser, Miss Moira Dennehy, a middle aged spinster, highly competent and with a sense of humour, from the Board of Trade, and Harry Fisher, one of the brilliant sons of the Archbishop of Canterbury, at that time a rising barrister, but later a High Court judge and Head of Wolfson College. Jack Beevor recruited Harry Fisher, but he came loosely under my wing. He may have been paid by the Council of Foreign Bondholders. He was immensely able. Later he was succeeded by another barrister, Tony McNulty. In Warsaw the 'Delegation' was completed by Gilbert Holliday, Commercial Counsellor, or, more likely, First Secretary, who had risen through the Consular ranks. Moustached, urbane and cosmopolitan, he was married to Anita, dark haired, attractive and very Central American. She was of Honduran origin. They were childless. I have no recollection of our flight to Warsaw but I think I was accommodated by the Hollidays who were, in any case, most hospitable and welcoming to me. Oddly we did not have a titular 'Head of Delegation', but Francis Vallat was the wisest and probably the most influential. In practice we all got on well and operated in a curiously democratic fashion. I took all the minutes and dealt with the administration of business. Gilbert Holliday supplied all the local knowledge, though he did not, as I remember, know much Polish. The Chargé d'Affaires (Bill Bentinck, Ambassador, was away) was Philip Broad, but he did not concern himself with our business in any way. There was a very pretty young Polish widow, locally engaged in the Commercial Section, called Mary Buyno, whose husband had been killed during the Nazi invasion, I think in fact he was killed in the cavalry, who found themselves gallantly but hopelessly opposed to German tanks. Mary Buyno acted as our interpreter. Her English was excellent but I do not know how she acquired it. I fell in love with her and she with me. She later escaped, with British help, taking her young son, to London, and I saw her again briefly and rather sadly on my first leave from Moscow. Caution and selfishness on my part precluded further continuance of our romance. Mary Buyno wanted marriage but I was not in the least ready. I have never heard what happened to her, and feel rather ashamed that I did not try to find out.

We set to in a series of intense negotiations with the Polish Vice Minister of Finance, called Kurowski, who was extremely obdurate and exasperating and an object of our frustrated antagonism. After several weeks, however, we reached an agreement which, we reckoned, though far from perfect, the Council of Foreign Bondholders would just accept. We were convinced this would be the most the Poles would concede. I do not remember that we consulted or were directed by London and we must have, or thought we had, semi-plenipotentiary powers to enable us to sign a document on which, I remember, Francis Vallat's guidance on phrasing, formulation and presentation was exacting and meticulous. It was nevertheless accepted that our Agreement was subject to the Council of Foreign Bondholders' approval.

We made, under Polish guidance, one or two country expeditions including a visit to Cracow, and the Black Madonna. I had become attached to Mary Buyno, and I remember holding her hand, which she did not withdraw, rather the opposite, under a rug in the back of the car coming back from Cracow.

We were entertained generously by other members of the Embassy and, at such gatherings, rumours about an imminent Communist takeover and President Mikolajczyk's downfall circulated in an atmosphere of rising tension. As it was, Mikolajczyk did in fact leave the country suddenly while we were there, spirited away, as was thought, but not openly discussed, by British Intelligence. Though far from unaware of the 'cloak and dagger' atmosphere, we were completely free from any clandestine activity ourselves, with the exception, possibly, of Mary Buyno who subsequently managed, as I have said, to get away from Poland, seemingly in adventurous circumstances, with her young son. But even when I saw her again briefly in London on my leave from Moscow, probably in late 1948, I never pried into the details of her escape.

We pocketed our Agreement and went back to London, for some reason by train via Prague where we stayed a night. I do not remember that Prague made much of an impression on me, though no doubt, in spite of the dour Soviet-dominated atmosphere, it should have done.

A big meeting was planned of the Council of Foreign Bondholders in the City. It fell to me to make the presentation of our case. Before I left for the meeting, Robin Hankey genially but firmly adjured me:- 'John, just give them the facts, and don't indulge in your rhetoric.' So I hope I spoke plainly. When I had done, and felt I had convinced the packed hall, a very old man got up at the back and said, 'Mr Waterfield is a very young man; he would do well to remember that the City of London can afford to wait one hundred years.' This did it. The mood turned against acceptance of our Agreement and we were beaten, with nothing to show for our efforts. Pat Hancock consoled me wisely (I was also preoccupied with Mary Buyno's precarious position in Warsaw) by telling me that in Foreign Office business, one must never let one's heart rule one's head. Jack Beevor was no less realistic about our reverse.

Many years later I learned that a new Agreement was made with Poland which the creditors in the City accepted, but that it was much less favourable for British interests than ours had been. By that time I had no feelings on the matter. Another strange turn. When I was Ambassador in Mali in 1964/65 (I was expelled from Mali and also Guinea, where I was simultaneously Ambassador, 'à cause du trâitre Smith', as Ousman Ba, the Mali Foreign Minister, told me, referring to Rhodesia) who should turn up, as the United Nations Resident Representative, but the self-same Kurowski who had tormented and exasperated us in 1947! He was suffering in the heat, had no refrigerator and few other amenities, and lamented his lot. But as no Communist he had sought his fortune with the U.N. We got on all right and we tried to help him with imported foods and other small comforts. It was a strange reversal of our positions.

In the late summer of 1947 I was told by the Personnel Department that I was to go to Moscow as my first overseas post. I was to succeed Michael Caroe, son of a former Provincial Governor in India, who was not established in the Service, as Private Secretary to the Ambassador, Sir Maurice Peterson, and also to do normal 3rd Secretary work in the Chancery. I spent the summer agreeably at balls and weekend house parties, and enjoyed my time in the Resident Clerk's flat, though I do not remember with whom I shared it. I was also invited in January 1946 by Rachel Stuart, wife of James Stuart the then Conservative Chief Whip, later Viscount Stuart of Findhorn and Secretary of State for Scotland, to join a ski-ing party, a mixed young and older group, at Lenzerheide in Switzerland, which I enjoyed hugely. I had never before been on skis and was thrilled to learn. Rachel Stuart (daughter of the Duke of Devonshire and sister of Dorothy MacMillan) became a dear and kind friend and later lent Lee and me their flat in the Findhorn Yacht Club for a holiday on our leave from New York. I did a number of paintings of the estuary some of which are still on the walls in Somerton. I had also earlier stayed with Rachel at Findhorn in the summer before going to Moscow and made a lot of new friends among the established figures of the neighbourhood. Her daughter Davina was also there and she visited us later in Tokyo to see her young husband who was serving in the Norfolk Regiment in Korea. Sadly he was killed just after Davina's visit. Sadly too, Rachel died comparatively young at her house in the New Forest. I always remember her kindness and friendship, which still surprise me. I was in awe of her husband James. He once asked me for a drink in the bar at White's but, to my embarrassment, said nothing at all except to order my drink.

Michael Caroe had returned from Moscow and we had lunch but I did not get any clear picture from him about what awaited me. Though I met and was attracted to a number of charming girls, I felt I was off to a new life and avoided entanglements. But, as was to be expected, I sadly lost touch with many of my newly made girl friends on going to Moscow.

In November 1947 four-power conferences of a kind still continued and it was London's turn to be host. Soviet planes flew in with officials and material for their delegation. In an original gesture, Tom Brimelow arranged for me to travel to Moscow in one of these Soviet planes, returning empty. Meanwhile my late Colonel's mother, Lady Hope, made provision for me to have her husband's Edwardian travelling fur coat, musquash lined and with astrakhan collar, to keep me warm. Eddie Tomkins, later Ambassador in Paris, who had been with the Free French at Bir Hakeim, and there made friends with Hugh Hope, my Colonel John's younger brother, also had the coat for Moscow, but handed it over. It was a wonderful article. Hugh commanded a Company in 1/KRRC but was put in the bag in 1941 at Sidi Rezegh. He returned to action in Italy, after escaping, and was DAAQMG of our Brigade until the close of the War, and became a close friend. Alastair Maitland (elder brother of Donald, later Sir Donald after a number of distinguished posts) who was in the Personnel Department, lent me his elegant mink fur hat, which in due course I returned. But, after consulting Hugh Hope, I kept the coat, and still have it.

When I went off from Heathrow, apprehensive but excited, I was the only passenger. A paragraph appeared in the Evening Standard, which my sister forwarded to me, and which read, 'A mysterious man in a trilby hat and a mackintosh left this morning on a Russian plane, the only passenger. When asked who he was and why he was travelling, he replied 'Don't ask me. I know nothing.''

Sheremetevo Airport presented a drab, grim appearance in November. The sky was grey and so were the people. Snow covered the ground. I was met by Oliver Kemp, 2nd secretary in the Chancery. He was unlike anyone whom I had previously met in the Foreign Service. Small, untidy, moustached, with a strong Yorkshire accent and garrulous, he was not encouraging. But

he had a good heart. I only met him again once years later. He seemed the same as ever. But on looking him up in *Who's Who* I see that he had an astonishingly varied career in the most remote and difficult situations which the unkind Personnel Dept could find, including being Ambassador to Togo and to Outer Mongolia, with the award of a CMG.

The Embassy was then, and until fairly recently, situated in an imposing stone building, formerly owned by a rich sugar manufacturer, and right on the banks of the river Moskva, facing the shining gilt onion domes of the Kremlin, which dominated the far bank. The Chancery, 'Russian Secretariat' and Commercial Section (not much Commerce then) were on the ground floor, off a big gloomy entrance hall, where electric lights shone permanently and the Chancery guards, ex-Servicemen, manned a desk. The Ambassador's office was straight ahead with French windows opening onto the garden and tennis court. The Ambassador and his wife lived on the first floor. The Service Attachés were in one wing, together, and the Administration in the other. Soviet militia in strength stood permanently on duty outside the gates, and the N.K.V.D group of plain clothes, heavy booted thugs who always pursued the Ambassador's Rolls in their small 'Moskvich' vehicle, and, in due course always followed me in my Humber ex-Army staff car, lounged about, smoking, detached, and menacing. At the back was the hard tennis court. Only one other existed in the whole of Moscow, in the Finnish Embassy, but the Americans had a bumpy grass court at their country dacha. No-one imagined then that Russia would produce a champion player. Our court was surrounded by a drive and skimpy bushes, and beyond there were some flats in two storied buildings occupied by junior administrative staff and our lady Russian teacher's room. We skated on the flooded tennis court in winter, and played keen tennis with each other, Americans and Australians, in summer. *Dvorniks* (workmen), in fur hats and padded jackets, swept the paths.

On arrival I found my quarters were on the first floor on the flank of the main building but have no memory of who showed me to them. I had a large bed sitting room and my own bath opening out of it. The view of the river and the Kremlin was sensational, and threatening, a constant reminder of Stalinism and the awful tyrant who ruled from within. I did a painting of the Kremlin from my window, which I think is probably unique as no-one else ever lived there who painted. Later when we had an American Colonel to a dinner party in Tokyo, I light-heartedly told him he was sitting beneath a picture of the Kremlin. He reddened, got up, and moved away! The U.S Army staff in Tokyo, with few exceptions, were obsessed with Communism and the sentiments of Senator McCarthy.

From the first night I found myself dressed in a black tie and dinner jacket dining alone on the Ambassador's left with Angel Lady Peterson, a gentle, ungainly Anglo-Irish clergyman's daughter, and kind to me, opposite. Maurice Peterson was by origin Scottish, son of the Head of McGill College in Canada. Of massively solid build and dour of mien, but of great intellectual power, he rarely opened his mouth at lunch or dinner. I kept quiet with difficulty. Sometimes in the evening Peterson would call for brandy after the meal and reminisce. But his reminiscences consisted mostly of bitter complaints about the British Government which had plucked him from Spain, replaced him with Sir Samuel Hoare at the Embassy in Madrid, and consigned him to virtual isolation in Moscow. On only two occasions in my two years and three months in Moscow did any Russians enter the Embassy for a meal, or indeed for any other purpose, though we had one or two 'refugees' who were promptly thrown back by us like fish from a trawler to the N.K.V.D. There was no way we could help or protect them. More about those two sets of guests later.

The Petersons had a smallish black and curly haired dog called 'Brindle' whom on rare occasions they took out for short walks, followed by their 'slugs' (as I called them) around the

neighbourhood usually in Sokolniki Park. On most days I was deputed to walk Brindle on a lead after lunch, before work started again in the Chancery. I quite enjoyed this and usually made a sharp hour's turn over one of the bridges, up to Red Square, and around the Kremlin. In winter, with snow everywhere, walking was tricky. Old women cleared the streets by hand but not always the sidewalks.

I do not remember our food in the Residence, but it was not a matter for complaint. The whole Embassy imported food and drink in bulk from England via Helsinki. There was a Russian cook, with whom I do not remember having many dealings, who lived with his family and all the Volga Deutsch servants, who acted as house maids, in the labyrinthine, obscurely lit basement. I do not remember how Lady Peterson planned meals as she had no Russian. Nor did Peterson. He made no effort to learn it. I think all food came up in a lift from the basement kitchen.

The head housemaid was a striking looking prematurely grey haired woman called Margareta Yost whose younger brother had been 'given' to the previous Ambassador, Sir Archibald Clerk Kerr, later Lard Inverchapel, by Molotov, and accompanied the Ambassador into retirement in Argyllshire as valet. We sent letters to him from his sister in the 'bag'. This was probably the first and last gift of any kind by a Soviet Minister to a British Ambassador. The Volga Deutsch had all been deported by Stalin from their homeland to Karaganda, in Siberia, probably to mud huts. Why our few maids had been allowed to stay I do not know, but about a year after I reached Moscow, Margareta Yost came to me and said 'they have stopped me on the street and told me to leave.' We racked our brains, but there was nothing we could do to save her, so I drove her to the Voksal (station), embraced her, and saw her leave in the train for Karaganda, to where her mother and other brothers had already been deported. The N.K.V.D and militia stood over us, but of course said nothing. Orders had been carried out. It was unbelievably sad, and we never heard from her again. Nor, I suppose, did her younger brother in Argyllshire. Years later the British press made something of a feature of his life. He sounded unattractive. Lord Inverchapel was married to a beautiful and much younger Chilean wife. She took one look at Moscow, and left. In Santiago 1954-57 we often met her.

Frau Ruppel, an old and talkative Volga Deutsch, was not at that time ordered away. She made my bed, did the laundry and cleaned. We talked in Russian, but I think the Volga Deutsch spoke German among themselves in the basement. I occasionally carried out rather superficial 'inspections' of the servants' quarters there. They were dark, thronged with families, and quite impossible to control in any way.

Under the English butler, Bentley, the Petersons had two liveried footmen, Laryk and Sergei, who also looked after me, my clothes and so forth. Aged about twenty five, Laryk was dark and good looking and very intelligent. I practised my Russian with him. Once he asked me if I did not want lumps of ice in my bath. He said 'Ambassador Clark Kerr liked me to put ice in his bath'! I refused. Some years later, I think after Laryk had been withdrawn by the Soviet central administration who controlled all Embassy local employees, it was revealed in a Soviet press article, denouncing foreigners, that Laryk was a Colonel in the N.K.V.D. We never suspected it. I think it came out because he was given a medal! The other footman, Sergei, was also young, but rather fat and less intelligent than Laryk. As far as I know he was not in the N.K.V.D. Both of them were, of course, Russian, not Volga Deutsch. At that time, though we were aware of security, there was no general set of instructions in the Service. When I was in the Security Department in the Office after Tokyo, 1952-54, I drafted a large part of the basic Security Memorandum for the guidance of all staff. Nor, in my time in Moscow did the Security Service yet have a residential representative. Howard Bridge, in charge of Administration, was also nominally responsible for security. I think he came from the Colonial Police.

Bentley was the model of an old school butler. Recruited in England by the Petersons, he was reddish haired, tight lipped, and gave the impression of being under great and perpetual nervous strain. He knew his work perfectly and resented any suggestion for change, let alone any correction. He wore a short black coat and striped trousers by day and, in the evening a frock coat. He never gossiped or talked of any previous jobs or his family, if he had one.

One aspect of our food in the Residence I always remember. In the absence of any Russian guests, the Ambassador gave a routine dinner party for diplomats in black tie about every two or three weeks. He invited friendly, or acceptable, foreign colleagues and their wives, their counsellors (but not lower) and Service Attachés. About twenty or so at the table, which was impressively presented, with glittering silver, polished by Bentley. I was allowed to ask a girl for myself. So I had a succession of whichever of the young foreign Embassy typists I happened to like best at the time. Peterson would have been uneasy with one of his own junior staff. So those I asked were usually Scandinavian or Dutch, all very attractive. Until Lee arrived towards the end of 1949 I did not ask Americans, who were all spoken for, though friendly and good fun at the parties, a lot of them, held by the younger and junior set. At the Peterson's dinners, the first course always consisted of a huge glass bowl of grey, the top quality, caviar, blinis (a sort of pancake) and sour cream. It was very good and as you could take as much as you wanted, I rarely had room for anything else. It was served with ice-cold vodka in small glasses. I think it's the best food I have ever eaten, though barrels of oysters in Japan and Chile ran it close. At the end of my time in Moscow I was lamentably sated with caviar, 'ykra' in Russian. But I would be only too happy to have a small helping today.

One thing disconcerted me about Maurice Peterson, and this illustrates the old style of the Diplomatic Service and, indeed, Civil Service. I had been trained to know and care for my NCOs and men in the 60th. When I was Adjutant, and before we were decimated by casualties in Italy, I probably recognised by name 90 per cent of the seven hundred and fifty NCOs and riflemen in the battalion, as well as, of course, all the subalterns and Warrant Officers. I found that Peterson was not concerned with his staff. He scarcely knew the names of any below Counsellor rank, and certainly did not recognise them by sight! Nor was he interested in their welfare. In Wheeler Bennett's biography of the great Sir John Anderson, Viscount Waverley, which I am reading, it is noted that Anderson, for ten years Permanent Secretary of the Home Office, after Dublin, maintained exactly the same distance from his staff as Peterson. Both were Scots. I would like to think that in my time in the Foreign Office and later in the Northern Ireland Office, we practised 'man management' in a more humane fashion. Certainly we tried.

But Peterson did not lack resolution. When the Soviets imposed yet another series of restrictions and petty impediments to normal diplomatic freedoms. he was so indignant that he resolved to take them on, and invited all the Western Ambassadors and a many of the 'neutrals' as would come, to a meeting in our Embassy. Peterson addressed them (I was there to record the proceedings) impressively, and argued for a collective démarche in protest at unilateral Soviet derogation from all normal diplomatic conventions. But there was little collective will, and his efforts were doomed to failure.

Stalin's harassment of diplomats and foreigners, restrictions on travel, and Soviet press denunciation of 'foreign spies and anti-Soviet manœuvres' had started in March 1946 well before I arrived in Moscow and it all got progressively worse. Before that life for foreigners was, if not free, much more so than it was in my time. We were limited for travel to a radius of fifteen miles from the centre of Moscow, with one or two special sites (such as Tolstoy's house and Zagorsk monastery) allowed for visits exceptionally, but with no deviations from the direct route

permitted. No Russians dared speak to us, let alone accept an invitation. We too learned to be constrained for security reasons, since the N.K.V.D pressed any Russians, male or female, who was tempted to have contact with diplomats, to act as informants or to set up a compromising situation for the N.K.V.D to photograph and then blackmail the entirely innocent, for the most part, foreign participant; or, if blackmail failed, to denounce the 'violations of Soviet integrity' in the press, to our great embarrassment. However tempted a young bachelor might be, if he met somehow on the sub-way an attractive Russian girl (most at that time were ill-kempt and unattractive, but there were some exceptions) he dared not pursue it, for fear of being blackmailed himself, or for a solicitous anxiety for the girl, since, if she was in fact, innocent, the N.K.V.D, who were everywhere, would quickly pressure her to act on their behalf, and she would be in real danger, because failure to co-operate led to deportation or worse.

There were of course underlying links with Soviet citizens, mostly originating from the War when the British Military Mission, of all ranks, was installed in Moscow, and then in Kuibyshev, in the south, when all the foreign establishments in Moscow were compulsorily evacuated to escape the impending German threat to the city. Some of the longer serving Western diplomats and press representatives used to talk in glowing terms of the convivial parties and social relations with Russians, especially members of the Bolshoi Ballet, during their exile in Kuibyshev. Stalin stopped all that in March 1946, and the régime became increasingly oppressive. This caused pain for both Russians and Westerners who found they could no longer see each other. Even the few Russians who had married servicemen or press correspondents were, notwithstanding their status, harassed by the N.K.V.D.

As an illustration of N.K.V.D tactics, it happened about the middle of my time in Moscow that I and Tony Howard, Lt RN and Assistant Naval Attaché, after persistent representations, were given permission by the Soviet Authorities, to visit Leningrad by train. Tony Howard was naturally interested in the Soviet Navy, and we walked for miles along the canals in hopes of glimpsing a vessel. I curiously have no recollection of where we stayed. All hotels were unpleasant and lacked plugs in the basins and baths. Of course no soap. I do remember that the architectural beauty of the place staggered me. On our return, though I do not know how the Soviets arranged it, I found there was a Russian girl sharing my sleeping compartment! She was pretty and agreeable, and we talked generalities, but quite freely. Nothing compromising occurred. I was much too cautious. On return to Moscow, I did venture that perhaps I could see her again, and she agreed to meet me for a drink in the lobby of the National Hotel, used by a number of diplomats, who had no official residences, as their quarters, and, as I reckoned, a pretty safe neutral place for a date. We duly met, but she was very nervous and finally said it would be impossible for her, and dangerous, to see me again. I think that the N.K.V.D, having failed to tempt me into a compromising situation on the train, felt that the girl, and I myself, were not worth any further attempts at entrapment at that time. I did not see her again. Soviet 'provocations' of all kinds continued throughout my time.

Of course there was no telephone directory available in Moscow (except the Diplomatic List published by the Soviets in Russian), nor, for that matter, were there any street or road maps, so, when I started driving myself, I had to learn the way by experiment, which was not easy. But I probably learned to know the city better than any other diplomat.

Quite soon after my arrival, André Saint Marceau, probably a Commandant, but in any case a French ex-pilot, and Assistant Air Attaché, came to see us in the Chancery. He was handsome and attractive, and spoke perfect Russian. He had been in Moscow for much of the War, and when evacuated to Kuibyshev had formed a close attachment with a Russian girl, from whom, however, he had been cut off by the Stalinist Iron Curtain. He did not even know where she

lived. He told us that he had recently received a telephone call from his former girl friend who said she needed his help and gave him her address. Naturally he went to find her. When he entered her apartment he found all the lights on and some focussed, as from a movie camera, on him. The girl was lying in bed with an infant baby in her arms. The room was full of N.K.V.D. They accused him of violating Soviet womanhood, said that the baby was his (plainly impossible as he had not seen the girl for some two years) and threatened him with denunciation in the press with pictures. He could report to them on French official secrets or get out of Moscow in 48 hours. So he told us he had come to say goodbye, and left. I do not think there was, in the event, any publicity. Poor girl, to be so exploited.

We had, close to home, another tiresome incident early on in my time, which caused an enormous amount of stress, agitation and paper work in the Embassy. For some ill-judged reason the Foreign Office had recruited an uncomplicated, good natured working class young man called George Bundock to act in some menial role in the Embassy. I think perhaps as storeman for our Commissariat of imported foods and household needs, but I cannot remember precisely what he did. I doubt if anyone had talked to him about security, but the N.K.V.D's malign and increasingly hostile methods were surprising us all. Poor George Bundock met a Russian girl outside the Embassy, or more probably the N.K.V.D manipulated a seduction. I don't think we ever learned how it originated. The first news was on the front page of *Pravda* denouncing a 'British Embassy official for infecting pure Soviet womanhood with syphilis', and demanding that George be handed over for trial. Press attacks on us continued for some time. George had no diplomatic rank so we could not claim immunity and send him away openly. Notes between the Soviet Ministry for Foreign Affairs and the Embassy were furiously exchanged. Telegrams whizzed to and from London. Roger Allen, Head of Chancery, was wholly occupied with papers on the case. We dared not let George out of the compound. Brains were exercised on the prospects of smuggling him out by 'diplomatic bag' under the escort of a Queen's Messenger, or otherwise, but it was all too risky. George was remarkably good natured about it all. Everyone was nice to him. He became a fixture and institution in the compound. His confinement lasted several years. Eventually, after I had left Moscow, I think a compromise was reached and the Soviets allowed him to leave. I do not remember what their price was, but am pretty sure there was one. However, they may have thought they had milked the matter with denunciations of British violation of Bolshevist purity, and successful publicity.

Another serious and long-running problem was caused by the 'Soviet wives'. These were a group of about a dozen Russian girls who had married, mostly other ranks, but one officer, who were serving, during the 'honeymoon' period, in the British Military Mission to the Russians. They had married for love, or what they imagined was love, and both parties at the time of their union, had every reason to suppose that they would live their future lives together in the U.K. The wives of course had received British passports. But Stalin vetoed the girls' exit visas, and when I got to Moscow, they were a pathetic group, isolated from normal Russian and English life alike, their husbands long since posted away, while they hung out in exiguous conditions in Moscow. Some found jobs as Embassy telephonists and similar employment with us. They were to be seen at junior ranks' Embassy parties, dressed up and awkward. Some pretty, some less so, and all miserable. Of course there were temptations, and I believe some did form further precarious liaisons with our juniors. The Soviets continued adamant and refused to let them go, and some of the husbands, after fruitless endeavours, began divorce proceedings.

Their plight became the subject of anxious consideration at the highest levels in the Embassy and in the Foreign Office in London. Some official opinion held that the 'wives' were no better than they should be, and we should, in brutal terms, wash our hands of them. Their husbands should all divorce them. Our constant representations in writing to the Soviet Ministry for Foreign

Affairs were abortive, and the situation dragged on in a stale mate. I cannot remember Peterson's exact arguments but I do remember that he wrote an Olympian despatch or letter to the Secretary of State himself (Bevin) and I think his conclusion was that we should give up trying and leave the girls to their fate in the Soviet Union.

In the event Stalin took matters out of our hands. Suddenly, and well on in my time, the girls began to 'disappear', one by one, from their jobs with us or their apartments. It appeared that the N.K.V.D removed them from Moscow, and consigned them, though we knew no details, to the outer reaches of the Soviet Union. Only one 'wife' remained as our telephonist, Natasha Price. She was tall and extremely handsome, with a luxurious mane of black hair. Sometimes she called me at night from her post in a cubby hole on the ground floor for no apparent reason, but I prudently kept my distance. I think we should have realized that, however nice she was, and attractive, with good English, these were the very qualities which made an agent of the N.K.V.D. Quite late in my time in the Embassy, when the Kellys had succeeded the Petersons, the papers were plastered with the announcement by one of our junior information officers called Dalglish, who worked in the Information Offices in another part of the City, with no access to confidential information, that he was fed up with 'imperialism' and had defected to the Soviet Union and a new 'socialist' life. It soon became apparent that Natasha Price had gone off with him. Whatever the circumstances of his seduction, and however much the Soviet Authorities made of their 'coup', Dalglish was no loss. I believe, and was told much later, that Natasha Price and Dalglish got married and lived normally, I do not know how happily, in Moscow until, I think, he died.

We and the Americans were uneasily jealous of our respective 'defector rate'. The Americans were not entirely satisfied with British security (though this was well before the treachery of Burgess and McLean). There was some schadenfreude in British reactions to the defection, when Lee was in charge of all the Archives and secret communications at the U.S Embassy in 1949, of Sgt MacMillan, the American chief cypher clerk. Overall our respective losses were just about even.

There was an epilogue for me to the saga of the 'wives'. A successful and most engaging television producer, Catherine Bailey, got in touch with me, and others, in the nineties with a view to a feature on the 'Russian wives'. She came down to lunch at Somerton, with her boy friend, and quickly showed that she had done the most thorough research and had in fact travelled with impunity to Russia and interviewed at length most, if not all, of the wives who had survived, including Natasha Price. She had a much more detailed current picture that I had, but I gave her some contemporary colour. However, more usefully, I put her in touch with Marie Dobbs, the Australian-born wife of Joe Dobbs, who served in the Information Section in Moscow throughout my time, and finished his successful and varied Foreign Office career as the distinguished Minister at our Moscow Embassy. Joe and Marie Dobbs have remained close friends and, living as they did, until recently, at Charlton Musgrove near Wincanton, we have seen each other regularly over the years. Marie Dobbs had done her best to befriend the Soviet wives in their bad times and knew much more of them than I did. She made a substantial contribution to Catherine Bailey's production and talked vividly direct to camera in the final production, which was a fair and vivid record of the story. The most unattractive feature of the film was seeing Sir Frank Roberts, at one time Minister in Moscow (before I arrived) and later Ambassador to Germany, talking in his extreme old age, with smug complacency, of the 'wives' in Moscow, without any trace of sympathy for their sad predicament. He looked on it as a purely diplomatic impasse which had to be dealt with only by realistic consideration of 'interests' overall. But it sounded humanly inconsiderate, which was a pity, in my view, and a bad advertisement for the Foreign Service.

Marie Dobbs became a successful writer, initially of short stories, and later made a considerable name for herself by the completion of Jane Austen's unfinished novel *Sanditon*. Her T.V 'epilogue' to the sad story of the 'Russian wives' was a fair and fitting memorial. I think that only one of the 'wives', the one married to an officer, eventually managed to be reunited with her husband in the U.K.

We seemed to live from 'scandal', as the Soviets called it, to 'scandal'. Apart from the general ban on travel out of Moscow, the Soviets were immensely sensitive about any State installation, factory or military centre. Photography was not allowed. The Western Service Attachés fretted, as they had no access to the Soviet military establishments. Anything they could glimpse of interest was a feather in their caps, apart from their ritual searches in the press for promotions, accounts of new weaponry, and so on. Our Military Attaché was Major General Hilton, of the old but keen school, whom I scarcely got to know. Early in my time he was arrested, with the usual adverse publicity, for 'spying' in a forbidden area. I dare say he had taken a risk in a drive out of town. There was a row, but he had to go. After that the post, which in view of the frustrations, did not merit a General Officer's rank, was down-graded to Colonel. Dennis Wynne-Pope, R.A, and his hugely stout but sociable and rich wife, arrived, and became good friends of mine then and afterwards in London. They came to our wedding in February 1950 at St George's, Hanover Square but we gradually lost touch, as we went off to Tokyo, and they both died prematurely. In Moscow they did their best to enliven the social lives of many.

At the start of my time the American Ambassador was the highly distinguished General Walter Bedell Smith, who had been Eisenhower's Chief of Staff in North Africa and throughout the North West Europe campaign. I saw quite a lot of him as, although very junior, I escorted him in when he occasionally came to see Peterson to compare notes, and I was also, as I have said, present when he and his wife came to dinner. I was also often included in American Embassy parties at Spaso House, the Residence. I recollect Bedell Smith clearly, a lined determined face, moderate height and lean build, but saying little. He gave every impression of self-confident power, but, like everyone else, he could achieve little or nothing in Moscow.

I saw a great deal of the members of the American Embassy – the first time in my life that I had met Americans and American culture at close quarters. With very few exceptions they were very capable and nice, but we saw more of them socially than in the office, and official contacts between the Chanceries were not formalized. The Service Attachés did, however, compare notes with their American counterparts on a more regular basis. The Americans, then and continually in later years, told me of their immense respect for the expertise on the Soviet navy demonstrated by my close friend, who has just died on 31 October 2001, aged 92, Captain Ivan Sarell D.S.O R.N. Sarell succeeded Captain Duncan Hill, R.N, quite soon after I arrived. Duncan Hill was an imposing figure with a fine war-time record, but I did not get to know him as well as I did his successor. Ivan Sarell had a close professional and social relationship, continued long after their association in Moscow, with the French Naval Attaché, Capitaine de Vaisseau Peltier, Mme Peltier and their eligible, but closely guarded, daughter. Ivan's career, when he was clearly destined for Flag, was blighted by a collision with his Admiral's flagship off Iceland. I am glad that the Times published an obituary which I wrote. He had outlived family and contemporaries who might have written a more detailed account.

On the political side, the Americans were led by the Deputy Chief of Mission (as the Americans call the post), Wally Barbour, a big, relaxed and wise bachelor, who inspired confidence. He was kind to Lee when we got engaged in late 1949. The Minister-Counsellor was Foy Kohler who had a most successful career as Ambassador and in the State Department after Moscow. He and his wife Phyllis were friendly and hospitable. My best friend was Richard Hallock Davis, a large and

convivial bachelor, who played powerful tennis with us in summer. He became an Ambassador, I think in Romania, but I did not see him again after Moscow, a source of regret as he was excellent company. In the Chancery Brewster Morris and his wife Ellen, cultivated and sociable, were good friends. Ellen generously put on an exhibition of the watercolours I succeeded in doing around Moscow, of rivers, churches and silver birch woods, despite the ever present N.K.V.D, who always surrounded me, at about fifty yards distance. I have given away nearly all of the pictures I did at that time. Brewster Morris finished as Ambassador in the desert wastes of Niger, I think, about the same time as I was in Mali. I feel he deserved better, but the Americans are hard on their career Foreign Service people.

Another young and intelligent American friend was John Keppel whom we met again when he was posted to Seoul at the outset of the Korean War, and stayed with us in the Embassy compound in Tokyo on his leave. He is the second in our Visitors Book which we have kept pretty meticulously up to date since 1950. John Keppel married Grace Marjorie Woods, a vibrant blonde, who worked somewhere in the American Embassy. She had been, she told us, social editor of the local paper in Little Rock, Arkansas. It was my first meeting with ebullient, young American career girls of her kind. Beautifully turned out, vivacious and voluble, a big fish in her small home town, but revealing nothing of her real inner character, she stands out clearly in my memory. But we lost all touch with John Keppel and Grace Marjorie, which was a pity, though inevitable in the Foreign Service. I do not know where his future career lay.

I was also close to the American military attachés, especially Colonel, later Brigadier General Tobias R. (Toby) Philbin and his wife Anne, from a Baltimore newspaper owning family. Toby had the very rare distinction of having been awarded an immediate British D.S.O, for gallantry in helping the British Army when commanding his battalion at the battle of the Ardennes, when the Nazis nearly broke through the Allied Forces. He had, after all kinds of War College and University qualifications, a successful career, mainly in Intelligence, at Fort Meade and in Europe, and I was surprised that he did not rise higher. Lee and I saw the Philbins in Washington, when we were on family visits, and, later, stayed with them twice at least in their beautifully restored eighteenth century town house, 'Evergreen House' in the centre of Lexington, Virginia, full of memories of General Robert E Lee and his famous horse, 'Traveller'.

The senior American military figure in Moscow was General ('Iron Mike') O'Daniell whom we also saw in Japan when he was passing through from Korea, where he commanded a Corps. A tough, genial fighting soldier, with a motherly wife. The Service Attachés in the American Embassy actually outnumbered the political staff. All were friendly and nice except, late on in my time, a raffish Air Force Brigadier General whose openly loose behaviour went beyond the normal but correct conviviality of the Western group.

The French Embassy was headed by a General, I think he was called Catroux. I have now found, in Field Marshal Alanbrooke's Diaries, that Catroux, if it was he, had been Commander of the Free French in the Levant, and had also acted as liaison for the Gaullists with the British High Command. I do remember his and his wife's very 'correct' and formal French manner when they came to dinner, though she showed a motherly bourgeois disposition later in the evening. I also remember the good-looking and gregarious French Counsellor, Guy Dorget, with his amazingly attractive and flirtatious wife. The General was succeeded by an austere grey haired man called Chataigneau. I cannot remember if he was a career diplomat or politician. I did not have much contact with him as he and his wife kept to themselves.

The Italian Ambassador was Manlio Brosio, a tall and impressive, craggy northerner, who lived with his wife in two sparse and uncomfortable rooms in the National Hotel. He much later

became Secretary General, and a good one, of NATO where I met him again in Paris (NATO HQ was then still in Paris) when I was Chairman of NATO's Intelligence Committee in 1965/66, an *ad hoc* body initiated by Mr MacNamara, U.S Secretary of Defence, to set up a system of crisis management in the Alliance, which I mentioned above. Brosio was most affable to me in Paris, no doubt due to our mutual experience in Moscow.

The Australians were headed by Alan Watt, who had been reserve for the Australian Davis Cup team. Though about fifty he still played formidable tennis and was always ready to join a four at our Embassy in the summer. He did not hit or serve very hard but placed the ball with teasing accuracy. His game, though he competed keenly, was not so superior to ours as to spoil our doubles. John Rowland, a bachelor, was First Secretary in the Australian Embassy and a good friend. He had a distinguished career subsequently and I think I read that he became Head of the Australian Department of External Affairs.

The Canadian Chargé d'Affairs was John Holmes, a bachelor of great intelligence and sweetness of character. He was a close friend of us all. He had a distinguished career in his Government's Foreign Service subsequently, though I never met him then, and, later, an even more distinguished career in academic life. Professor David Dilks, who has recently become a friend, has sent me a fine eulogy he delivered on John Holmes, after the latter's early death, at a Canadian institution.

I was friends with the young Icelandic Chargé d'Affairs and his attractive wife. One day at dinner in their flat they gave me more quantities of some fiery Viking spirit than was wise for me to drink. Driving back I remember skidding uncertainly at the sharp turn into the Embassy on Sofiskaya Boulevard and only just missing the elaborately shaped iron gates. It was the only time I felt out of control from liquor in Moscow and that is why I can remember it so clearly, as I can the comparatively rare similar situations in earlier and later life, especially when the Sergeants' Mess in Algiers deliberately set out to see me under the table when I was Adjutant. In Moscow, although, as I shall describe later, the Soviet Authorities and Militia harassed me in my station wagon all the time, and, unjustifiably, accused me of driving offences, I do not think they would have regarded drunken driving as anything serious, as inebriation from vodka was endemic among all Soviet males.

India had no representation when I arrived in Moscow, but, after a while, amid considerable publicity, Nehru's sister Mrs Pandit arrived with a small staff. Although the ostentatious Indian sympathy for the Soviet Union was distasteful for us, Commonwealth solidarity dictated that we should do what was possible to smooth the Indian delegation's practical path, which was all the more necessary as none of them had any Russian. I accordingly made all the arrangements for Mrs Pandit's initial reception, which the Soviets attended in numbers beyond our imagination. As I said above no Soviets (with two exceptions) would come to our Embassy. T.N.Kaul, whom I found then and much later in Delhi 1966-68, when he was the Secretary (ie the most senior official) in the Indian Foreign Ministry, far from agreeable, and no friend of the UK, was Mrs Pandit's First Secretary in Moscow. I think his inevitable dependence on my Russian and knowledge of the local system in arranging Mrs Pandit's party was probably the first and last occasion when he was out of his depth. Mrs Pandit we also met several times in India. She was, unlike T.N.Kaul, a distinguished and fine woman, of considerable presence, and also charm. In India she spoke warmly of my half cousin Thomas Gay Waterfield who went into the I.C.S and stayed on in India, near Bombay, after partition, in the idealistic misconception that India was his real home. He left his wife and three children in Cambridge. He died at Pune in 2001, well over 90 years old, never having returned to England. His sons Roger and Hugh, and daughter,

despite his alienation from his roots, kept in affectionate touch and the sons visited him at intervals until his death.

Among the foreign diplomats in Moscow, another special friend was Arthur Janzen, a bear like, cuddly and sociable bachelor, who was 1st Secretary, and for a long period, Chargé d'Affaires at the Dutch Embassy. I saw a great deal of him. He had been in Russia since early in the War, and had shared in the high life at Kuibyshev, with many Russian friends. He told me that he had been sent by the Dutch Army at the outset of the War, and after Holland had been over-run, to Sandhurst and claimed he had got the Sword of Honour there, (I never tried to check this) but had been hauled out by the Dutch Foreign Service, because of his perfect Russian and deep knowledge of Russian ways, to go to the Moscow Embassy. He said that he was in fact the hereditary heir of the 'beys' of Tashkent and was entitled to be called 'Tashkent Bei' or 'Bey', since his ancestor, a Dutchman, was Catherine the Great's architect, and had been given the fiefdom of Tashkent as a reward. I had no means of checking any of these exotic claims but he sounded convincing, and was, in many ways, more Russian in character than Dutch. Indeed he clashed with his newly arrived, aggressive and volubly Dutch Ambassador, called Visser, before I left Moscow; and because the Soviets felt he was a threat, knowing so much, they framed him for espionage and he had to leave in a hurry. The next and last time I saw him was when Lee and I, travelling by sea on SS Glenroy to our first post together in Japan, found him installed as Dutch Consul General when we put in to Singapore. Arthur, we found, was by this time married to a charming little Thai-Russian 'Princess', as she claimed, called Pak, pronounced 'Puk'. They took us out to an exotic Chinese restaurant for dinner. Arthur said he had been in effect 'exiled' to Singapore because the Dutch Ministry for Foreign Affairs considered him 'insufficiently Dutch'. Indeed he was punished unfairly for his origins by both Soviet and Dutch authorities, but he seemed happy with Pak and to be his usual convivial and warm-hearted self. I never saw him again and only heard indirectly of his existence from friends. I wonder what happened to him. I did hear, however, that a number of white Russian aristocrats settled in Thailand and married high born local girls. So Pak probably was indeed a princess.

American journalists in Moscow played a prominent part in the Western community, and some had had distinguished careers reporting in Russia on the War and went on to even more distinguished careers later in America. Ed Stevens, serious and dour, was there for one of the Agencies, with, I think, a Russian wife. I did not socialize with him. Harrison Salisbury was for the New York Times. He was a bachelor, a serious scholar and became a recognised authority on Soviet affairs, with several books to his credit. I cannot remember who Ray Whitney represented. He seemed rather a louche character and was married to a very sexy looking Russian Jew who was, in our gossiping circles, supposed to be under the thumb of the N.K.V.D and therefore risky to associate with. She was undoubtedly, conspicuously, and temptingly attractive. One of the two journalists whom I knew best were Walter Cronkite, for U.P, I think, with his popular American wife Betsy. Of course he became and remains a household figure in America, as a T.V anchorman, personality and pundit. Sadly he and Betsy divorced, though they were, I think, still together when we were in New York from 1957-60, and we certainly saw Walter, in New York, before he became so famous, quite often, on the strength of our Moscow friendship. He was a keen amateur driver of racing cars, and once took me up to Watkins Glen, the famous circuit in New York State, for a, to me terrifying, series of runs round the track, with himself at the wheel and me as a passenger. Inevitably we lost touch when we left New York for London.

However Eddy Gilmore and his Russian wife Tamara were not only the most sociable and popular of the press representatives, but also my closest friends, despite some ups and downs. We remained on close terms later in London until their respective deaths. Eddy, first, from a heart attack, and Tamara later, living in a flat in Cornwall Gardens near us in Kelso Place, from

cancer. Eddy was originally a sports writer from Selma, Alabama, in the deepest south, and notorious for all the prejudices and unattractive features of the region. He was sent to London early in the War for A.P, and made a great name for himself reporting in the Blitz. He was then sent to Moscow, though knowing no Russian, and was, with every other foreigner, evacuated to Kuibyshev. There he met Tamara, a minor dancer in the Bolshoi Corps de Ballet, and married her. In due course they had three daughters. Eddy had to return to America at least once, whether on duty or because he needed a break, I do not remember. He hoped to take Tamara with him but the N.K.V.D would not let her go, and from the moment she was alone the N.K.V.D put the most unpleasant pressure on her to become their informant. She was of course highly vulnerable but resisted, I believe successfully, all the threats and blandishments of the bullies of the Soviet system. Eventually Eddy returned to his job in Moscow and they were together for much of my time there.

Indeed Lee and I got engaged outside their house at the close of a romantic walk in the dark after supper, which included Red Square and a circuit of the Kremlin. Somehow we had eluded my K.G.B followers or perhaps we were so absorbed we did not notice them. After my rather clumsy and ill-phrased words, to the effect that I was being posted away from Moscow, and so, as I did not want to lose her, we might as well get married, and Lee's usual undemonstrative assent, we knocked on the Gilmore's door and, on being welcomed in, I announced "We are engaged"! I think I remember Eddy exclaiming "I knew it". Lee and I later featured in Eddy's book, quite successful at the time, *Me and My Russian Wife*. Not a profound study of Russia, but a racy account of his experiences. I fear I may have got rid of the book in one of our many moves. I would like to read it again.

Eddy was a large, powerful and loud figure with a big bald head, a mixture of Southern civility, coarseness and unexpected sensitivity. He had a gift for making friends, especially with successful and prominent people, and was very sociable. Some of his behaviour was outrageous. Once he invited a group to watch the great celebratory Soviet parade on 7 November, which was visible, as if from a grandstand, from the building housing the American Embassy offices and flats, known as 'Mokavaya'. He must have borrowed the flat and its balcony from an Embassy friend. I do not believe he and Tamara every lived there. We all watched the parade, the experts with binoculars, making fascinated notes on the types of Soviet weaponry displayed, the only time the Western Service attachés could get a glimpse of such things. There was plenty to drink. I sat with Tamara and we had a happy, probably slightly flirtatious talk – she was coquettish by nature – but nothing of which I could be ashamed. After the parade, Eddy suddenly called us all to attention and played a taped extract from my conversation with Tamara. He had placed a microphone under my chair. It sounded banal and silly, but I was embarrassed and indignant. I got up and shouted at Eddy that his trick was disgusting to a guest, and said I would never again accept an invitation from him. And then I walked out! Needless to say, as we were all so closely involved that time healed the rift, but Eddy's mean sense of a joke remained in my mind. One never was quite sure how he would behave.

I have had a few good and trustworthy journalist friends abroad and some in London, but I learned very soon that except for a very few, their professional aims were always the opposite of ours, and anything one told them was regarded as fair game for publication. So one had to be wary and guard one's tongue, for fear of inevitable betrayal. I once incautiously told a funny but delicate anecdote at lunch to Max Hastings, later Editor of the Daily Telegraph and Evening Standard, when I was a Director of International Military Services in the early eighties. He had been brought to lunch by a close friend of mine on what I thought was a social basis. They shot together in Leicestershire. I had a point to make with my story but asked him not to publish it.

He put it on the front page of the Evening Standard the same evening! I was embarrassed, and he was not asked to shoot by my friend again.

On the day that the Gilmores' third daughter was born in a Soviet hospital, shortly before I was due to leave Moscow, and after Lee had gone to London to stay with my parents in Bryanston Court, W1, and to prepare for our marriage, I went out to dinner at the Aragve restaurant as Eddy's guest to celebrate the birth. The Aragve was the only acceptable restaurant to which foreigners had access. The other guests were Jack Nicholls and Colonel Dennis Wynne-Pope, our new Political Minister and Military Attaché respectively; their wives were not present. Tamara was still in hospital. We must have had a lot to drink in celebration, and I remember, in particular, that at a certain stage, Jack Nicholls took a run down the Aragve's floor, leapt in the air and turned a full somersault, landing on his feet. This was an amazing demonstration of gymnastics for someone in his mid-forties of which one would not have suspected Jack was capable, though he was compact in build and had a spring in his step. He later became 'Sir Jack', Ambassador to, I think, Belgium or Holland. He died quite young. His vivacious and socially manipulative Greek wife, Domini, made a mark in our lives. They both showed a strikingly warm contrast to the comparatively icy and detached behaviour of their predecessors Geoffrey and Mimi Harrison, though both Jack and Geoffrey were, like most of their Foreign Office generation, extremely able.

Much later Geoffrey returned to Moscow as Ambassador, but his career ended suddenly in scandal, when he dutifully reported in a personal telegram to the Chief Clerk, my friend (Sir) Peter Wilkinson, that he had, in Mimi's absence, allowed himself to be seduced by his head housemaid, and thereby been compromised. Wilkinson once told me that on a visit to Moscow he had been struck by the extreme beauty of this girl who was handing round drinks, and had warned Harrison that she was probably in the K.G.B and he should get rid of her somehow. But this is another story. I once saw Geoffrey, by then retired, walking in Piccadilly, and I felt rather sorry for him, invited him to Boodle's for a drink. He behaved in his usual cool, detached fashion. Mimi had forgiven him, but he did not get another post.

Jack Nicholls had a particularly ingenious mind. To me he once showed himself also extremely brave, as well as having an elastic physique. Sir David Kelly, who had succeeded Peterson as Ambassador, owned a large, graceful and far from aggressive Seluki hound, a gift, I think, from his time in Turkey. Jack Nicholls owned a pair of low slung and ferocious bull terriers, from whom I kept my distance. One afternoon, in the dimly lit ground floor hall of the Embassy, the Seluki, on its own, came down the stairs from the Residential quarters above, just as Jack Nicholls entered the hall for afternoon work with his two bull terriers, not on a leash. Suddenly the bull terriers both rushed at the innocent Seluki and sank their teeth from each side into its neck, with sinister and frightening grunts. I was there by chance and so, I suppose, was the Chancery guard at his table. There was an awful noise from all three dogs. Without hesitation, Jack hurled himself into the melée, and by sheer force and with bare hands, grabbed open the jaws of his animals and pulled them off their victim, which had stood no chance, and would certainly have been killed, had Jack not intervened. They were of course his own dogs, and knew their master. But it always struck me as a brave act, and Jack went right up in my estimation. Owing to its thick and drooping fur the Seluki was shaken rather than bloodied. I do not remember if any of us told Kelly what had happened, but Jack may have apologised. I occasionally took the Seluki out in my Humber staff car and made it run behind for exercise, which the Kellys did not provide for it.

I have, as usual, digressed and anticipated events. But, now, to get back to the Gilmores, of whom Lee and I saw quite a lot later on when at intervals we were in London. They at first lived

in a fine house in Cheyne Walk, Chelsea, which I think Eddy bought cheaply, in the War. Later they had a striking flat, with immense views, on the top of Highgate Hill. Eddy was working again for A.P in London. He had a mixed group of up-market, aristocratic friends, and frequented modish, if slightly flashy clubs and restaurants. On one occasion, I remember, he took offence at some man's remarks in the Embassy Club and knocked him out. I think Eddy died, quite young, when we were again abroad. I certainly do not remember his funeral. But I saw Tamara regularly when she was ill with cancer. She told me that up to the end the Soviet K.G.B sent people to threaten and bully her in London. I felt sure she was not lying and tried to get her some sort of protection from the Security Services but without any success. I was always fond of Tamara. She was in fact the daughter of a Polish citizen, though her mother was Russian. She talked of herself to me as Tamara Adamova, and always called me 'Jonchik'. She had close and kind friends from Eddy's aristocratic connexions, especially one of the Duchesses of Argyll, whom, however, I never met. Tamara died, sadly, of the cancer, and I have never seen her daughters again. One, I remember, married an officer in the Welsh guards.

The Scandinavians also formed part of our social circle. Two Danish secretaries, one after the other, Inga and then Pjers (pronounced 'Pios') attracted me greatly before Lee arrived, and each came in their turn to the Peterson's diplomatic dinners as the one girl I was allowed. We were very correct in those days, and, despite my efforts, I scarcely saw either of these very attractive girls tête á tête indoors. I never dared ask either, or later even Lee, to my quarters in the Embassy Residence. The only entrance was past the Chancery Guards and up the main staircase, and I felt shy, cautious and inhibited. But, having my estate car, I was able to take the Scandinavians, and also later a seductive brunette Dutch secretary, for Sunday picnics in summer to authorized places outside Moscow, where we sat on rugs, surrounded by my K.G.B followers. On my return from leave in the middle of my tour, after skiing in Austria and Davos, and then London, I came via Berlin (to see the Birleys) and then Warsaw, again, expressly in the hope of seeing Inga, who was by then posted there. I did see her again, and we had a picnic, but that was the end of it. I was, perhaps, closer to the Belgian, until Lee arrived. So much so that when I told Lady Kelly (Marie Noële) that I was engaged to Lee, she burst into tears, to my astonishment, largely, however, with indignation on the grounds that I had not confided in her, and then exclaimed "I thought it was the other one", a typical Lady Kelly remark. Marie Noële was herself a Belgian aristocrat and extremely forthright. She knew what she wanted, and said so. Her English step daughter Elizabeth stayed on long visits in the Residence, but was, and her step mother made no bones about it, far from seductive. But Marie Noële also made no bones about insisting that I should take her out in my car to join any collective picnic parties to which I was invited. A younger Foreign Office colleague, later Ambassador in three places, once told me, much later, that Lady Kelly had singled him out, as a Catholic, and had offered him a substantial sum to marry Elizabeth! But even later Marie Noële described to me in London at lunch in Carlyle Place with robust relish that by then Elizabeth was happily married, and had 'discovered the pleasures of sex'! But while an idiosyncratic subject for anecdote, Marie Noële Kelly was also a considerable scholar, with aesthetic sensibility, and, later, published several distinguished volumes on Turkish and Russian antiquities.

Except for the Americans, with whom we compared notes on Soviet politics in a rather casual manner, the rest of the Western diplomats had no information or intelligence worth hearing. They were more useful on the petty difficulties of domestic existence. Their ambassadors called at intervals in a formal manner on Peterson but more in the hope of learning than communicating. In Moscow, as elsewhere, it was diplomatic practice for all newly arrived Heads of Mission to call on all their colleagues (no women in those days; Mrs Pandit was a conspicuous exception) with whom his country had relations. This meant a series of exchanges of correct but

futile banalities, with coffee or tea, perhaps, to break the ice, especially necessary in the case of the Communist East European Soviet satellites.

It was accepted practice for the ambassador receiving a newcomer's call to pay a return call, after a decent interval. Peterson hated doing this, as a waste of time. He put it off as long as he could, and only very rarely made a note on return of anything he learned of interest. But every year in those days we had to send to the Office an annual report on Heads of Foreign Missions, which, I suppose, provided a mine of useful information on good or bad characters with whom the Foreign Services had to deal elsewhere in future. Peterson's notes on his colleagues were, despite his discontent, succinct, perceptive and acerbic. After the initial courtesy calls, the only sight we had of the East Europeans was at their National Day Receptions, where all the top diplomats were invited, and an opportunity occurred to judge the particular country's standing in Soviet eyes by the number and rank of the Politburo and officials, carefully directed, who attended. 'Kremlin watching', in the minutest detail, was our bread and butter.

On the subject of courtesy calls, I remember what seemed an entertaining example, much later, in 1964, when the newly arrived Chinese Ambassador came to call on me when I was Ambassador in Bamako. I had been warned by the Foreign Office that this individual, who arrived from Geneva (I do not remember what post he occupied there – possibly in some U.N. organization) was regarded as a very high ranking and malevolent intelligence officer. We had a difficult time in Mali with the Chinese, who were making a huge effort, with swarms of 'aid workers', to extend their influence in West Africa, in competition with the equally thrusting and pervasive Communist East Europeans, especially Bulgarians. I received this Chinese Ambassador, with some unease, in our beautiful Residence, probably the best diplomatic house in Bamako, with its huge swimming pool, shaded terrace and beautiful large garden, which housed two enormous tortoises, male and female, each at least two feet wide. Our Embassy office was much less agreeable or impressive. I spoke no Chinese and the Chinese Ambassador spoke no English, so we exchanged the usual trite courtesies over tea in French. When he took his leave, I, of course, took him to the door onto the street, and saw that he had arrived in an enormous Mercedes. I felt mischievous enough to comment that it seemed incongruous that a professing Communist should move around in a capitalist produced vehicle. Quick as a flash he replied, '*Mais vous savez, Monsieur l'Ambassadeur, sur le plan domestique, nous sommes tous conservateurs*'. I still think this was a witty observation. No further reply was required to such a universal truth.

I omitted to comment on the Swedes in Moscow. Their Ambassador made no mark, and was outshone by General Dannfelt, the Military Attaché, who arrived, without a wife, accompanied by a truly pretty and agreeable daughter, Julie, early in my time. Julie had a sweet disposition and was quickly a honey pot round whom all the young circled,, though not, in fact, I, though I knew her well. She eventually married an amiable but not over-bright American Naval Ensign, the most junior member of the enormous naval, military and airforce contingent of U.S Service Attachés. In my time propinquity let to three marriages between Western Embassy staff:- my own to Lee, John Keppel to Grace Margorie Woods (to which I have referred above) and Lt Col Pete Urban, a handsome American Assistant Military Attaché, to Margaret Sullivan, a secretary in the American Political Section. Lee and I were fond of this last couple but eventually lost touch with them. We were even more close to Lt Col Tobias R. Philbin (Toby) and his wife Anne, as described above. Toby later attended our Imperial Defence College with two life-long friends of mine, Major General Dick Lloyd, who became D.M.I, and Captain Ivan Sarell D.S.O R.N. (both already mentioned and both sadly dead). We saw Toby and Anne Philbin regularly in America and Europe, and again several times when they retired to Virginia. They were also among the welcome guests at a splendid dinner party which Robin Renwick, then Ambassador, and his

wife Annie, gave for Tilla and me in Washington in 1996. Nearly all my best American official friends, known over the years, were asked, a generous gesture. Toby Philbin retired as a Brigadier General. He specialized in intelligence and was at one time number two at Fort Meade, the equivalent, though much bigger than, our G.C.H.Q. Perhaps he was too clever, as well as brave, for further promotion. I am afraid that, as I write in 2001, I know Anne died last year and Toby is increasingly frail, and I shall not, I fear, see him again. Though I go every year in summer to Tilla's house in West Cornwall, Connecticut, and to Manhattan for a few days, I do not find it easy to contemplate long distance expeditions much further afield in America. And indeed my limited stays are fully and happily occupied locally in the 'North West Corner' of Connecticut.

I have again digressed horribly but although I have not mentioned all friends, the foregoing may show how closely we were all thrown together in Moscow in those days. It was commonly said that friends made in Moscow under the Stalinist régime lasted forever. However, two footnotes. General Dannfelt was succeeded at the end of my time by a very 'Swedish' airforce Colonel called Wennerstrom, a handsome but, to my mind, slippery bachelor (or, at least, no accompanied wife) who was much given to heel-clicking and hand-kissing. Later he was revealed to have been an active spy for the Soviets and was sentenced to prison in Sweden. Though I was surprised I felt my instincts had been correct.

About the middle of my tour, a new Belgian Ambassador, called Goffin, arrived. He was middle aged, rather oily, and without obvious charm. He was accompanied by a much younger and extraordinarily beautiful and charming wife, Chantale. She was much liked and admired at all our parties and her charm contrasted greatly with her husband's lack of it. At the same time she gave an impression of tragic melancholy, and I believe gave voice to this sadness, probably because of her husband, to Ivan Sarell, our then single Naval Attaché. Ivan much later married Ann Morgan after she and Hugh were divorced.

I will now revert to our working lives in the Chancery, which was unlike work in any other political section that I ever knew subsequently. I was, of course, as well as 3rd Secretary in the Chancery, also Private Secretary to the Ambassador. I lived and fed with the Ambassador, attended to his engagements, took his papers in to him, collected and distributed them to appropriate members of the staff. When I could I drafted some of his personal correspondence, and, to a certain extent, ran the household, all Volga Deutsch except for the English butler and chauffeur of the Rolls, called Fox. I was also privileged in many ways as I attended, as I have said, the Petersons' dinners (not many) and was invited, more often than others, to some functions in other Embassies because of a misplaced belief, I suppose, that I was somehow specially attached to the Ambassador. This probably gave me an exaggerated sense of my own importance.

I sat in what was the equivalent of the 'Third Room' of the Northern Department which I had just left, now the 'Chancery' on the ground floor, with three or more First or Second Secretaries. Michael Warr came from London soon after I did. Hugh Morgan (later Ambassador to Peru and Austria), John Bushell (later High Commissioner to Pakistan), were there, both like Michael Warr, Wykehamists, and both having been shot down as R.A.F pilots over Germany, and having spent years on prison camps. They became and remained close friends until they died, but I always felt that prison camp had blighted their lives. The Head of Chancery, in an adjoining room, was Roger Allen, who later became a Deputy Under Secretary of State in the Foreign Office, and, as such, visited us in Bamako. He finished as Ambassador to Turkey and Greece. On my first, and only, leave from Moscow, Roger Allen, John Bushell and Sandy Goschen (a renowned Commander of A Company of the First Battalion of the 60th, and another close friend

until his death) gathered at Davos for a week's skiing on the Parsenn. George Mallaby, who had been a senior official in the Cabinet office in the War and later became First Civil Service Commissioner, also joined us, I cannot remember why, but did not ski. I think he had known Roger Allan in the Cabinet Office. He was kind, entertaining and wise.

I had gone first on my own in a Soviet plane (again I was the only passenger) to Vienna and to stay with Sandy Goschen at his family's, Schloss Tentschach near Klagenfurt, in Kärnten, where we had finished the War. Sandy's grandfather, Ambassador to Austria, had been given Tentschach, a huge turreted pile, and its extensive, wooded and hilly estate, as a present by the Emperor Franz Josef before the First War. In those days diplomats got presents. Sandy came back from the 11th Battalion in Greece to a post in the Military Government and then Civil Administration of Austria. He lived in the Schloss and ran the estate on behalf of his elder brother Sir Edward (Teddy) who inherited it, and carried on his governmental duties from this unique base.

He received me warmly, when I arrived from Moscow. We went skiing first in Hofgastein and Badgastein, where my inadequacies, compared with Sandy, were shown up. Lajos Lederer, Hungarian born, was local correspondent for the Observer and visited us at Tentschach, and we became close friends of him and his wife later in London, when I think he had become Diplomatic Correspondent. Sandy took me up the hill to try for me to shoot a chamois. I am afraid I missed the one good shot we had. But my heart, as much later in India, where I missed a leopard in the night, was not in it.

Then we went to Davos. I do not remember by what means, to meet Roger Allen and John Bushell. My skiing improved on the Parsenn, and we had a happy, convivial time. But none of us could compete with Sandy who usually went off on his own. Sandy and John Bushell had to leave, but I had a few more days with Roger Allen. However our holiday was marred when Roger fell and broke his leg on our way down to Klosters. It looked quite bad and he was clearly in considerable pain but endured it stoically. A signal was sent somehow to the top and quite soon the two man 'Parsenn Patrol' arrived with a stretcher sledge. They put Roger on this facing backwards and, with no delay or word to me, set off in an absolutely straight line down the mountain. I had to follow, though I would normally have gone down in easy, slow slalom turns. I was terrified and can remember Roger looking back at me and laughing, his pain forgotten, at my expression of horror behind him.

So now, after all these diversions, I must revert again to our work in the Moscow Chancery. In normal Chanceries the political officers follow and report on events, their sources being the press, official and social contracts with ministers (if possible) and officials of the government, members of opposition parties, journalists and other influential locals. To various degrees the opportunities are considerable, dependent on the individual's command of the local language, enterprise, appetite for social intercourse, and energy. I enjoyed this when I got to it later, especially in Chile, where the opportunities were unlimited. But my introduction to Chancery work in Moscow was a stark contrast. Soviet ministers (the Politburo) and officials were entirely inaccessible. We were never able to call, for example, on the Foreign Ministry, or any other officials. We had no access to Russian journalists, or private Soviet citizens. We could not entertain anyone except fellow diplomats and American journalists. I do not think there were any resident British journalists. Our travel was strictly limited, and we only had the evidence of our eyes, with a circumscribed range of view, for forming any opinion on local happenings and economic trends. Most of us did not get about at all inside or outside Moscow city limits. Our only other source was the Party and government controlled press. Pravda for the Party, and Izvestiya for the Government, came out daily, with very little or no 'news', but speeches and

editorials emitting streams of propaganda against the capitalist 'enemies of the people'. There were also a few specialist papers, for the Armed Forces, the 'workers', and Soviet so-called culture (Literary Gazette). These were our only sources for political reporting.

So three or four of us, highly educated, trained in the Foreign Office, and all supposedly intelligent in our own ways, sat down every morning in the Chancery, with the press and our dictionaries. We had all reached a certain standard of Russian. The range of vocabulary of the press, a sort of 'Soviet speak', was not wide. The Minister, Geoffrey Harrison, came in and allocated to each of us one or more of the daily editorials. We had to summarize these into English *en clair* telegrams by lunch time and submit the results for Harrison's approval. Sometimes we obtained the services of one of the secretaries to whom we could dictate direct, sometimes straight onto the typewriter, if the girl was fast. But for this we had to be confident that we had got it right. Sometimes Harrison, if there seemed to be a new trend in the Soviet propaganda, would draft a following telegram in cypher giving the Embassy's views. If sufficiently important, as it seemed to us, such cypher telegrams of comment would be submitted for the Ambassador's approval. About midday, Harrison came in and handed back our drafts, amended by himself in blue chalk, and initialled off, hopefully, for despatch. I was conspicuously bad at these summaries, not for lack of Russian, but because Harrison, probably rightly, felt my style was too long-winded and I had not selected the essential points. Hugh Morgan, with his clear and controlled script, was the best of us, and, unlike me, escaped Harrison's unconcealed acerbities. But I must admit that Harrison, though the bane of my life in the office, was affable enough outside, and an agreeable companion on the tennis court. Nevertheless he was a cold fish and gave me an inferiority complex over our daily press summaries, which I still remember vividly. It was ironic that Geoffrey Harrison should have ended his career in such inglorious circumstances, again in Moscow, as I have already described.

But what an extraordinary way to have to use our collective abilities on press summaries for all reporting on Soviet affairs. Yet, as it was pretty well their only source for these, the Foreign Office lapped up our daily output with every sign of satisfaction. And it was undoubtedly a useful discipline for us, the summarizers. I am reminded here that young Chancery officers had to be prepared for every sort of task. When we were in Tokyo, 1952-54, at the outbreak of the Korean War the British Chiefs of Staff sent a self-important Air Vice Marshal on attachment to MacArthur's operational HQ. His duties were to send to London a daily situation report on progress. The Americans were far from forthcoming, and he had no access to MacArthur's inner thinking. But he managed to churn out pages of reportage, little of which was not published in press handouts. All this was classified 'Top Secret' and 'Immediate', if not 'Emergency' (which seemed absurd to us) and all the junior Chancery officers (I had been advanced routinely to Second from Third Secretary) had to drop all other work and, in pairs, put the Air Vice Marshal's outpourings, most of which to our minds could have gone *en clair*, into cypher, on one-time pads, on the grounds that the material could not be trusted to the Embassy's (in fact before the Japanese Peace Treaty we were still called the 'UK Liaison Mission') normal cyphering staff. We worked at this for weeks, day and night.

In addition to the Chancery in Moscow there was another important part of the Embassy's resources, the Russian Secretariat. Their offices were located, also on the ground floor, at the side off the entrance hall opposite the Chancery. The Russian Secretariat was staffed by scholars and linguists, some established in the Foreign Service and some temporarily seconded to work in Moscow from the academic world; their London base was in the Foreign Office Research Department and they did not normally expect a general career in the Administrative Branch though some did in fact move on to the administrative ladder. In my time, for example, the Russian Secretariat was headed by a quiet voiced, kind and shrewd Russian scholar called Bill

Barker who later became Ambassador in Czechoslovakia and an Under Secretary of State in the Office with a K.C.M.G, and, in retirement, Professor of Russian at Liverpool University. Under him in Moscow worked several brilliant linguists of whom I remember Max Hayward, Hugh Lunghi and Ted Orchard in particular. All three distinguished themselves later. Ted Orchard, full bearded, continued in the Foreign Service and himself became Head of the Secretariat in Moscow in due course. Hugh Lunghi became well known as a journalist and B.B.C pundit on Eastern European affairs. Max Hayward, with whom I formed a close friendship, probably had the greatest and most profound feel for the Russian language of them all. On leaving Moscow he became a Fellow of St Antony's College, Oxford, where I stayed with him several times, and, from a visiting professorship at Harvard, he stayed with us several times in New York between 1957 and 1960. He became known to a wide public for his translation for English publication with Manya Harari, of Pasternak's famous novel *Dr Zhivago*. He died sadly young, and I collaborated with the American author of a memoir about his life. She sought me out in London and I felt able to give her, as the security experts had by then evaporated, the report I wrote on the adventurous journey Max and I made together in 1949 to Pyatigorsk, in the North Caucasus (once called Mineralyni Vodi – Mineral Waters) – and also to Vladikavkaz – Ruler of the Caucasus, on to the Caspian Sea through Daghestan, to Machachkala, and then to Baku, Tiflis and Kutaisi. We were the first British officials to venture successfully into such parts of the Soviet Union since, I think, Fitzroy Maclean before the War. Adam Watson had also made a similar journey at an early stage in the War, I believe. Our report was printed for circulation by the Foreign Office and also distributed by the State Department. As nothing at the time was known at first-hand about conditions in the Caucasus, every little piece of descriptive material, though entirely subjective, was eagerly fastened on by Western Intelligence.

We had some exciting adventures. In Baku, after an overnight train journey to Machackkala on straw palliasses ('hard' class), and flight onwards, we were invited by the stewardess to go on to Aschabad, in Central Asia. There had been recently a severe earthquake there, and the authorities were very secretive about damage and casualties. We had at that stage evaded Intourist and could easily have gone onwards. But I had a vision of never getting back, tempting though the opportunity was, and we funked it. Then Intourist and the K.G.B caught up with us on the tarmac (we were never free of them after that) and we were arrested. We were confined to our hotel room in Baku, the window looking out on the port and the oil fields, with an armed guard at the door, and, although we eventually managed to get to Tiflis (full still of German PoWs), Kutaisi and Mtsketa, we were finally defeated when a Soviet girl, with two little daughters, to whom we were talking on a bench in the park in Mtsketa, was arrested and taken away, holding her two small nieces' hands, by an uniformed militiaman with the unforgettable words 'Stand up; come with me. Don't you know you are talking to foreigners and spies?' We decided then that although we had evaded the system pretty well, and managed to meet and talk to a wide variety of people, of the Soviet Union's various nationalities, we were now being hopelessly constrained by our K.G.B followers, and any contacts we made were only bringing trouble for innocent people. So we went back to the hotel, a dump, and asked the desk for flights back to Moscow. In contrast to the previous refusals or indefinite delays when we had tried to get tickets, by air or rail, elsewhere, our request was immediately acceded to – they were glad to be rid of us – and we flew back to Moscow, with glorious views of the Black Sea's Crimean coast, of Rostov on Don and the endless Russian plains, the same afternoon. It was, in fact, a relief, though we were happy with what we had achieved.

Our unease about continuing had been heightened by an episode on the previous day. We went for a long walk up the bare mountains from where we had a good view of Kutaisi airfield below on the plane. Colonel Pete Urban, in the American Embassy, had specially asked me to do what I could to photograph this. It looked like any other airfield to me! We had far outdistanced our

followers in plain clothes but we could see a uniformed militiaman struggling after us up the lower slopes. I took a picture with my antique Kodak, and we then felt we had better get out, and made off down the hill to where we thought we would find the road back to town. We strode back, relieved, until suddenly we were confronted by an Army platoon, with fixed bayonets, occupying the road. In front was a short, young officer, with a pistol. I remember saying to Max, 'just keep walking, and do not stop'. I must have been thoroughly frightened, but somehow the brashness of youth kept me calm. The officer said, as we reached him: 'Halt. U vas apparat?' (Have you got a camera?). I remember his words with perfect clarity; my Kodak was in my tweed coat pocket. I said 'Nyet', and kept walking through the ranks, Max alongside. No-one made a move to touch us, and we did not look back. We were soon at the hotel. I do not remember being too alarmed, but it was an unpleasant confrontation. Pete Urban, on our return, seemed disproportionately excited by my dull photograph.

The account of our journey which I still have is in fact a State Department circulated copy which someone must have given to me. I think it is too long to reproduce here in its entirety. I omitted from it, for obvious reasons, the story of my photography.

The Russian Secretariat did not report daily on the Soviet press, as we did in the Chancery. They made in-depth studies of Soviet doctrine from speeches at Party Conferences and so on, reproduced in the press, and produced papers analysing what could be deduced of Soviet domestic and foreign policy. It was generally accepted that the Soviets' aim abroad was revolution and world-wide imposition of communism, and, domestically, a complete domination in all spheres by the Party, and ruthless elimination, by execution or deportation to slave camps in Siberia, of every element which could be construed as 'reactionary'. Indeed indoctrination was so complete that we came to believe that Marxist-Leninist-Stalinist man was unredeemable and would perpetrate himself indefinitely. I personally sometimes expressed the hope that, as Dr Johnson observed, 'human nature would keep breaking in', since the ordinary Russian was 'frank, curious and kind', a phrase I invented. But I never once thought that the Soviet system would collapse as it did, and that communism would be discredited as a pattern for human society in my own life time.

Max Hayward deserves a footnote, as he was both brilliant intellectually and lovable. His origins were North country, not privileged, and I have no idea how he acquired the genes for his amazing linguistic skills. He knew Russian better than the Russians themselves. He was rather unkempt and untidy in appearance but was gifted with an engaging quality of innocence which endeared him to anyone he met, and meant that even when he was drunk (as he was too often in New York) he went through every encounter, whatever the milieu, entirely harmlessly. Once I fetched him from a dive in the Bowery, pretty helpless, but unscathed. We had one interesting, though, in the end, unfulfilled collaboration in New York. Max received a letter in Russian from a man who said he was a Professor of Russian in Mexico City. It began on these lines:- 'Dear friend and comrade translator of *Dr Zhivago*, while endorsing and admiring your rendering, may I venture that on page six hundred and forty two (or some such number) you have translated the word 'drobh' as 'the twittering of small birds' when I suggest a more accurate phrase would be the 'scattering of small shot'. (I have always been fascinated by this intriguing distinction.) The writer went on at length to give an account of his life in Russia including a period when he had taught Malenkov, later a potential Soviet leader, at school, or possibly university. He said he was the son of the famous British War correspondent Dillon and had grown up in Russia. Now he had a trunk full of letters, notes and memoirs of Russia during the Revolution and subsequent civil wars between the White and Red forces. When Max showed this to me, I formed the idea that it would be a wonderful opportunity for a British newspaper to commission Max to go down to Mexico, interview this correspondent, and do some articles based on his treasure of

documents. I enlisted the help of my friend Bill Deedes (now Lord Deedes) with whom I had served in D Company of the 12th Battalion K.R.R.C in Yorkshire in 1941. He was at the time editing the 'Peterborough' column of the Daily Telegraph, of which he later became editor. I kept Alex Faulkner, New York correspondent of the Telegraph, in the picture. Bill Deedes was enthusiastic and replied that he was doing his best to get the D.T. management to pay Max to go to Mexico as I suggested. But despite our early optimism, nothing came of it. I have always felt that a potentially rich source of anecdotal material on Soviet history was missed on this occasion. I kept the correspondence about all this.

Max Hayward had an amazing gift for cultivating expatriate Russians. One evening in New York he took me to a luxurious apartment on Park Avenue, furnished in Russian style, with ikons on the walls. It was owned by an impressive old lady who, I gathered, had once been a distinguished actress in Moscow, and now taught drama. Was it the Stanislavsky method? I have only a vague memory. Everyone in the dimly lit living room was talking Russian. I remember Max said that the old lady's late husband had, after fleeing to New York, made a fortune in coal, which seemed a curious source for such evidently expensive surroundings. I cannot say now, if I ever knew, whether he had imported or exported the coal. While we were in the apartment, an elderly but quite well preserved gentleman entered and was warmly greeted. I was astonished to discover that it was actually Kerensky, famous as the last (Socialist) Russian Prime Minister before the Communist Revolution. I thought he was long since dead.

Max's early death left a sad gap in the lives of many. I learned a great deal from him, and he was an intriguing and warm hearted companion.

There was little except parties to divert us in the evenings in Moscow. But we had one important and agreeable alternative. The Bolshoi Ballet and the Moscow Arts Theatre, and one or two other minor theatres, were tolerated by the régime provided they conformed, in their choice of subject, to the ideals of Soviet realism. Indeed Stalin was said to enjoy the ballet. It was not easy to get tickets. On the administrative staff of the Embassy was a comfortably built black haired Greek (though he had been all his life in Moscow) called Costaki. He had all the manners of a Mediterranean middle man. Apart from being the sole source for ballet tickets, he also handled arrangements for recruiting all the Embassy's servants and drivers with the appropriate Soviet authorities. These were all carefully controlled, but Costaki had an influential rôle to play and we were dependent on him to a disproportionate degree, for both tickets and household staff. Sometimes we waited weeks for both. Many years later I read in the press that Costaki had been found, perhaps after his death, to have amassed a valuable collection of Russian art.

The Bolshoi Theatre had an unforgettable smell of saddle soap on leather in a stable. I think this was in fact probably due to the unwashed smell of the audience, confined in a small space, and the absence of soap, rather than its use. But it certainly was distinctive. The ballet performed the classics, Romeo and Juliet, Swan Lake, and so on. One more recent piece, the Fountain of Bakschiskirai, full of urgent Tartars rushing about, stamping and jumping, appealed to me, but was rarely done. The lead ballerinas, whom we all wanted to see, performed in turn. The top star was Ulanova, no longer in her first youth, but like a graceful bird in the lightness and pathos of her performance. We felt lucky if it was her turn when we had tickets. Another lead dancer was Semeonova, and a third, whose name eludes me (perhaps Beriosova?), tall and dark, was said to have denounced her husband, who was executed in consequence, when he was Ambassador in Turkey. I felt a shiver when she appeared on the stage. The rising new star was Plysetskaya, tall and fair haired, who reached the top after my departure. The ballet was, to us in our drab, confrontational daily rounds, a memorably inspirational experience. The Moscow Arts theatre was professionally outstanding, but their approved repertoire was usually so ideologically

'sound' as to be a sad bore. The Bolshoi also performed opera, such as Boris Goudounov, but opera has never greatly appealed to me, admittedly to my loss.

As I have described in my memoir of Lee, the first time I, full of anticipation, took her to the Bolshoi in my staff car, I was accosted by name in the car park by a Polkovnik (Colonel) in uniform, whom I recognised. He must have had special duties for checking on foreigners at all functions. He said I could not park, and told me to get out. I knew I would lose my vehicle if I obeyed, I was in the proper parking area, and I refused, telling Lee that this might take some time, but my car was most important to me. Lee did not take this well, got out herself and walked back to the American Embassy. I stayed in the car. My argument with the Colonel was prolonged, but finished as a draw, me still with my car, and he having made his mark, that is, that they had their eyes on me, and had successfully frustrated us out of the ballet. Fortunately, with an abject apology, I was later able to repair relations with Lee.

But, in truth, my Humber staff car was indispensable in making my life much more pleasant than if I had not had it. I was extraordinarily lucky to be able to buy it when it was, as probably the last relic of our War-time Military Mission, put up for sale by the War Office in London. I was the only bidder as no one in our Embassy wanted to risk driving. The Americans did not allow their people to drive for security reasons. The seniors had their own (Russian) chauffeurs in both Embassies, and the juniors were shepherded to and from their apartments by the Embassy car pool. The chauffeurs, it was accepted, reported on all journeys, so none of the staff, even if they wanted to, could take chances with, for example, possible Russian contacts. Of course the fact that I drove myself irritated the authorities. From the outset I was followed by a small 'Moskvich' vehicle with four heavy booted, flat capped 'slugs', as I called them, but I sometimes at night got free of them, and as they never dared resort to physical control over my driving, they could not prevent me going where I chose. My car was maintained and cleaned by our head *dvornik* (Embassy labourers), a giant of a man called Umyr, who volunteered for the task. Though he may have had to report on me, I had no evidence for this, and in all respects he was a most faithful and effective protector of the car and my interests. I loved the car, and remember it well, painted green, wooden slatted body, four manual gears, room for five passengers and baggage full of associations with the War-time staff cars, of which we had one in 1 K.R.R.C for the Commanding Officer. I suppose we drove on the right of the road in Moscow, but this, then and later in Europe and America, has never given me problems and I simply do not remember if we went on the left or right. In fact Moscow was full of 'ploshads' or huge open spaces onto which a number of roads converged so right or left made no difference across the squares. There were no traffic lights, of course, and traffic was controlled on these huge squares by fur hatted militiamen, standing on podiums, often several to a square. They were equipped with shrill whistles and batons which they waved up and down, and horizontally, in some, to me, bewildering indication of what route they wanted traffic to follow. There were no traffic lines either and in snow these would have been useless. So one ventured out onto the middle (no roundabouts) of one of these huge snow covered squares aiming at one's exit road the other side, and watching anxiously at the waving baton of the nearest militiaman, and trying to take the right line. If one got it wrong there was a shrill whistle, sometimes repeated in fury, and more baton waving, and shouting. The safest thing was to try to keep going and thus to give no opportunity for a militiaman to get off his perch and accuse one verbally of 'a violation'. Somehow I survived but it was always a hair-raising experience. Except for the main roads, Moscow streets were badly paved and pot-holed. The further from the centre, the worse the holes, and I remember backing once in darkness into a huge snow-covered hole and getting stuck. Luckily I got out somehow, as there was no garage service or other facility for help if one broke down. My Humber proved very reliable and I do not remember, fortunately, having any

mechanical breakdowns. When the snow became frozen I think I remember Umyr putting chains on my wheels.

In the curious way in which the Soviets respected all authorized officialdom, the whole militia apparatus waved their batons and cleared the squares whenever the Ambassador's Rolls, with Fox (Rolls trained) at the wheel, wearing the Union flag, appeared. I frequently accompanied Sir Maurice and Lady Peterson when they went out, and it gave me satisfaction to see the militia, who harassed me in my own car, paying such deference to the Union flag, in just the same way as they stopped all traffic for the Polituro's long black Zis saloons, in groups of five or six, whom we sometimes observed hurtling into the Kremlin at 60 miles an hour. Of course motor traffic at this time in Moscow was comparatively light and there were very few privately owned cars, other than those for which officials qualified. So, although there were no traffic signals, it was not too difficult, except for snow and the absence of any maps, to get about. I tried in summer to get out every weekend into the country (within the limits allowed) and to do a watercolour of some monastery, river or lake, which attracted me. I had to be careful not to choose any view, for example of a factory, which could be construed by the authorities as a prohibited site, on grounds of security. But in fact there was some attractive country, not all flat, but with undulations, shapely birch woods, and isolated monasteries, and a few rivers, to which I gradually learned access, just outside Moscow. My slugs got out of their Moskvich car once I was sitting with my paints, and surrounded me, also sitting, at about a hundred yards range. If I approached or addressed them they would retreat and turn away, a comical sight. It could be quite hot in summer, so there was no problem in sitting outside.

As time went on the Soviets evidently got fed up with my independence and, just before I left, sent a series of Notes to the Embassy from the Foreign Ministry citing my 'traffic violations' and, in the end, indicating that I should be stopped from driving. We sent back Notes of tactful apology, and I continued driving up to my departure in early February 1950, but it was probably as well that I left before the authorities succeeded in getting me off the road, or the Embassy itself felt that I had become too much of a liability.

A happy interlude during the Peterson's time was a three week visit by my sister Mary. I do not remember how the idea started, but Lady Peterson, with great generosity, extended a positive invitation to Mary to stay in the Embassy. Except for the holiday visits from school of their two sons, no one other than my sister ever visited the Embassy Residence form the U.K in my time with the Petersons. Maurice Peterson did not want to ask anyone, and no one, unlike in later régimes, proposed themselves. Mary duly arrived and Angel Peterson clearly rejoiced in her company. Mary took part in such social functions as occurred, and I remember that John Bushell and Tony Howard among others took her out. I was delighted to see her.

Mary tells me now that she slept in the huge Residence guest room of which, she was informed, the last occupant had been Ernest Bevin, Foreign Secretary. He must have come, before my time, to one of the post-War Four Power Conferences. At one stage Mary remembers that she was unwell and confined to bed, being attended on by our resident English doctor (we did not trust Russian doctoring) Michael Gillies, a very agreeable young man, son of a famous London doctor, Sir Harold, who made a name for himself in the War. Mary says she never went shopping with Lady Peterson (there was virtually nothing to buy) but visited one or two museums, and occasionally took walks with the Petersons and the dog, Brindle. She also remembers sitting at the Peterson's dinner parties with Elizabeth Hunkin, both *au bout de la table*, and watching, with amusement, Peterson, at the head, going through the meal without saying a word to the wife of the French Ambassador, on his right. Elizabeth Hunkin, daughter of the Bishop of Truro, had been a friend of Mary's at school at St Mary's, Calne. She was, with good Russian, working in the

Information Section of the Embassy. They were housed in offices in the city, from which, with sincere effort but comparatively puny results, they published a magazine called 'Britansky Soyusnik' (British Ally), a title by then no longer applicable. Elizabeth Hunkin, as I recounted above, would never have been asked to dinner, had she not been Mary's friend! Peterson was unaware of her existence on his staff! But Mary remembers he was kind to her. Another thing that my sister remembers, odd that it sticks in her mind, is that Lady Peterson used to pull off the dead petals of chrysanthemums, probably bought in the market, so that they could be used again as table decorations at a dinner party, whether for reasons of meanness or scarcity of flowers, she never knew. Later after their retirement, and Peterson's death, Mary kept up her friendship with Lady Peterson.

I am reminded here of one aspect of life with the Petersons from which I learned a memorable lesson of protocol. I refer to it because I think of it whenever my mind goes back to Lady Peterson and I always add 'poor Lady Peterson' to myself. It happened first one evening when I was accompanying the Petersons in the Rolls to some other Embassy's National Day. Fox held the right hand back door open for the Ambassador, and he got in, with his fur coat and fur hat, and sat down. Lady Peterson was behind him. I sat in front as usual. There was recent deep snow, not yet brushed off by the *dvorniks*, on the raised ramp at the front of the Embassy. Peterson did not move over to make room for his wife. He made her trudge round through the snow, to the other side of the car, the snow up to the top of her boots, and get in on the other side. I was rather shocked at first, but learned that the Ambassador, as the King's (or Queen's) Representative, always sits, or should sit, on the right. Much later this was brought home to me when in 1976 the IRA blew up our Ambassador's car on the drive out of the British Embassy Residence in Dublin. Our Northern Ireland Office Permanent Secretary, Brian Cubbon, had been staying in the Dublin Residence for liaison purposes, accompanied by his Private Secretary, Judith Cook, whom I had recruited, an outstanding and popular officer. When they came out to get into the car in the morning, Brian Cubbon, who knew nothing about ambassadorial protocol, got in on the right hand side. The Ambassador, Christopher Ewart Biggs, a contemporary of mine, was too polite to make him move over to the left hand side, and got in himself on the left. The bomb was in a culvert also on the left. It killed Christopher Ewart Biggs and Judith Cook. Brian Cubbon, though badly injured, survived, and returned to work, as did the chauffeur. A courteous disregard for protocol had turned lives upside down.

I have already mentioned several times, but it was an extraordinary feature of the period, that in all my time in Moscow, there were only two occasions when Russians entered the Embassy for a meal. The first was quite early on in my time, and occurred for special reasons. Harold Wilson, the very young President of the Board of Trade in the Labour Government, more or less invited himself to Moscow in order to conclude a deal whereby the UK would sell to the Soviets Rolls Royce Nene engines (as I recall) in exchange for Soviet grain. There was considerable opposition on security grounds in the U.K to the sale of their British aircraft engines. Wilson was accompanied by Sir William Strath, a Deputy Secretary in the Board of Trade, a dour Scot. I suppose they stayed in an hotel or perhaps a *dacha* provided by the Soviets. I certainly would remember if they had stayed in the Residence. I would have seen Wilson at breakfast. They managed to conclude some sort of agreement with the Soviets and Wilson, cock a hoop, wanted to have a celebratory dinner in the Residence, to which he invited Mikoyan, an Armenian by origin, third senior in the Politburo, and responsible for Soviet external trade. Typically no acceptance came from Mikoyan, and it was not until the very last minute, when we were all on tenterhooks, that word arrived that Mikoyan would come. Lean, short and dark skinned, with a sharp moustache, he brought an official and an interpreter. Max Hayward also came as Wilson's interpreter. Geoffrey Harrison and I completed the party. It was a unique privilege for me. No black tie in deference to the Russians. I remember this occasion clearly because of the contrast

between Mikoyan's grimly taciturn behaviour, no small talk, and Wilson's volubly ingratiating manner, like a moth beating on a window pane, which appeared to me humiliating. He seemed to be talking as if Mikoyan was a fellow Socialist and political 'brother'. He got no change out of Mikoyan, and perhaps did not know that the Armenian probably harboured no love for the British, as our troops, after the Revolution, shot his brother for being one of the members of the famous 'twelve men of Baku', all revolutionaries.

The second occasion when a Russian came to dinner was during the Kelly's régime, and I shall describe it in due course, at the close of this narrative.

As I said about my sister's visit, there was nothing to buy and few shops, all State run. I think I only once went in to the big central store, called 'Gum' (or 'State shop'), and was shocked by its drabness and virtual emptiness of stock. There were some street markets in the outskirts where *babuski* (old women in head scarves and padded jackets) came in from the surrounding countryside to sell vegetables. I do not remember how or where vodka was sold but there was always plenty of it. There were, however, a few shops open only to foreigners (to get foreign exchange). They were called 'Commission Shops' and were stocked with the looted possessions of those unfortunate aristocrats or bourgeois 'enemies of the people' who had been executed or deported, or had fled from Russia during the Revolution and subsequent purges. These shops were full of jewelry, gold and silver ornaments, and European ceramics. Although it gave me an eerie feeling to think of the history of all these precious objects, all foreigners took advantage of their availability, and I did the same when I could afford it. I bought several pieces of Meissen as presents for my parents (these have now reverted to me, and are here at Somerton) and Russian silver cigarette and snuff boxes, and modern enamelled boxes, a typical Russian craft. When the time came I also took Lee to a Commission Shop and bought her a pretty sapphire and diamond engagement ring, which Hemings, jewellers in Conduit Street, subsequently said was certainly made in Europe, probably in the 19th century. The Commission Shops ascribed no provenance of any kind to their stock, and we always wondered what piece of history, probably tragic, was attached to Lee's ring, and who had worn it. It will go, I hope, to one of my grand-daughters.

I should mention here that I have no recollection of how we drew roubles against our London pay for local expenses. These were small, Bolshoi tickets, pay of Umyr for looking after the car, and little else. Unlike in other Embassies later, I do not remember that we had an accountant, though someone must have maintained the Embassy's books under the overall supervision, I suppose, of the Head of Chancery. It was a great treat when the 'bag' arrived weekly with the Queen's Messenger, as we spent much of our pay on imports from London, paid by sterling cheque. The 'bag' consisted of a large number of canvas sacks, carefully guarded. I sometimes ordered shirts, in imitation of Pat Hancock, from Hodgkinsons in Jermyn Street, a great treat.

The Chancery officers took regular Russian lessons with a gentle, faded lady with an air of frustrated romance. She had quarters in the Embassy compound. I had started, before coming to Moscow, by learning the Cyrillic script and elements of grammar from a book, but had no practice in speaking. I learned pretty fast once I had arrived, with the help of my weekly lessons, and a determined attempt at conversation with the footmen, maids and anyone else I could find. With our teacher I read Lermontov's *A Hero of Out Time*, a romantic story about 19th century Russian colonization of the tribes in the Caucasus. We were tacitly encouraged to do the Foreign Office's Interpreter's Examinations. Michael Warr was especially keen and successful. Perversely, I refused to sit for the exams. I had had enough exams. But by the time I left Moscow I could read, write and talk fluently, and, on my Caucasus adventure with Max Hayward, who was of course accepted by strangers as a Russian, I was pleased to be taken, on one occasion, for a Yugoslav! Although I was useless as singing, myself, I enjoyed Russian singing, especially folk

songs and the Red Army Choir. One folk song I learned from an Embassy driver, about two escaped convicts in the 19th century, encouraging each other as they rowed to freedom across the enormous Lake Baikal. Many years later in the early seventies, after I had stayed again in the Residence, when Sir John Killick was Ambassador, and I, as Managing Director of the British Electrical and Allied Manufacturers Association, was organizing a British industrial exhibition (how things had changed, even by then), John Killick found and gave me a copy of the full words and music, with its haunting tune, of that song about Baikal. I still remember the first verse, and sometimes try to sing it at parties to show off my Russian, which has otherwise nearly evaporated, as I have never again had the chance to practise it.

Maurice Peterson's tenure of the Embassy came to an uncomfortable end. I went in to his study one afternoon to collect his papers and found him slumped in his chair behind his desk, seemingly in a bad way. I managed somehow to get him onto his feet – he was solidly built and very heavy – and to support him up the stairs to bed. I may have been helped by the Chancery Guard. I only remember that it was a huge effort, and worrying. Lady Peterson had gone home already in advance of their leave. The doctor came and Peterson made a sufficient recovery to go home himself. Curiously I have not the slightest memory of this departure, possibly by train to Helsinki, our usual route. Certainly there was no sense at the time that he would not return. He left the key of the wine cellar in my charge. But in the end he did not come back, and retired to their home in Kintbury in the Berkshire downs near Newbury. Lee and I visited them there after our marriage and were kindly received. I became fond of Peterson, and admired his robust qualities, despite his dour exterior. I also remained in warm contact with his younger son, Colin, now himself retired as a senior Civil Servant.

After Peterson left, there was an interregnum and Harrison became Chargé d'Affaires. I remember organising a King's Birthday Party for him in the Embassy Garden. The guests were only the staff and their families, and Heads of foreign missions, as there were no other British residents; but all these amounted to a good number. Hugh Morgan taught me how to economise when making punch by using a liberal amount of strong boiled tea, a trick I've frequently followed since. It also works with mulled wine. I got the feeling that Harrison was keen not to spend too much.

I got ill with what Michael Gillies diagnosed as glandular fever after Peterson's departure, and was in bed in my quarters for about two weeks. I kept the key of the cellar under my pillow. During this period a major confrontation arose with the Soviets over the Berlin air lift. The Russians had blocked access from the West to the city, and the Western Zones had to be supplied by a bold, complicated, and hazardous system of transport planes. The Soviets threatened further action and it was thought necessary to send a special emissary from London to handle direct negotiations for a settlement of the crisis, if possible, with Stalin himself. Frank Roberts was sent out for the task, and stayed in the Residence of which I, though confined to bed, was in effect in charge. I issued Peterson's drink from the cellar with the key, still under my pillow, so that Frank was not deprived. Frank had preceded Harrison as Minister in Moscow after the War. Though he had little Russian, he was fully familiar with Soviet ways.

Frank Roberts had been born in Argentina, and sent to school from there to Rugby, where he was a successful scrum half. He was only a little over five feet tall but stockily built. He had risen rapidly through the Foreign Office due to immense diligence, an ingenious mind and a fluency of expression, orally and on paper. He spoke fast in a precise, almost mincing manner, and had a slightly sinister and self-satisfied smile. I got to know him well during his mission as he had no-one else to talk to, and was virtually dependent on me for all his personal requirements. He was not really an endearing character. One felt that he was always up to something. But he was very

capable and handled his negotiations successfully. He actually talked to Stalin face to face on several successive evenings, taking Max Hayward with him to interpret. He was kind enough to come into my room, after he had dictated his telegrams, and tell me something of how matters had gone, over a drink. This, at second hand, was the nearest I ever got to Stalin.

Although I never afterwards worked directly for Frank, I saw him over the years in the Office, and occasionally read his minutes and drafts on European matters, I think when I was Assistant (1960-64) in the Permanent Under Secretary's Department (P.U.S.D). He and his Egyptian wife (they had no children) lived in a Kensington mansion flat, not far from our house at 30 Kelso Place, and once or twice invited me and Lee to drinks. It was said that he could never return to the Argentine lest he be called up for the Military Services from which he had escaped when a young man. He finished his career as Ambassador to Germany in Bonn. Though he was not one to make close friends, I could not help admiring his ability and got on with him well on his Moscow visit. He lived to a very old age and Frank Cooper and I went together to his well-attended Memorial Service in St Margaret's, Westminster. As in so many cases, I did not recognise his personality from the memorial address.

There were two other episodes, typical of life under the Soviets, which I recall from Frank Roberts' stay in the Residence. The first took place when I was on the way to recovery from my glandular fever, but still in bed in my quarters. One Sunday morning several friends came to see me. Frank Roberts was in the group, also Dick Davis, my friend from the American Embassy. I think I gave them all drinks, but do not remember drinking myself. Perhaps I was not allowed alcohol. Suddenly the telephone rang. It was not beside my bed, but at a table at the far side of the room. Dick Davis picked it up, and then put his hand over the machine, looked at me and said "It's a girl called Galya. Do you know her? She says she wants to see you." I had never heard of anyone of that name, and my conscience was entirely clear. But I remember that although I replied quickly "Certainly not. Cut her off" I felt hugely self-conscious and blushed bright red. Everyone teased me with ribald jokes, and I do not know if they believed me. I did not hear from 'Galya' again. It was plainly another Soviet try-on, whether clumsily, or cleverly, timed to catch me in such circumstances, was not clear.

The second occasion was when I was up and ready to get out and about. I invited Frank Roberts to come for a drive in my staff car. I probably wanted to show off my knowledge of the Moscow countryside. I followed my nose instinctively, in the absence of maps, but after an agreeable country drive along back roads, lost my way and sense of direction in a thick forest. I pushed on hopefully but we suddenly were forced to stop at a huge wired gate across the road, with a glimpse of what seemed like a hutted camp with watch towers inside. Suddenly there poured out of the gate a crowd of uniformed and armed men, running towards us. I said something like 'we must get out', and managed to turn the car and drive back from where we had come, as fast as I could. We were not followed. I felt we had got away lightly. Arrest would have made for a real scandal, or worse. Frank took it extremely well, and did not remonstrate with me for exposing him to such a risk. I never learned what this camp in the woods contained. There was thought to be a number of prisons around Moscow. Or it may have been a military establishment. In any case our presence, in the prevailing climate, would have been taken, privately and publicly, as capitalist spying. The curious thing about my memory of this otherwise vivid adventure is that I have no recollection of the presence or otherwise of my regular followers in their Moskvich. But their job was only to follow my movements, not to get involved in anything I did. Perhaps they were there all the time and I was too shocked to remember them. I was so used to them that they were practically invisible.

In due course we heard that the Petersons were to be succeeded by Sir David and Lady Kelly. As with all new Heads of Mission we speculated uneasily on what changes a new régime would bring. And indeed changes there were. A new broom was an understatement. In contrast to the Petersons, who saw no purpose in beating against the pricks of restrictive Soviet bureaucracy, the Kellys were what is hideously and popularly called nowadays 'proactive'. They ambitiously wanted to make a mark in every sphere, and I found myself, to their frustration, all too often pointing out the difficulties, if not the impossibilities of this and that desired initiative. They chafed at the obstructions and thought they could, as in previous posts (Kelly had been Ambassador in the Argentine and, most recently, in Turkey) overcome all by personal charm, lavish expenditure and energetic activity. I must admit that to a certain extent, and despite set-backs, they succeeded in making a fresh mark in relations with the Soviets as well as the hitherto dreary routines of diplomatic life in Moscow. I believe their success was the more evident as time went on after I had left.

David Kelly was an Irish Catholic, very tall, gingery haired, with a straggly military moustache. He had served bravely in the 1914-18 War as a young infantry officer, and been awarded the Military Cross. He had written a short book of war memoirs of which he lent me a copy. He had a fertile and restless mind, always exploring new ideas, and wrote prolifically himself, exploring and analysing. A complete contrast to Peterson.

My memorable Sixth Form Classics master at Charterhouse A.L.Irvine (known as 'the Uncle') once entertained us with the story of a famous and very rich High Master at St Paul's called Walker who was highly unpopular with his staff, so much so that Irvine said he had seen a medicine bottle on the mantel piece of one junior master, conspicuously labelled, 'To be taken before seeing that beast Walker'. I was highly amused by this story, and have always remembered it. I was, therefore, vastly intrigued when Kelly revealed one day that this same Walker had been his step-father and had left him most if not all of his very considerable fortune! I did not, prudently, mention the medicine bottle.

Kelly was sadly and inordinately vain. At Christmas 1949 I had drawn and had printed (in London) my third Christmas card in a series of what has become an annual family tradition – over fifty now, with two gaps when Bunny and Polly did the drawings. The 1949 version I drew in ink from a watercolour I had done in the summer of Russian church with a spire, isolated in the countryside. I sent cards to my personal friends, among them Bill and Hilary Deedes. Bill, who, as I mentioned earlier, was working on the Daily Telegraph's Peterborough column, published my card as the only illustration for the daily column, widely read, with a highly flattering paragraph about me, as being a 'promising diplomat' making the most of life in remote Russia. It had never occurred to me that Bill would do this, and I had not seen the item in the paper, which came by bag, when I went in one morning as usual to take papers to Kelly. I found him, scarlet with indignation, brandishing the paper. He evidently suspected that I had deliberately manoeuvred this personal publicity, as his expense. He was not mentioned in the item. He ignored my protestations of innocence, and shouted at me for several minutes, ending with the injunction never to do such a thing again. I felt hurt and aggrieved but wrote to Bill to ask him not to mention me again in his column. I think he did once more in 1960 when I had arranged a dinner for 60th Rifles officers, British and American, in the Knickerbocker Club in New York, where we had mounted a big trade exhibition in the Coliseum and a Military Tattoo, with the 60th Band and Bugles, in Madison Square Garden. We sat down about fifty to dinner with silver table ornaments brought over from Winchester. Bugle-Major Silver came in, fresh from the Tattoo, and in his green uniform, after dinner, and blew his bugle, with a tremendous noise, which sounded out of the open windows. I felt he had stopped the traffic on 5th Avenue. Sir Hereward Wake, over 80, who had come to New York with his wife, Daisy, especially for the

occasion, never having been in America before, turned to me and said, 'John, I don't think I have ever heard the bugle blown better since I was Adjutant of the Fourth Battalion in '02 in the Boer War.' But this time there was no Kelly to complain of Bill Deedes's happy record of a unique and memorable celebration.

I have already given some description of Lady Kelly. In retrospect I can only add that she was truly formidable, energetic and original, beyond anything I had ever previously met. She inspired affection and admiration, awe, shock and irritation, at one and the same time. I suppose I got to know her quite intimately, and remained close to her in later years, though always in an atmosphere of high tension in anticipation of some outrageously frank and direct comment on personalities in her husky Belgian accented voice, even on those just out of earshot at her table. She was, I think, well disposed to, even fond of me, but never ceased to express pained disappointment when I resigned from the Foreign Office, and had not risen to the higher elevations to which she was so greatly attached and aspired for me. She always had protégés. She lived to an old age and I attended her memorial service with all the Catholic rituals in Chelsea. The Kellys had two sons, Bernard (about 16) and Laurence (about 13). When they came for the school holidays I was expected to take them out in my car. I saw both in years to come, both successful.

When the Kellys arrived, in about May 1949, they kept on Bentley, the butler, as well as two footmen, Laryk (the K.G.B agent, though we did not know it) and Sergei, as well as all the Volga Deutsch maids and laundry women in the basement. They also brought with them a temperamental, knife brandishing, Belgian chef. Marie Noële met her match in Bentley, with whom she found she could not deal. I for my part could not deal with the Belgian chef. With her usual directness, Marie Noële (of course I did not call her anything but 'Lady Kelly' until many years later) proposed to me very soon that she would handle everything with her chef, and I should continue to deal with Bentley in English, and, in Russian, with the footmen, under her overall supervision. This worked quite well, and a routine developed.

But the Kellys also brought with them a middle aged Belgian female retainer, a sort of governess, who had been long in their service. Other than comforting Lady Kelly with her presence I did not discover that she contributed anything to the household. But she was someone for Lady Kelly to order about, and may have done more that I realized. In any event she and Lady Kelly coveted my quarters in the Residence, and after several weeks, I was turned out. Roger Allen, Head of Chancery and a bachelor still, initially, and then his successor Gordon Whitteridge, who had sadly lost his wife at sea after the Japanese invasion of Singapore, took me in, generously, at their very comfortable and roomy flat on Skatertny Street, with a lovable and motherly Russian maid called Frosya, who spoilt us. I remained there until Harry Hohler and his wife succeeded Gordon Whitteridge as Head of Chancery late in my time, and I then was, no less generously, taken in by Colonel Dennis Wynne-Pope, Military Attaché, whose wife had gone to England, until my departure in February 1950. Gordon Whitteridge, a kind man, married again happily, to an American, and became Ambassador to Afghanistan when we were in India. We arranged for Lee, who took Bunny with her, aged about six, to visit the Whitteridges in Kabul, when we were in Delhi. Bunny says he still remembers the endless barren mountains around the Khyber Pass, and the garden in the Kabul Residence.

Although I enjoyed my freedom from the constrictions of the Residence, and learned new habits, and the problems of living in the city, I still continued as Private Secretary, and was required to be regularly in attendance on Lady Kelly, especially as neither she nor Kelly had any Russian. I think they gradually acquired some, after I had left. I also continued my normal duties in the Chancery.

In June 1949 the time came for Kelly to present his credentials. Their recipient under the Soviet régime was the President of the Supreme Soviet, called Schvernik, pretty well a figurehead, but a conveniently titled ceremonial personage. It was rather surprising that the Soviets adhered to traditional ceremonial for these occasions, and did not demur at Kelly's arrival in full diplomatic uniform, cocked hat with feathers and sword, supported by as many of his diplomatic staff as possessed it, also in uniform. Some, however, wore suits. He took with him the Minister, Harrison, the Counsellors, three Service Attachés and their Assistants, and the whole Chancery, also Max Hayward, always present as interpreter. It was the first time I had worn my uniform, which was kept in a black tin box. I had bought it from a retired Foreign Office Counsellor and it luckily fitted pretty well. I was rather proud to wear my War medals, as none of the other diplomatic staff had any. In after years I wore uniform for Sir Esler Dening's credentials ceremony in Tokyo, and for Sir Charles Empson's in Chile. In Mali and Guinea, for presentation of my own credentials to two black Presidents, uniform was out of the question, and I wore a suit, as also in Delhi (I think) for Sir Morrice James, when he succeeded John Freeman. In Moscow Kelly took a lot of trouble in composing his speech, which he made on handing over his Letters to Schvernik. Max Hayward, looking more like an oppressed Soviet citizen than a British official, translated eloquently, in his flat North country voice. Gromyko, Foreign Secretary, was present, with a variety of protocol officials. It was the first time I had ever been inside the Kremlin. The series of rooms through which we passed were all elaborately decorated and imposing. I suppose we were given Russian champagne afterwards. I eventually gave away my uniform for theatricals at Wycombe Abbey School, where two of my grand-daughters are now boarders.

When I started the last paragraph I remembered that I still have my photograph album of those times, including presentation of credentials, and got it out. There were many more than I remembered, with views of people I have mentioned, and others, skiing, on summer picnics and swimming, in the snow, in front of endless monasteries, dachas and former palaces, making our lives then seem rather more attractive than I have perhaps described above. Of course there was no way to develop photographs in Moscow. We sent the negatives in the bag to be developed in London.

The photobook has reminded me of one other singular diversion. Tony Howard, Assistant Naval Attaché, and I learned somehow that Burobin, the Department which handled all administrative and domestic matters with foreigners, offered and would exceptionally allow diplomats to visit a 'hunting lodge', somewhere out of Moscow. We put in a bid, and were given a piece of paper authorizing us to go. It proved to be an almost bare wooden hut deep in the forest about a hundred miles from Moscow. No other habitations for miles around. Beds and bedding were of the simplest. There was a wood burning stove but we took our own provisions. I simply cannot remember how we got there, but it was certainly not in my car. It was awesomely desolate. Burobin said a 'hunting guide' would be provided and, sure enough, one such turned up, with optimistic talk of wild boar, deer and even, I think, bear, waiting to be shot. I have several photos to prove we were in this barren and menacing place, but I have no recollection at all of what we did, except to trudge through the woods, where we would have been quickly lost without the guide. We saw no-one, and absolutely no game. So much for Burobin's promises. I remember I was glad to get home. As with so much of the Soviet Union at that time, it did not work. I do not know about hunting but I know that nowadays Russia provides the most wonderful salmon fishing, from luxurious camps, where dollars are the favourite form of currency for every kind of food and drink.

From the photographs, carefully labelled, all black and white then, I am reminded of the soft-sounding Russian place names, Novi Devichi monastery, Khimki Port Donskoye monastery, Kolumenskoye monastery, Ostankino, Yasnaya Polyana (Tolstoy's house), Perlovka, Kuskovo Palace, and something I had forgotten, a large boat trip for diplomats on the 'Moscow Sea' and up to Uglich on the Moscow Volga canal. Increasingly, as 1949 went on there are pictures of Lee, who arrived around mid-summer, first in summer clothes and then coated and hooded against the snow, always looking stunning, in front of various architectural sites or with my staff car among silver birches and firs, dripping icicles.

I went on one other occasion only into the Kremlin. For some reason the Soviets had an evening reception to which all Embassies were invited. I cannot remember what was being celebrated but it was the only occasion of its kind in my time. The only feature I remember was the sight of Lady Kelly, dressed to the nines in a long cream coloured gown, gloves to her elbows, and a tiara on her head, sweeping up to be greeted by all the Soviet officials. She was most impressive and outshone everyone else. I felt proud of her.

I was becoming increasingly attached to Lee and saw as much of her as I could. She had a highly responsible job, being in charge of all the American archives and cypher staff. She had to manage both career staff and also wives who did jobs in the Embassy as well as supporting their diplomatic or military husbands. She also earned substantially more than I did, and, on agreeing to marry me, lost her economic independence, a very serious step. I have written fully about Lee in those days in an earlier memoir for our grandchildren.

By this time Bedell Smith had been succeeded as American Ambassador by Admiral Alan G Kirk who had commanded U.S Naval Forces at the Normandy landings in 1944. His wife, Lydia, was a New England Chapin, a family of Ambassadors and public servants of distinction. As with the Kellys, the Kirks were a complete contrast to their more reserved predecessors, being warm hearted, outgoing and hospitable. Nothing wrong with the Bedell Smiths, but they were not stylish. Mrs Kirk, no less a *grande dame* than Lady Kelly, and very stylish, more or less adopted Lee when we became engaged and there was an unspoken but real rivalry between the two Ambassadresses in guiding, instructing and entertaining us, the engaged couple, in the niceties of our preparations for marriage and our future diplomatic careers together. This became quite awkward for us and we had to tread carefully especially as Lady Kelly and Mrs Kirk, both grand, self-confident and authoritative, were entirely different in characters and style, and gave conflicting advice, though always well meant, according to their own lights.

The Kirk's younger son, Roger, aged about 16, a very nice boy, came out for the summer holidays of 1949, and joined us for tennis. In 1965/66 I found him again when he was in Delhi as 1st Secretary at the American Embassy, with a charming wife, and we again played tennis. After one game we were talking politics, as usual, when he suddenly gave me an important lesson. He said, 'John, you must remember that however warm our personal relations, the U.S Government will never be swayed by British official representations or advice. The policies of the U.S Government are solely governed by an exclusive regard for America's interests.' I was as much struck by the frankness of this truth as by the fact that it was expressed by a friend whom I had first known well as a young boy. I think Roger became an Ambassador in East Europe in due course.

As her first move, on learning of our engagement, Lady Kelly invited Lee, whom she had not met, to tea. Her approach was direct as usual. She first asked Lee 'Do you know how to manage servants?' Lee confessed she had had no such experience except for black maids in Texas and Illinois when she was growing up. Lady Kelly wasted no time in giving a lecture on the subject.

Then she said, 'The next and most important matter is that you must buy black clothes for all occasions. You never know when you may be called upon to wear mourning.' In fact this proved to be good advice when we were all in mourning in Bamako and then at an Ambassadorial conference in Dakar upon Sir Winston Churchill's death. Sure enough Lee turned out brilliantly, as usual, in black dresses and suits appropriate even for tropical climates.

Lee also soon encountered another example of Lady Kelly's idiosyncratic ways as a hostess. She preferred to give large dinner parties, for up to fifty, seated at tables of eight, to the more conventional use of one long dining table for about eighteen. At the first of these, to which Lee was specially invited as my fiancée, Lady Kelly instructed me firmly that she wanted the footmen and maids immediately to clear the plates of those that had finished first! This, she said, avoided social *longeurs* and enhanced the animation of the party. I duly translated this, and the servants, though puzzled, carried out their instructions with panache. The result was that Lee, in any case a slow eater, and seated, in strict protocol order, at the most junior table, last to be served, got virtually nothing to eat as her plate was whisked away while she was only just started upon what was on it. Lee never forgot this strange experience.

From the American end, Mrs Kirk took it into her head, kindly and generously, that we should be married from the American Embassy residence. This we resisted, as tactfully as possible. But Mrs Kirk's interest in our, and especially Lee's, welfare persisted. She did not feel Lee should be exposed solely to English manipulations in London when it was settled that we would be married in St George's, Hanover Square, and arranged for a middle aged bachelor member of the American Embassy in London, of impeccable New England credentials and gentlemanly manners, called Henry Stebbins, to watch over Lee and, in the event, to give her away, as her parents were elderly and frail and did not feel up to the strain of the long journey from Panama City, Florida, where they were living in retirement. Lee went off to London early in 1950 and stayed with my parents at their flat in Bryanston Court W1. My great great Waterfield grandfather had been married in the 18th century at St George's, and that made for an appropriate connexion.

I now come to the second occasion on which Russians entered the Residence for a meal in my time. The Kellys were especially frustrated by their inability to entertain any sort of Russians, and made persistent plans to overcome this barrier. They set as their first objective Gromyko, Foreign Secretary, as, after all, his job was to deal with foreign countries. They thought that to ask him with his wife, never seen before in public by any of us, would perhaps make it easier to get an acceptance. I cannot remember how the invitation was sent. Perhaps Kelly wrote a civil personal letter, or Marie Noële did. To the surprise of the cynics, after a typically long Soviet interval, there came an acceptance, and Gromyko and his wife turned up for lunch. I was lucky enough to be included. Lee had by then left for London. No diplomats from other Embassies, which would have diminished the Kelly's success, but perhaps one or two of our staff. It was planned as an intimate and informal occasion, and went off well enough, with no controversial subjects raised, though the atmosphere was rather stilted as Mme Gromyko, a comfortable and evidently nice unsophisticated woman, spoke no English and did not give the impression that she was used to diplomatic sociabilities. When the Gromykos left, I accompanied them down the stairs to their car and at the exit felt emboldened by Mme Gromyko's motherly air to confide in her that I was about to marry an '*Amerikanka*'. She replied, without hesitation, 'Then I wish you many babies.' It was a kind thought.

So now I think I have reached the end of this account, disjointed as it is. Though my recollections are clear enough I know I have omitted mention of many other incidents and people at that strange time. But I hope I have given something of an impression of what life was like under

Stalin's oppressive régime, of the unyielding and obdurate Marxist-Leninist-Stalinist dogmas and bureaucracy, and the underlying patient endurance and good nature of the individual Russian citizens, especially in the countryside. I have been listening (in February 2002) to a charming account on BBC Radio 4 by a young English girl, a student, who spent a year in Voronesh in 1991, at the time of the collapse of the Soviet Union. Her descriptions of obstructive bureaucracy, strange smells, snow and ice, casual rudeness of female officials, offset by the curiosity and simple kindness of others, seem to me to show that in some ways, Russia remains much the same as in 1950 in spite of the huge structural changes. But I have no ambition to go back.

The Foreign Office decided to strengthen the Chancery on my departure and sent three young officers, all of whom achieved considerable success later, in my place. Perhaps Kelly said he needed support for the opportunities ahead.

I went off, to be married, by way of Helsinki and Stockholm, after farewell parties. I took with me and still have a large cylindrical British wicker linen basket which Lady Peterson had made a special point of giving to me. It sits in the bathroom at Somerton and reminds me every day of my quarters in the Moscow Residence, of the K.G.B agent/ footman Laryk, and all the other people I have tried to write about.

As I left Moscow I felt very much an 'uncouth Swain', as in Milton's Lycidas, and for me, as for him, it was:-

Tomorrow to fresh woods, and pastures new.

JPW
Completed at Somerton
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