

# Netti's memoirs

## of Austria & England

Johanna Domneva Pinschof von Pirquet OSB  
1908~1997



MEMOIRS  
OF  
Johanna Domneva Pinschof von Pirquet, O.S.B.  
also known as **Netti**  
1908-1997

**PART I**

*[Preamble, added 1980]*

My very dear children, Anna, Maria, John & Toni, and grandchildren, I am getting old and will soon go, where I long to go and have to go, whether or not I want to. Am looking forward to it, seeing God as your Vati saw him when he lay on his death bed. So radiant his words and expression were that I, even with my little memory, can never forget. [...]

*[manuscript started October 1979]*

Not being what you would call an educated person, you must bear with my attempts or better, throw them in the waist paper basket. Dates of birth, marriage, deaths etc. you don't need to have here, as Opapa gave you each tables of this. It is more to give you smaller unimportant observations that I want to memorise. It is these which so often give colour and life to a picture.

**Hirschstetten.** Your mother spent an unbelievably happy childhood, most of the year in Hirschstetten, of which you only have a picture of the façade. How it looked inside or what went on through my 19 years spent there, can only be told by one inside. My memory is still very clear of our *Kinderzimmer* in which I stayed till I married. It was formerly a big hall into which they built a storey. It had 3 high windows with wooden shutters (very useful for some of us that went on journeys when the moon shone). I remember it had one tiny little door, through which I don't know *[what passed]* & one had the option to look out from. But the moon always looked in through it, which was enough for me to go wandering and kerrying bedclothes unto high places as, for instance, on top of a big cupboard. Another nightly distraction was the voice of Onkel Clemens Pirquet coming through, while *[weil=because]* he had to read to his domineering wife Tante Christine. Maybe it was not so late in the night, as of course by 7 pm we had to be in bed. I still know where my bed stood, feet end to the wall, which just there formed a deep niche where probably formerly was a big wide high window, as one had them in the *[former]* big hall, whose windows reached the ceiling of the first floor.

*[Schloss Hirschstetten, the Pirquet family home, situated with its farmland in what is today Vienna's 22<sup>nd</sup> district, was twice hit by American bombers, on 16th June 1944 and 13th March 1945. The East wing survived, with the chapel. The site was sold to the Salesian Order for a modern parish church to be built on the same foundations. The old chapel was used for a family funeral as recently as 1992, for Hubert von Pirquet, born 1906, the Pirquet vault being situated in the nearby municipal cemetery]. [this photo 1913>*



My memory starts when we were 4 children and our Anna, our beloved *Kinderfrau* (nanny), who stayed in this big room until a year after I married. The 4 children were Florette, Peter, Annamirl and I. Only once was there a great row with our beloved Anna. I remember, I came in from the garden where I always played only with the boys, Hubert and Toni. Exciting games we invented, robbers, Indians and more, but all involving running, hiding, fighting (no personal adversity *[animosity]* involved). And of course doing these kinds of things, meant to be real life, made us so involved, forgetting all warnings of care for clothing and, with my overalls, I looked a sight by evening. Big splashes and rips; consequently tears in the evening and strong hands on my behind!

But then I also remember creeping up to where Anna sat, and she showed us how to knit, crochet & embroider, as we grew older. Toni, Hubert, Florette and I had to do some schoolwork together with a *mademoiselle*, whom I feared very much, as of course *[I]* being stupid, she knocked me under the table. But my beloved brothers could not stand this much longer and went to Papi and told him of what happens in the schoolroom. So we soon had peace, as she was quickly dismissed. But never were Florette or I very happy with any of our teachers, preferring roaming about in farm or garden. The boys had soon a tutor, who also had a hard time with them. One day Florette and I played a trick on the teacher, by hiding under the bed of our parents, where the counterpane reached to the floor. But this trick brought us some strong scolding & punishment.

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*Editor's note: This transcription faithfully renders Netti's handwritten original, including charming phonetic spellings, germanisms & malapropisms. Editor's text is in square brackets [italics]. Netti's nickname derives from Janette (French form of Johanna). Photocopy: John Martin Pinschof 1998. Transcription: Maria Flora Pinschof 2002. This edition: Anton Silverio Pinschof 2015. Netti wrote these her memoirs from 1979 to 1982, with one late addition in 1986 and almost no corrections or deletions. The family received the manuscript after her burial in November 1997 at St Mildred's Abbey, Minster-in-Thanel, Kent. Domneva is the name Netti took on entering the Order of Saint Benedict in 1961, twelve years after being widowed. Collection of early photographs, letters and other material continues and any contribution is gratefully received by the editor: [antonpinschof@netcourrier.com](mailto:antonpinschof@netcourrier.com) [this is the second edition of 12-VII-2015, slightly revised 18-VI-2018, AP]*

Florette & Netti



### First School, 1919

Later, when I was 11 and Florette 10 years old, we were sent to a school in the next village. Our own village catered only for the first 3 or 4 years. This involved a good 20 minutes walk daily. Rucksacks on our backs, coats from our brothers and also the shoes. But we loved every bit of this school. To be with so many children, sit in a big classroom, having playmates during recreation, was wonderful. Not so grand were our first lessons. We could not follow, never having done dictation for instance nor grammar, hardly able to read, it was not easy. But we stuck through and caught up fairly soon. My favourite hours [lessons] were nature study, painting & Handarbeit (all sorts of sewing, knitting, netting etc) and, best of all, Turnstunden [gymnastics]. Here I was in my element. But one of the lessons I also liked was Rechenstunde [arithmetic] and this was taught by our class mistress, a very strict stern woman, where no tricks were played and discipline was perfect and we adored her.

Later when we still had her, as it was the custom that your first year teacher took you through all the years to the top class, she also had to arrange the big yearly school outing, the highlight I think for all of us. We went for 2 days away to the Schneeberg or Rax, the highest mountains south of Vienna [2076m], which you reached by 2½ hours train journey, bringing you to the foot of the mountain. In later years it was this train line we took to travel to the Oed, where Eugen's aunt had a house which she only used in the summer holiday season.

But coming back to our school outing, I still remember going with a small group, one of the leaders [going] far too quickly, and nearly missing [losing] our way, as once you come beyond the forest line the path markings were few, but we ended up punctually at our hut. The best part being sunset and sunrise. It was not the first time I saw such views, but for many of the others it was. Great silence and awe came over us all.

*[here the manuscript contains remarks in the handwriting of Toni Pinschof, who had been shown the manuscript so far]:*

*"Bitte nur weiter schreiben, für uns wäre das so wertvoll! Du gabst uns Leben und mehr soll man ja nicht verlangen, aber Du schreibst vom Herzen und kannst ein anderes Zeitalter erleuchten. Bitte noch und noch..!"*

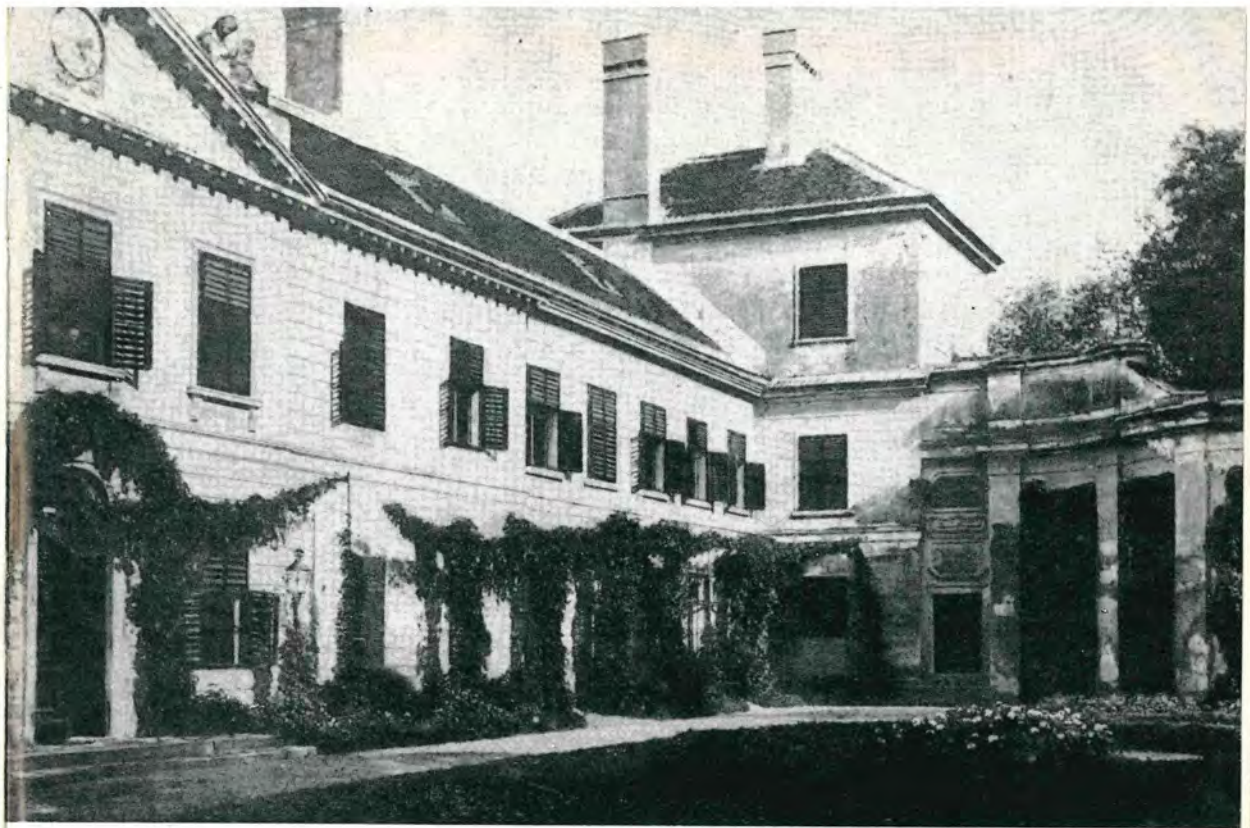
*Wenn's leichter geht, ruhig Deutsch schreiben, oder auch nur Stückelweise, da ich's ja übersetzen kann. Toni."*

### Games

[10-III-1980]

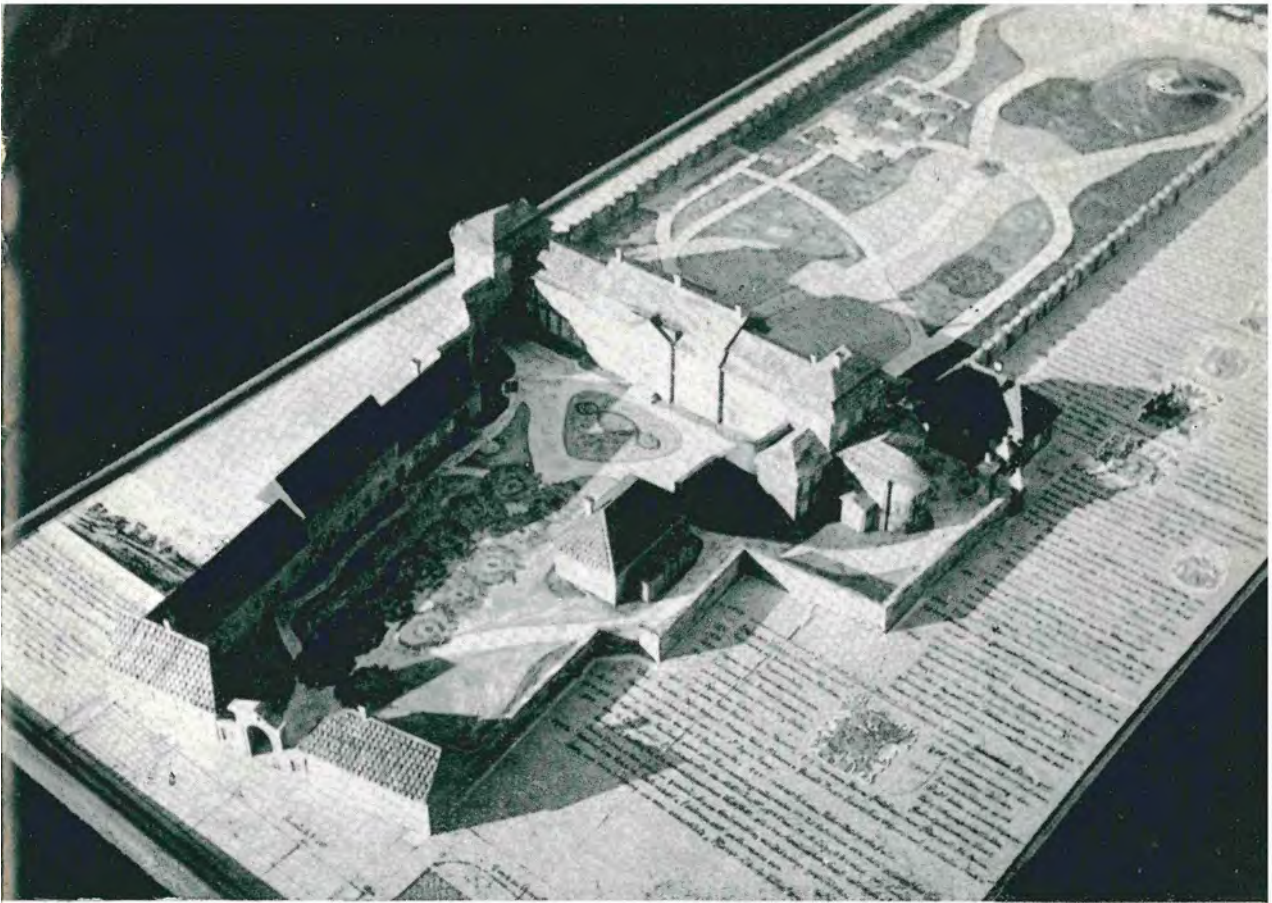
Ja, so tu ich weiter. Bleibe noch in Hirschstetten. Natürlich erinnere ich mich am besten, was unser Spielen betrifft. Da war der Südhof. Ich wollte ihn bissel skizzieren, damit ihr meine Beschreibungen besser versteht. Much better [than my sketch] are the photos in the booklet "HIRSCHSTETTEN, EINST UND JETZT" [published by the parish: Pfarre Hirschstetten 1961, pp 15, 29, 41, 45 reproduced hereinafter].

Da gab's ein Spiel das hiess "Schneider, Schneider, leih ma die Schere": Wir nahmen jeder Wache vor einem Baum in der Allee und eine Person in der Mitte, die hatte keinen Baum und hatte zu versuchen einem Baum zu erringen, während wir von einem zum anderem Baum sprangen, einander abwechselnd, oft vom Baum weglockten und im letzten Moment wieder zum eigenen Baum zurück liefen, ausser der in der Mitte war schneller. Das war so beliebt dass wir es noch spielten, bis wir gut in dem Teens waren. Dann Fangen spielen quer über den Mittelrasen, über den Buchs [box hedge] springend und Oh weh, wenn man in einem Hundedreck landete und ausrutschte. Dann war's ein grosser Sport zwischen Toni und mir, zu ringen und den Partner flach am Boden zu zwingen. Mir gelang es sogar manchmal, auf grosses Jubelgeschrei von den Zuschauern.



*Schloß Hirschstetten vor der Zerstörung*





*Modell der Schloß- und Parkanlage Hirschstetten*

[25-IV-1980]

You must take in hand a photo of Hirschstetten *Schloss* [manor], South front. Every time we had free was spent at the front door, standing about or sitting on the big warm stone slates. Very often our father would join us. Then we usually arranged competition games. Running round for instance on the lawn on our 2 legs, or only hopping was allowed on one leg, or wheelbarrow game using your arms to move on and the legs pushed by a 2nd child. Yes, nearly all the games one plays here-to-Land [*hierzulande=in this country*] also.

The boys being older had to ride their ponies every day. And so it was, one day, that only the pony arrived back, heading for its stable and food. Poor Toni was thrown off, right at the very farthest end of the fields by a nasty trick of the pony. But it did not hinder the good comradeship between the two.

On one day, it must have been a Sunday, because so many people were about and all sat on their horses, my father asked me to get on the pony. But knowing how naughty he could be and what tricks he usually played on such occasions, I did not want to be made a laughing stock and refused to mount (I was about 8 or 9 years old then). I was only put on a saddle very occasionally and could not ride yet. But it disappointed my father very much and I never rode until I was about 16 or 17 years old and then I went to a riding school in the Prater, where I always was given the naughtiest of horses. But I managed fine there and enjoyed our rides through the Prater. It only had some bad consequences. Going home in the tram, which took an hour, my raw flesh stuck to my underwear & and whenever we had to get up, it was painful. It took my skin a long time to get the better of it and of course the brothers had a good laugh.

### **Neighbours - the Tavonat family**

[2-V-1980]

It is May now that I write and, there comes to mind a yearly expedition to the *Donau Auen*, which took a whole day and the whole household. My father had 2 [horse-drawn] trailers cleaned up and 4 benches put on, where we all sat, and the coachman up front. And one vehicle called the *Landauer* with 2 benches facing each other and easy to get on and nicely worked for only this purpose. On it sat the grandmother and old aunts of whom we always had a good number present. It took us a long time to get to the arranged place, passing through at least 5 villages each a few miles apart. Starting after breakfast and arriving for lunch, which was pre-cooked and kept warm in large wooden cases. Arriving, usually our neighbours greeted us with great Hallohhhs! They had only a couple of miles to go and it was in their *Aue* [pasture] that it took place, and near their forester's house. Long tables were prepared and all had lunch together, mixing together like on Breughel pictures. The purpose or excuse for all the fuss were the Lilies of the Valley, which we all went to pick in great quantities. Only in this place were they so numerous and the rejoicing was great. We sang, danced & played games.

The neighbour's three girls were about our age and we were good friends. Tavonat was their family name and they lived in an old castle surrounded with a deep ditch and water. Being very isolated it needed this safety in olden times. A real *Zugbrücke* [drawbridge] leading into it: a bridge which could be pulled up, to prevent others entering. Inside also everything was different to a normal house. Every 3 or 4 rooms on a different level and every room a passage, there being only one entry. The windows in the most queer positions and the shape of rooms all with rounded walls, as the whole castle was like a giant round tower, built for defence. [4-V-1980]

With these neighbours we kept up regular come-togethers, around Christmas, Easter and one in Autumn. Normally we reached them by steam-engine tram, which stopped near the portal outside our house. The carriages were also squarish and inside you sat on very straight hard benches. But it had, in front and back, open porches where you got up or down. To stand outside on hot days was lovely. Its engine you could hear puffing for miles and when you heard it, you just had time to finish quickly your breakfast, a cup of too-hot milk and a piece of Lard bread (when you were lucky) or a dry bread. Then on your back your school-bag and you ran and jumped onto the tram while it was still going a good speed. This was great fun and was allowed, as long as you did it nimbly. But, should you slip, the conductor gave you a good scolding for being so clumsy. A trick we sometimes played on the engine driver, putting coins on the line which made a terriffick rattel going over them and, hiding behind our entrance gate, we saw the fists of the driver. But never more serious consequences and often, when we just happened to come out when they drove past, they would wave to us and make jokes.

Everybody knew everybody in those days. So this was the tram we got to go to our friends Tavonat, taking about an hour to its last stop where we got out and walked a good 2 hours, no houses anywhere to be seen, only flat fields left & right and, for some of the way, fenced by enormous poplar trees. After an hour's walk you turned into a smaller road leading to a few houses and soon you saw the castle high up, woods all around. The meals we had there I still remember. On large platters half a pig or deer joints and one pudding I never forget and never have I eaten so rich. *Nuss-strudl* and *Mohnstrudl*; you had them when you came to my 70th birthday. But these were made differently. All butter & honey soaked and crisp short-bread pastry: a Hungarian way. The lady of the house was Hungarian and her sister a real old fashioned *Hausfrau*, knew what was good and had it all put on for the guests. We usually stayed over 1 or 2 nights. Had great fun in their large garden around the castle.



Portal  
des ehemaligen Schlosses  
Hirschstetten

**Dancing.** Later, when we were grown up, we did not see them so much any more in their castle, but in Vienna we went out together for dances in friend's houses, as was the custom in those days, or you met at the big official yearly dances. Never will I forget our first public dance, when the music played a most inviting waltz and we danced in the big hall, and all around on a higher level were seated old ladies. It was the most ugly fashion in those days. Very short narrow skirts, and the waist not in its normal place but around your hips. So when you sat down the skirts slipped up even higher and what you saw from below you cannot imagine. I tried not to look, it was so disgraceful to see those fat legs. But I just loved dancing and often would be, with my partner, the only ones left; and the musicians seeing this, would play quicker and quicker and we swirled round like those toys, only stopping when the players were tired and stopped. Toni, my brother, I liked best to dance with.

**Der grosse Saal / The Great Hall.** At home too, Toni, Hubert & Florette, we danced to my fathers lovely piano playing. He had a warm but also strong musical touch which Hubert too had. In summer we often went to our big hall where we had 2 pianofortes standing and Papi would go to one and Hubert to the other, and sat down. One of them would start just with an accord and the other take this up and put a few more chords in and it was not long before they played away, sometimes using a familiar tune or inventing one and playing round it. We all spellbound sat around on the various *canapés* of which this big hall housed many. [5-V-1980]

My father was a bit of a collector of good old furniture and when he went on business trips he would bring some piece home to my mother's great joy. But oh, when it came to clean this hall! After the 14-18 War we had only a cook and our Anna in the house and they had no time for this huge hall. So Florette & I did it. We put the polishing brushes down [on the floor] and, with our feet, back & fro we went along the lines. It was laid in rows [as herring-bone parquet] and results got best if you followed the grain, so turn you would at the next row, until we were exhausted. (I have no time to see the dictionary for spellings, please excuse. Time is so precious to me).

## Visiting Vienna

[7-V-1980]

Another of these old vehicles to convey you to Vienna was a covered 2-horsedrawn coach with 3 windows at the side & coachman's seat on top. It opened in the middle to 2 benches facing each other. We only got a chance once a year when *Grossmama* invited us to her place in Vienna. This excursion was most loved by all, and we were packed in like sardines, as the cabin was not very large. It must have taken at least 2 hours. I remember nothing of what was going on at *Grossmama's* flat, only the lovely rumbling of the coach when it went over the cobblestones, which were not on all roads, but in town most parts were cobbled. You could not hear anything [else], it rattled so much. The funny part I remember was the horses stopping each time, about half way of the

journey, and the coachman had a job to make them move on. Later I heard the explanation of this. It was at an inn, where the coachman bringing into town foodstuffs, like daily milk & vegetables, always had a glass of beer.

**School in Vienna.** When Florette and I were 14 and 15, we went to a school in Vienna. It took us over an hour each way and we had to change trams 3 times. But we never came late. Only the girls living next to the school were the late comers. This was a private school where we had excellent teachers. The best of them all an English teacher. All the girls of the 4 year courses, about 30 or 40, from the youngest to the last form, had to attend and I can remember learning a lot from her in a short time. Half of the pupils were *intern [boarders]* and we two, coming from so far, shared their lunch. These children all came from wealthy families and were very spoiled, where food was concerned. As we sat (about 20) all at one table, with only one teacher attending at the opposite end of the table, whatever was possible to transfer under the table unnoticed, landed at Florette's and my plates. The best I remember were small *Buchteln*, a sweet rich yeast bun or dumpling filled with jam. As we left home very early 6.30 a.m., with only a hastily drunk hot milk and a slice of bread, you can imagine our appetite. The journey was long and in winter very cold and draughty. But we loved every bit of it.

**Riedenburg.** But we did this only for one school year. Then we were sent to a Sacred-Heart Convent as *interns*, to Riedenburg in Voralberg near Bregenz, on Lake Constance. The lake we never saw, as a high wood was between. The mountains we saw, with hearts longing to climb them or use them for skiing, but alas again, we could not go there. I hear nowadays they go out and about. Two years Florette and I stayed there except for the summer and Xmas holidays when we went to Rindbach. It was a long journey which always took a night and 1/2 a day. The train was in the Vorarlberg Alps when just sunset came and we never missed looking at the high rugged mountains (one called the *Wilde Kaiser*) full of snow and the sun behind, and clouds of snow dust rising pink over the ridges. The trains in Austria at that time were packed and we slept as best we could on half a bench and one in the middle on the luggage. But we loved this journey.

In Riedenburg all conversation and information were in French and at table we should have also spoken it, but Florette and I were not at all fluent and hardly opened our mouths for speaking the first year. Later it was not very good but, we could make ourselves understood. Visitors we had every 3rd or 4th week Tante Clara & Onkel Peter Pirquet who lived in Bregenz. This was always a great joy. But I tell you how it was done. We had to be examined by some nun on duty, for our tidiness. White gloves on your hands, not only in our hands, and curtsying to everybody in the big parlour and then to our dear Aunt and Uncle who were not at all stiff. Soon we chatted, while Auntie would unpack most delicious cookies. You must know this was after the war, in 1925/26, when food was still very scarce and the convent food was all but dainty. But all was cooked tastily and we never felt hungry. At 10 a.m. we could go for a plate of soup which we always did and liked, and grew big and fat on it, so that our brothers, when we came home, mocked us and called us *Bratganseln* (roast geese). [16-VI-1980]

Our uniforms were long dark blue dresses, black stockings and for church a white veil loosely tied. We had to do our playing also, of course, in these heavy dresses of woollen material, which was fine for winter, as all rooms were rather cold. But when it was hot and we played on our playground, which was only hard trodden earth, and in dry spells we raised clouds of dust. I remember our dirty feet, when it came to washing in the evening, which was done in a small bowl for which you had to queue first, to get water. And, when you finished washing, it was literally a thick black sauce. Florette and I had a double cubicle with no curtain between the beds, like the single beds had, and this was so much better & airier. Speaking of course was strictly forbidden in dormitories and corridors. We whispered to each other when it was needed but, as a rule, I remember we kept silence pretty well. Of course we were in the older category, what is here the 6th form, responsible for the good conduct of the smaller children. Our sister Annamirl came in the last year with us. She must have been about 10 years old. And we had our own cousin, Maria Eiselsberg, as class mistress and that was chaos. Annamirl would just play her up. Poor soul, for that period alone in her life she will gain Heaven, as it was Hell on Earth for her. So, after all, she is perhaps not all that poor. But Amia could not get on in Riedenburg. She stayed another year or half after we left, but then she was taken into a school in Salzburg, also with nuns, where all went fine. [17-VI-1980]

Florette was not happy in Riedenburg either. She had a nasty experience when playing on the hard court. She fell and was hardly able to get up to the infirmary. It seemed not very serious to the nun in charge and no doctor was called to examine her leg, and she had much pain. Later it was discovered she had seriously injured it and should have had medical treatment. I was the lucky one and got away unharmed those 2 years. Did not even know where the infirmary was, and liked my stay there immensely, even that stiff end of the year, the public examination, where all the girls & all the nuns were present. It took days, and probably with long waiting, all your tension gone and you were glad at last to be called up onto a high podium to answer endless questions, mainly on subjects of literature and history. Maybe other subjects too, but I only remember these. [1-IX-1980]

I loved our class mistress, a nun called Tiefenbacher, no, she was headmistress. Mother Preysing was her name, later transferred to USA. She was very clever, so was her brother who was Bishop of Munich in Hitler's time and very bravely spoke out, but termed *[drafted]* his speeches always so that they (Hitler's party) could not lock him up. Later, here in Minster-in-Thamet *[Kent]*, the Prioress mentioned him as a relation of hers *[Mother Walburga von Waldburg-Zeil O.S.B.; and Konrad Graf von Preysing was in fact bishop of Eichstätt & Berlin, later a Cardinal]*

All our home work had to be done in one large room, where each one of the whole school worked - about 100 - in afternoons and evenings, with one nun seeing to order. But all was well as we had a lot to do for each subject and discipline was therefore easy. But Oh, the year Amia was with us! I had her at my side. She never did any homework, but played tricks or read a book. I remember her reading a book of a wooden man called *Pinocchio*. From time to time she would burst out in peels of laughter. Of course, along came the nun and gave very strict order to be silent but not long after a new eruption of laughter would come and I too had to laugh, because Amia enjoyed her book so much. Poor might [mite], she was in Riedenburg another year after we left, never liking it. For me it was a great help through all my life, having learned a lot in literature & in domestic science (like ironing, cooking, sewing). But most in religious instruction, as we never had much of this before. A never-to-forget retreat by a Jesuit father from Feldkirch, who did not talk around the bush and gave us strong guidelines for life after school, to which I often came back in my life, which helped when I needed support.

**Rindbach.** As already mentioned, I think all our holidays were spent in Rindbach, *am Kögerl*. It was a lovely place for children, at the foot of a very steep mountain, beside a small river, the Rindbach, that was still a quite formidable river in our early youth. We spent days in or on it. Big boulders it had in some places, which had deeper water around them, and it was there we tried to catch tiny fish. Then on washing day the washerwomen would come out with loads of soapy washing to be rinsed. A large raft of wood with long feet on the end which reached deep into the river, but keeping a good 6 inches over the water, the women would take each object and pull it back [to] and fro, then bundle it up on the board and beat it with a flat wooden instrument to squeeze out the last bit of soap and again rinse. We also did this occasionally. I hear from Peggy (our postulant) that, in France, she saw similar rinsing done in rivers. But, of course, when there was a long-lasting rain in the mountain above, the water was full of floating earth and dirty, which would not have improved the clean white wash.

One year we had an earth-fall [*Erdrutsch: landslide*] and big parts of rock fell down and, with the strong rain, all was washed into the riverbed and the high water & strong current brought along enormous amounts of stones, filling the riverbed considerably so that in dry weather you could not see any water. It ran underneath. I don't know how it is now; the Americans surely would have brought bulldozers and lifted the rubble out of the river [*this was in the American occupation zone 1945~1955*]. The villagers I know were scared of what would happen if another flood came, as the village would be swept away should the water get out of this bed. You must go there one day and investigate what happened or how they tackled the problem. [5-X-1980]

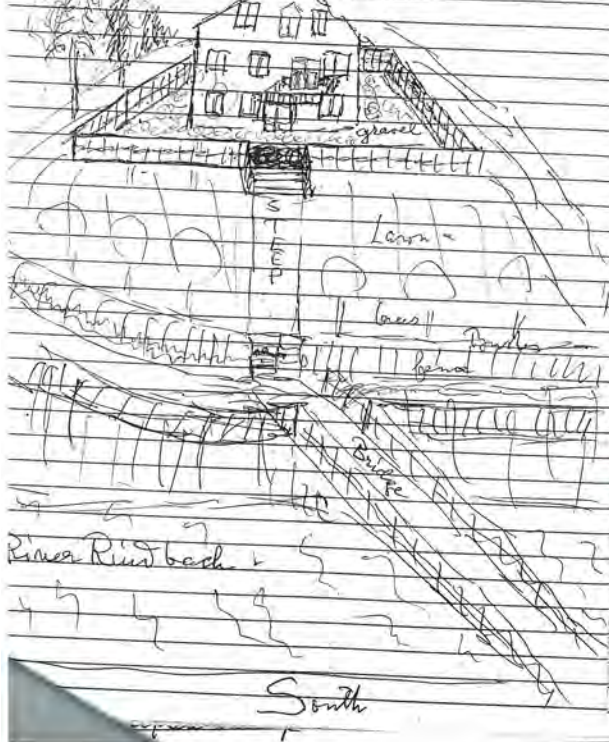
**The Kögerl** was originally an Inn. My mother's father [*Johann von Haimberger 1836~1909*] bought it, to spend the summer holidays there with his 7 children, several aunts & cousins. It was [*then*] only a ground floor house, but had a good cellar (where you could store your foodstuffs for a good time, no need of refrigerator). But the steps down to it were difficult to negotiate, very shallow, high, irregular & winding. And a candle had to be carried also, even by daylight. Rather a mysterious place for us, when very young, and forbidden for us to go down. Yes, count the family as it was then +servants, you came at least to 12 people. So he built on 2 floors. The 2nd was a mansard, in which our parents and we mostly lived, at least some of us. Wonderful sliding built-in cupboards and, behind this, another partition [*with*] another space the whole length of the wall, rather low even for us, but a most valued place to hide in. And everything was wood and had a most intriguing good scent. Every window niche had a cupboard built in, and so there was enough floor space to put up beds. As we grew rapidly in numbers, I remember the youngest had to sleep in drawers which were put under the beds during day.

One has to have seen this top floor to grasp the spell it had on us and, only then, you would understand the very extraordinary character it had. No water pipes up there. This [*water*] had to be brought up the steep staircase and then a rubber bath about a yard in diameter was put on the floor, into which a large bowl [*was put*] and there we washed every night. All by candlelight and, once our dear Anna was finished and everybody in bed, she took the candle with her and we were left in complete darkness. The wood walls and cupboards giving their queer squeaks and sighs, but you knew them and greeted them every first night of our holidays with great happiness. In later years electricity came and took away a bit of the charm of the house, as even the big oil lamps in the dining and living room had their particular attraction.

The dining and sitting rooms also had a lot of wood panelling & shelves where stood dozens of pewter plates, mugs & jugs. One corner was the *Herrgottswinkel* with crucifix & candles & flower vases. In the sitting room these shelves had rare specimens of china. I never saw anybody dusting them and nobody could notice dust as the shelves were too high and I too small – I don't know. When the house was empty, the caretakers, our beloved Cilly & Toni Loidl, took all the stuff off the shelves and, before anyone arrived for holidays, they put everything back in place, all clean & tidy in and outside the house. [*sketch of Kögerl with bridge, below*]

[Front cover title page: aquarelle circa 1884 by Hermine von Janda: DAS KÖGERL.  
Photo sent by Florette 1987. Where is the original painting?]

put everything back in place. All clean  
tidy in & outside the house.

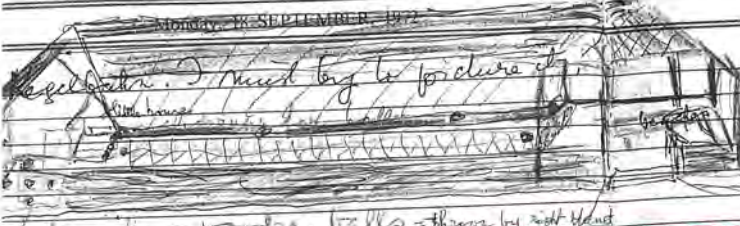


Our dear "old Cilli" or called as she had a  
daughter, also named Cilli, had every morning  
to rake the gravel round the house, &  
I remember well the sound of it, which I loved.  
Also if you slept on the Back side, you  
heard the gurgling sounds of the Bach, as it  
is in some of Schubert's music so very  
realistically composed. All was full of very  
particular, nowhere else heard noises.  
As the staircase itself & its loosely hanging  
red thick ropes on which you held on  
& then the rings they were held with, gave a  
queer squeak, it was absolutely impossible  
to negotiate the staircase, without making  
some noises. I expect some of the English  
Victorian houses could tell a similar story.  
There is a peculiar atmosphere about it, one  
cannot adequately describe, or I cannot. A country  
house inside and out.

Sunday, 17 SEPTEMBER, 1972

Our activities: - of course when we  
were very young we were mostly in  
the garden, & later on the hill up to the house. A complete  
of sorts which you reached by a sloping  
path. A patch of grass & gentle  
flower beds on the upper side & further  
down vegetable plot with a big backhouse.  
And the thing most in use by us, was the

Our dear "old Cilli" (she had a daughter also named Cilli) every morning had to rake the gravel round the house and I well remember the sound of it, which I loved. Also, if you slept on the Back side you heard the gurgling sounds of the Bach, as in some of Schubert's music so realistically composed. All was full of particular nowhere-else-heard noises. Also the staircase itself and its loosely hanging thick red ropes, on which you held on, and then the rings they were held with gave a queer squeak. It was absolutely impossible to negotiate the staircase without making some noises. Expect some of the English Victorian houses could tell a similar story. There is a peculiar atmosphere about it, one cannot adequately describe, or I cannot. A country house inside and out.



It did not need rainy days only when we  
many cousins joining was some of the cousins  
had their own house in the village, they  
& of course Steinbargers. Some brought  
& then them & so spoil them for a good  
And as a result we played happily there  
about in the wood behind the house. The river  
had a very big large boat built that put  
times to go to have fun. First of all  
Sundays, grandmothers on the clearing  
a bench (of wood) to work & pull on  
a good hard rowing them so using  
us which was always the case on the  
with blisters on your hands, but soon you  
as you were free from this duty, we had  
to investigate what I did know. We did  
though of course we went into the water  
was 15°C, but that was very rare, 14°C  
and jump in and soon came out  
backhouse being used as a changing  
room about on, great care was taken  
the side as a storm could lose the ship  
lifted end of the water a little bit

no windows but all under roof.  
with benches along closed tables & big  
table. Wooden heavy benches, which you  
had to throw to the other end where  
several dummies stood, you should hit.  
The sliderun was for the one in the  
little house to read the back.  
all congregated down there to play. Endless  
were piled in bailed houses during summer or  
were mostly wooden tables & benches  
their day with them & these would shock the bases  
turning which we did not really take lightly.  
In later years we used mostly rowing  
The bridge but mostly on the lake Grandfather  
would not dip over as hard as we some  
it was to transport the family to church or  
read old Auntie Hermine. Then we in pairs or  
in 4 benches or you see it was big & needed  
sat in 2 th, when we had the kind great  
journey back. First times you came home  
got used to it and we enjoyed it. But  
not swim until we were at least 8 years old  
as was as it was a bit warm, the warmest  
was good but more often it was less. Then  
again, red as a crab & shivering. The  
room, though there was very little space to  
to close the boat house entrance from the  
to pieces. Also the ships had to be tied up  
to prevent scraping on the sides of walls.  
+ never behind his hill

## Activities in Rindbach

[7-X-1980]

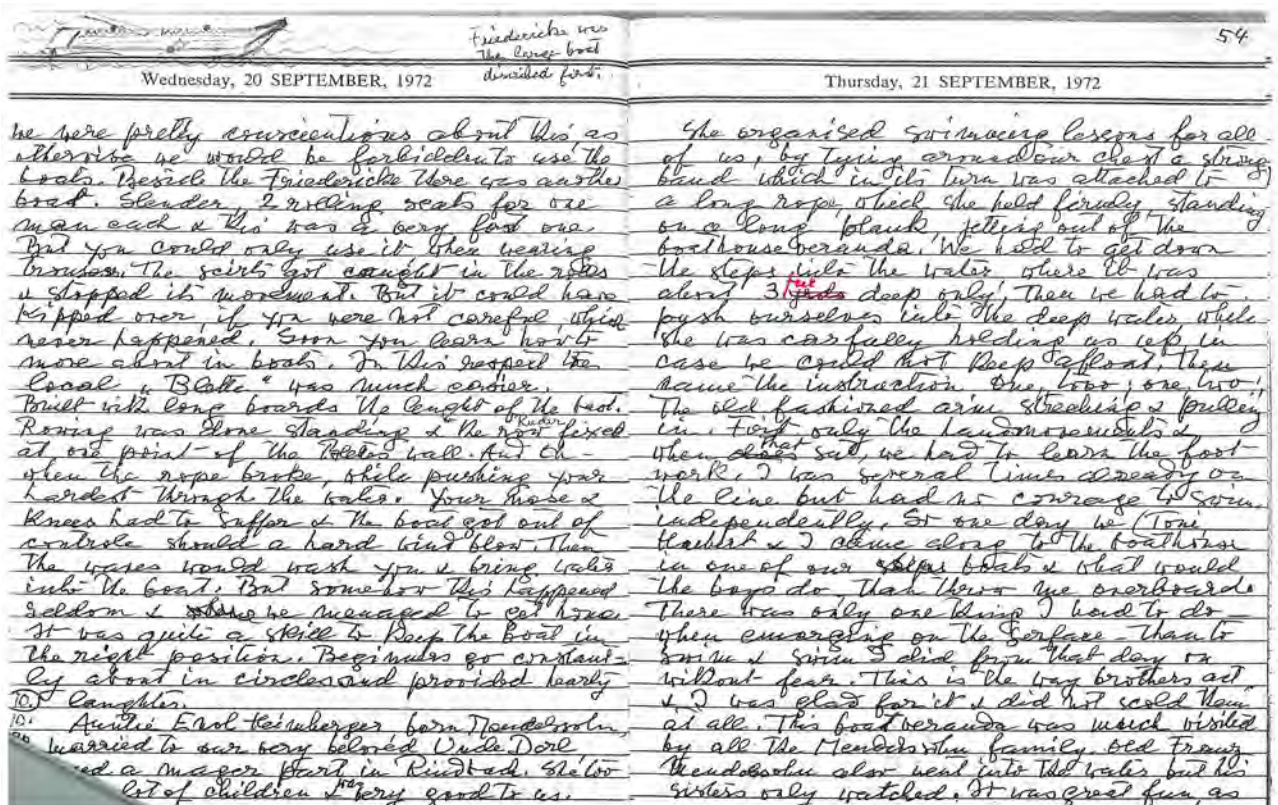
Of course, when we were young, we were mostly in the garden, situated between the Rindbach and the hill behind the house: a long narrow strip of land which you reached by a gentle sloping path. A patch of grass and flowerbeds on the upper side and, further down, a vegetable plot with a big bee-house. But the thing most used by us was the *Kegelbahn*. I must try to picture it: [sketch of a long, open-sided, covered alley]. No windows but all under roof [unter Dach] with benches along walls and a big table. *Kegeln*: heavy wooden balls which you had to throw to the other end, where several dummies stood [that] you should hit. The slide-run was for the one in the little house, near the dummies, to send the balls back. It did not need rainy days only, when we all congregated down there to play. Endless many [unendlich viele] cousins joining in. Some of the cousins lived in rented houses during the summer, or had their own house in the village. They are mostly Mendelssohns & Konradsheims & Haimbergers. Some brought their dogs with them and these would steal the balls and chew them and so spoil them for a smooth running, which we did not take lightly but, as a rule, we played happily there.

In later years we went roaming about the woods behind the house, the river and the village, but mostly on the lake. Grandfather had a large boat built, that would not dip [tip] over, as hard as we sometimes tried, for fun. First of all, it was to transport the family to church on Sundays, grandmother steering, next to old Aunt Hermine. Then we in pairs on 4 benches, each one with a *Ruder* [an oar] to pull. So you see it was big and needed a good hard rowing when so many sat in and, Oh, when we had the wind against us, which was always the case on the journey back! First times you came home with blisters on your hands but, soon you got used to it and we enjoyed it. But, as soon as we were free from this duty, we would get back and row out alone, always having [something] to investigate, what I don't know.

[8-X-1980]

We did not swim until we were at least 8 years old though, of course, we went into the water as soon as it was a bit warm. The warmest was 15°C, but this was very rare; 14°C was good, but more often it was less. Then you'd jump in and soon come out again, red as a crab and shivering. The boat house was used as a changing room, though there was very little space to move about. Great care was taken to close the boathouse entrance from the lake-side, as a storm could toss the boats to pieces. Also, the boats had to be tied up and lifted out of the water a little bit, to prevent scraping of the sides on the walls. We were pretty conscientious about this, as otherwise we would be forbidden to use the boats. Besides the *Friedericke* there was another boat. Slender, 2 rolling seats for one rower each and this was a very fast one. But you could only use it when wearing trousers. Skirts got caught in the [seat] rollers and stopped its movement. It could have kipped [keeled] over if you were not careful, which never happened. You soon learn how to move about in boats. In this respect the local *Blette* was much easier [flat-bottomed gondola]. Built with long boards the length of the boat, rowing was done standing up [facing forward] and the *Ruder* [oar] fixed at one point of the [starboard aft] side of the *Blette*. And oh, when the rope broke, when pushing your hardest through the water, your nose & knees had to suffer. And the boat got out of control, should a hard wind blow. Then the waves would wash you and bring water into the boat. Somehow this happened seldom and we [always] managed to get home. It was quite a skill to keep the boat in the right position. Beginners go constantly about in circles and provide for hearty laughter.

[10-X-1980]



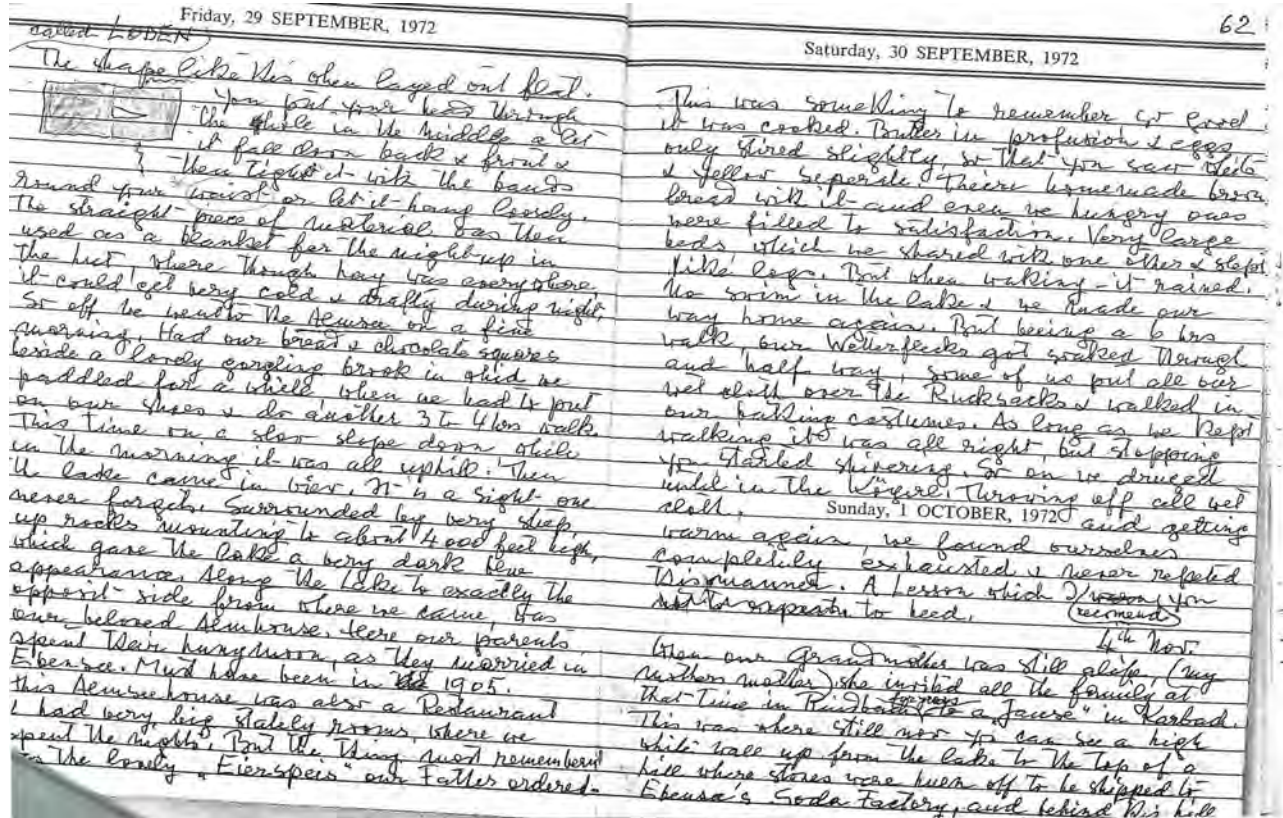
**Tante Enole** Haimberger, née Mendelssohn [1891~1982], married to our very beloved Onkel Dorl [*Theodor 1886~1931*], played a major part in Rindbach. She too had a lot of children and was very good to us. She organised swimming lessons for all of us, tying around our chests a strong band which, in its turn, was attached to a long rope which she held firmly, standing on a long plank jutting out of the boathouse veranda [*floor*]. We had to get down the steps into the water, where it was only about 3 feet deep. Then we had to push ourselves into the deep water, while she was carefully holding us up, in case we could not keep afloat. Then came the instruction: one two, one two: the old-fashioned arm-stretching and pulling in [*breast-stroke*]. First only the hand movements and, when that was learnt, we did the leg movements. I was several times already on the line but had no courage to swim independently. So, one day we (Toni, Hubert & I) were coming back to the boat house in one of our boats and, what did the boys do, they threw me overboard! There was nothing else I had to do, when emerging on the surface, than to swim. And swim I did from that day on, without fear. This is the way brothers act and I was glad for it, and did not scold them. This boathouse was much visited by all the Mendelssohn family. Old Franz M. also went into the water but his sisters only watched. It was great fun, as we were many children and all sorts of games we made up. My mother was very stricken for not staying long in the water. But, the big boathouse with its boats & changing cabins gave ample opportunity for play.

Then, in the evenings, we went sometimes up to their enormous house where music was played by famous guests (Casals, Bohnke, Menuhin etc.) and members of the family. Lilly Mendelssohn, the youngest, played the violin in official concerts and her father Franz the second violin. Various guests joined to make up a quintet or quartet. Mostly Mendelssohn chamber music. Also a few singers joined in. It was a big hall with a view to the lake. Then Tante Enole would come down after supper with her older children and we would organise a guessing game with pencil & paper or rhyming games. Then on other evenings, in the *Kögerl*, my father would go to the piano and play songs and we all joined in. Or, when we were older, for dancing. The dining table could be folded up to very small size and pushed in one corner, and the room was big enough for all of us to dance around. Then *Grossmama* would provide a cup of tea, plus unspeakably good little cakes. When we were real teenagers (forever giggling), we knew where they were kept and when all went upstairs and the air was clear, except for Florette and me and Mausi (a Konradsheim cousin), we would carefully open the doors of this wall cupboard and steal from the various tins some goodies and have more laughs. I don't know how it was, we were never found out, not even by our brothers. Dear grandchildren, don't copy us ! [20-X-1980]

Some days we felt we must investigate the woods. Boys and girls marched via the village, or climbed directly up behind the house into the woods. These had the most various attractions. Dark steep rocks, overgrown by water-loving plants hanging down and deep cliffs [*Klüften* = *clefts*], we had to look, and out came a salamander, a flat 8-inch reptile with 4 clumsy legs sticking out of a plump tummy with yellow (or red) marks all over his body. A few small caves we also had in our wood. One was supposed to go all through [*under*] this part of the mountain. Its entrance was at the side of the path down to the lake and also where an aunt of ours lived. The local people had a queer name for it and gruesome stories. When I was a biggish girl (about 10 or more) I was once sent down to bring a message to Tante Enny and it was pitch dark. I was too proud to say I was afraid of the dark & the cave and went off, but the fear I felt was horrible and I never forgot it. I was never sent down late any more, as someone must have noticed my terror. One wood, further away, had what seemed then [*to be*] giant boulders which we climbed up with some difficulty and occupied, pretending to be knights defending our castles. Rindbach also had very nice walks along the foot of the mountains, where we went at least once a summer, coming back in the valley, with all sorts of interesting houses, workshops, little chapels etc.

**Mountaineering.** When we were older, mountaineering was a great favourite. The first mountain to do was always the one behind the house. Very steep, for us a mount [*climb*] of at least 3 hours, very steep and dark for all the trees. The last bit was steep open grassland with hedges [*fences*], rivulets & often cows grazing as it was the *Alm*. There were in fact 3 *Alms* [*summer grazing & log-cabin*] one belonging to Tante Änny, where we halted. We got lovely milk to drink with our home-made brown-bread and we sat outside and on the fence to rest. This was the *Spitzelstein*. The way back you think was easy. But run down a long time, jumping from rocks or high steps, is heavy on the knees and, when at last you reached the flatter part through our wood, your walking did not look like a soldier's step. You crept along as well as you could and next morning it was worse, all the muscles of the legs hurting. But once this was gone (1 or 2 days) you were fit to climb the steepest highest mountain. And soon we would again be on the move, but this time higher up. Usually staying overnight in an *Alm*. My father was rather careful with the youngest in the party, setting the speed so they were not overtired. Usually we found someone in the *Alm* who would cook us something. The highlight was dumplings (*Knödel* or *Holzknechtnockerln*) of flour, fat & water, roasted in a deep frying pan with butter. They had to be crisp outside and deliciously soft & tasty inside. The woodworkers [*foresters*] were famous for cooking them. It was their stable [*staple*] dish. Flour was the best food to carry in your rucksack. The liquid needed to make something of it was found up in the *Alp*. You were filled with one dumpling & slept like a log. [2-XI-1980] After a good night's rest once, on one of these high *Alms*, we walked along on the steep sloping meadows and met a herd of cattle. And, lo and behold, a bull was among them and followed us, not really running after us, just following. We took no chances and ran to jump over the fence, which brought us to safety. Of course we laughed at our stupidity afterwards, but I remember it vividly.

The Almsee was our favourite excursion, leaving Rindbach early morning with rucksacks and a Wetterfleck. I must describe you this Wetterfleck. Made of very tightly woven woollen material called Loden, the shape is like this when laid out flat [picture of Wetterfleck = Poncho, below]. You put your head through the hole in the middle and let it fall back and front and then tie it with the bands round your waist or let it hang loosely. This straight [rectangular] piece of material was then used as a blanket for the night in the hut where, though hay was everywhere, it could get very cold and draughty during the night. So off we went to the Almsee on a fine morning. Had our bread & chocolate squares beside a gurgling brook, in which we paddled for a while, when we put on our shoes for another 3 or 4 hours walk, this time on a slow slope down, while in the morning it was all uphill. Then the lake came in view, a sight one never forgets. Surrounded by steep rocks rising to about 4000 feet, which gave the lake a very dark blue appearance. Alongside the lake, exactly opposite where we came, was our beloved Almseehaus. Here our parents spent their honeymoon [on foot], as they married in Ebensee (1905).



This Almseehaus was also a restaurant and had stately rooms, where we spent the night. The most remembered thing was the Eierspeis our Father had ordered. This was something to remember, so well was it cooked. Butter in profusion and eggs only stirred slightly, so that you saw white and yellow separately. Their home-made brown bread with it and even we hungry ones were filled to satisfaction. Large beds which we shared and slept like logs. When waking, it was raining. So no swim in the lake and we made our way home. But, it being a 6 hours walk, our Wetterflecks got soaked through and, half way, some of us put our wet clothes over the rucksacks and walked in bathing costumes. As long as we kept walking it was all right but, we started shivering if we stopped. So on we trudged until we reached the Kögerl. Throwing off all the wet clothes and getting warm again, we found ourselves completely exhausted and never repeated this manner of walking. A lesson I warn you to heed.

### Outing to Karbach

[4-XI-1980]

When our [maternal] grandmother was still alive, she invited all who were in Rindbach, for years, to a Jause in Karbach. This was where you see a high scar up from the lake to the hilltop where stones were [quarried] to be shipped to Ebensee Soda Factory. Behind this hill, opening a valley into the mountain, was a Gasthaus. After 1 hour's rowing in all available boats, we walked there and had our Jause, a cup of coffee with goats milk and a thick slice of bread. We found it delicious although the goats milk was a bit strong, nothing compared to the stable where the billy-goat was kept, which you had to pass by. After investigating the place and playing around the huge logs stacked by the brook, we climbed back into the boats with renewed strength to pull them home. The logs had been brought there in winter when the snow was frozen hard, sliding down the steep [wooden] slides they built all along, from a good height up the mountain behind. Sometimes very steep, then sharp round the corner and the logs making a sinister deep rumbling noise. These logs were the trees from high up the mountains, which the Holzknechte cut during the summer and, when shipped to Ebensee, made into planks for building houses or laying floors or for furniture. In Rindbach you can still go and watch the [saw]mill, on the way upstream along the Rindbach. The water is cleverly channelled into a narrow canal and turns an enormous wheel which in turn drives the saws up and down to cut big logs into planks. We watched the miller whenever we passed this place, which we often did, when going to the Rindbach Falls.

[15-XI-1980]

**The Rindbach Falls** we visited every year. A lovely walk past the [saw]mill, leading to the woods, with stones covered in green moss, big boulders across the path, not steep, with the music of water tumbling over rocks. The last 50 steps a steeper climb till you come to a primitive bridge, with a few planks and a thin balustrade to hold you on both sides and, under it, rapidly gushing white foaming water, that then fell 30 feet down into a deep green & blue cauldron. The noise of the water, even when not high water, was terrific. Human voices could not be heard. We never kept standing long on this bridge as the rushing water made you dizzy. [19-XII-1980]

**After the First World War** [and already during it] everything was very scarce: food & clothes. The political situation brought great distress, especially to pensioners, as money went down in value nearly 100%. Even I was hit, with my Post Office Savings Book in which I put the Half Crowns I got from grandma at birthdays and my first *Schillings* collected on Saturday afternoons, when Opapa's workers got their weekly pay. I was paid for working in the vineyard. Was I proud and happy receiving it and went straight to the Post Office to deposit this Schilling! I think I saved 20 Schillings, which I took out during the inflation and all I could buy was a pencil. I was then about 10 years old. Money was not something we had in our purses; pocket money for children was not yet in. [12-III-1981] [Amia remembered selling fruit to passers-by outside the front gate. Source: Rosemarie Starlinger 2015]

When the holidays started, early July, off we went to Rindbach. All of us children with our mother, Anna & the cook and, later, Peter & Amia's teacher Herta [Wallig]. What I recall most was the last years of the war. Everything was scarce. The trains would start on time but, you could never predict when to arrive. Once it took us 12 hours (what would take 3 hours nowadays). It was pitch dark when arriving in Ebensee. The great joy was when my mother started cutting bread from the big round loaf (home-made). What was smeared on it was not so important so long as you got a big slice. The best was a little square of chocolate an inch in size and to this day, your old Gran reaches for brown bread when she gets chocolate. This was nearly always our pudding, also when mountaineering. Back to the train, it took 12 hours with wagons that had all windows closed over with wood, so hardly any light. We found this great fun. And with all that, every carriage was packed with passengers and the corridors as well. To reach a lavatory was a long struggle of climbing over luggage and people's bodies.

When I was about 12 years old I was sent a fortnight later than the others, to bring fresh supplies of bread and other foodstuff packed in heavy cases. All went fine except when I had to change trains at Attnang Puchheim. Being nervous about missing it, I asked again and again, and was told when to get out. People helped me get the cases out and when we had finished and I jumped out, the train was again on the move and I discovered it was the wrong station (Lambach). So what should I do? A very kind stationmaster told me to wait in the waiting room which I did, surrounded with luggage, and got on the next train, for only the one station more needed. Arriving and getting out, I learned that the train I should have taken had just left, and I had again to wait hours for the train to Ebensee. Onkel Julius [Haimberger 1885~1950] who was to fetch me, had long left for home and so again I was stranded. Leaving all my cases in the guard's custody, I walked in the dark to Rindbach where everybody was relieved to see me at last. [13-III-1981]

**Drahtseilbahn auf den Kranabet Sattel** (1644 m. = 4932 feet). When the cable lift was installed, it brought many visitors to Ebensee. It was one of the earliest installed in the district. Before this we had to walk up this very steep mountain. I still remember when we were 15 or 16 and, coming from Riedenburg where we had little physical exercise, we had to rest several times before we made it. I also remember the friend that joined us with her mother, brother & elder sister over the holidays: Madeleine Manner. She also came with us to Riedenburg. She was very clever and studied, and I married and we lost track of each other. This outing to the *Kranabet-Sattel* we could only do in summer, but now with the cable car we only went up there in winter, to do some skiing, though we did not, only our brothers. It was not really a very good place for this, being too rocky. The name of all this group of mountains was *Höllengebirge*=Hell Mountains. On the other side of the valley where the river Traun cuts through, it is the *Totengebirge*=Death Mountains. Neither very inviting names. But if ever one of my family's offspring is interested in Alpine flora or rare flowers with colours inexplicably good, they would do well to climb up there, possibly in Spring.

With John & Maria we once went on a 2 day tour up the *Totengebirge* behind the *Offensee*, starting and coming down at Gössl on *Grundlsee*, where Florette & Franzl spent all their holidays. Unfortunately I overtaxed my youngsters and the weather turned menacing, though no rain came, and we had to hurry to get down to catch the bus, to get us to the train for going home, via Ischl to Ebensee. But I can still remember the fantastic flora right on the top, on a very wide plateau. Again and again, new kinds of flowers in large clumps. One was in a swamp and had long white feathery clouds of white that moved graciously in the light breeze. It was a first for me too, and the last, up into this range. [16-III-1981]

**Dachstein Höhlen.** This was a formidable outing for us, taking the train via Ischl and then, after a few stops, getting out at a very small station, which had only one primitive sign "*Dachsteinhöhlen*". From there it was about a ¼ hour walk in the valley and then a climb up what was for us a promenade path. Whenever we went up our "house" mountains, they [the paths] looked only faintly like a path. Stones, holes, high boulders to get over, very steep most of the time, but this path was layed out about 2 ft wide in gentle gradient, taking us to the entrance of the *Höhlen* [caverns] in about 2 ½ hours only. Now the mystery walk would begin, not like the Fun-Land one, here everything was as nature formed it. But still, we were lucky, in several places they had laid wooden planks,

where the ground was too steep & slippery. Even in some parts deeper in, we followed a properly made bridge. All the time the views changing in colour and variety of formation of frozen scalatites [*stalactites & stalagmites*]. Some forming huge blocks, others long hanging down icicles. It is a must for all of you youngsters to go and see. Fascinating scenary! It is pretty cold right down inside, so take a woolly. Coming down is very quick, we rushed it. Going home in the train, passing the Hallstätter Lake, you look out the window on the left side to see the lovely village of Hallstatt, stuck at the edge of the lake, houses climbing up the steep mountain behind. In our time they had a good crafts shop there, where they made beautiful small articles for neck-chains, rings, enamelled bracelets of cut horn. Also a pottery, that made fine articles. It was an eventful and interesting outing, and we did not mind coming back rather late when it was dark, and 1/2 hour walk to Rindbach. [25-III-1981]

**Glöckel-Läuten.** Today being a Feast Day it reminds me of another day, which fell in winter: *Glöckel-Läuten*. The learned men say it was a christianised pagan custom taken over, as were so many other customs. When it was very cold, snow lying on the ground, stars flickering in the sky and, being late in the day, was dark outside. You heard bells, smallish ones, ringing ; some getting further away but, if you were lucky, also some coming nearer. When near you saw what it was. White-clad figures with lighted head-gear, bells hanging from their belts and always at a run. If there was room before a house, they would form a circle and run round and round and you could see that each of their lighted and many coloured headgears was different. Then, after many rounds they stopped and the *Hausfrau* would come out with mugs of wine and gooddies and serve this to the men. But soon they moved on and the bells started tinkling from their belts and they vanished slowly into the darkness, only to stop at another house that baconed [*beckoned*] them to stopp. Something similar, but by day and with dear [*deer*] horns on their heads, also in tight pants and running in circles, is done in Abbots Bromley, Staffordshire, where we lived for 3 years. And not in winter, in autumn I think [*Morris Dancing: the famous Horn Dance*].

#### **Traunsee motor boat**

[late addition: 8-XI-1986]

These scribbles came into my hand the other day and, just now, I remember another summer "special". On the Traunsee you had a regular motor boat service from morning to evening, going from Rindbach to Gmunden, stopping at certain times at different stations on both sides of the Lake. But our outing on the private luxury boat [*hired by grandfather Franz Mendelssohn*] took you wherever you asked the captain to stop and often went criss-cross the Lake. There were favourite stops with various attractions, beer-houses, tea or coffee houses. One was their favourite. It had a speciality goody, everybody's favourite, a conical shaped sponge cake with cream & hot chocolate all over. Can you imagine us hungry horde of children. Yes, your granny also was once young, hungry and delighted and happy for this treat. A feast for us. Sometimes we would go straight to Gmunden. There again we found a luxuriant locality called *Grellinger* where we had ice cream, made with real cream & fresh fruit in the 1920s.

*Afterthought:* "Starting with Philosophy and ending -- with food. Try to do better, my dear grandchildren"



*Der grosse Saal, Hirschstetten, 1937, vermutlich zur Hochzeit von Annamirl. Am Plafond war ein Fresco von Daniel Gran, 1719, welches in 1945 von Amerikanischen Fliegerbomben zerstört aber, kurz vorher, zum wesentlichsten Teil fotografiert wurde. Siehe: <https://www.bildindex.de/document/obj19070514>*

| Key to photo : 70. Geburtstag der Grossmama <b>Friedericke</b> von Haimberger, 24-XII-1924   |     |                                                    |                                                   |
|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----|----------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------|
| Front row from left                                                                          |     |                                                    | Back row from left                                |
| <b>Haimberger</b>                                                                            |     | <b>7 spouses and 1 sibling</b>                     | <b>offspring</b>                                  |
| Julius                                                                                       | =§= | Romana « Mantschi » Waluszczyk                     |                                                   |
| Marie « Mariechen »                                                                          | =§= | Konrad von Konradsheim                             | <a href="#">Florette Pirquet</a>                  |
| Fritz (eldest son)                                                                           |     |                                                    | Johann « Czeck » Konradsheim                      |
| <b>Friedericke, née von Janda</b><br>1854~1925<br>veuve de Johann v. Haimberger<br>1836~1909 |     | Hermine v. Janda<br>(younger sister of Grossmama)  | Maria « Mausl » Konradsheim                       |
|                                                                                              |     |                                                    | <a href="#">Toni Pirquet</a>                      |
| Paul                                                                                         | =§= | Gertrude Kuhlmann                                  | <a href="#">Silvio Pirquet junior</a>             |
| Anna « Ennie »                                                                               | =§= | Harry Zitkovszky                                   | <a href="#">Annamirl Pirquet</a>                  |
|                                                                                              |     |                                                    | Johann Haimberger (fils de Karl)                  |
| Theodore « Dorl »                                                                            | =§= | Enole von Mendelssohn                              | <a href="#">Peter Pirquet</a>                     |
| <a href="#">Johanna</a>                                                                      | =§= | <a href="#">Silverio v. Pirquet</a> (7 enfants → ) | <a href="#">Johanna « Netti » Pirquet, age 16</a> |
| Karl                                                                                         | =§= | Elli Seidl                                         | <a href="#">Hubert Pirquet</a>                    |



Motorboat Ludgard, 14 metres, 1911~1970 >

[POSTCARD below : [Rindbach, 26 Sept. 61](#)  
 “Liebe Netti! Vorige Woche war ich also nochmals in Ten und wollte Dir Photos von der Einweihung der neuen Kirche in unserem lieben alten Schlosshof senden, aber sie kommen erst. Es war alles sehr schön und [...] Seine Eminenz Kardinal Dr Koenig hat die Weihe mit Assistenz vorgenommen. Die Kirche war ganz voll mit mindestens 500 Leuten aus der nächsten Umgebung. Ich bin sicher, dass diese Pfarre



*Hirschstetten ein bleibendes Kulturzentrum des ganzen Bezirkes werden wird. Jetzt wird noch die Wohnung für den Pfarrer gebaut und dann kommt die Gartenpflege dran und dann wird das Ganze einen wirklichen Charme haben und gewiss seine Aufgabe prächtig erfüllen. Diese Aussicht versöhnt uns alle mit dem schweren Schicksal das Ten\* getroffen hat. Dein uralter Vater, Silverio.”] [\*Ten = Hirschstetten]*

*[On this postcard to Netti, posted in Ebensee 27 Sept 1961 by her “ancient” father, the Kögerl is left of centre, the uppermost house, showing a pointed gable, with only forest to the right. The Dreyeck is the large L-shaped house at bottom right. The original message with Silverio's photograph, at the age of 91, is reproduced at the end of Part III]*





**Le château de Kreuzenstein, aux environs de Vienne.**

*Propriété des Comtes Wilczek, mentionnée plus loin ici, comme étant visible depuis Bisamberg.*

*[photo: Gerster, in "L'AUTRICHE", Larousse 1976, p112]*

## PART II

[manuscript date 15-XII-1980]

Die 10er, 20er & 30er Jahre, wovon ihr alle am allerwenigsten wisst. Ich hab sie noch nicht vergessen u. hab sie auch vielfach in den "Erinnerungsseiten" angebracht. Da ich im Sommer geboren bin, wurde ich in Rindbach geboren. Zu diesem Zweck mieteten meine Eltern Räume in einem kleinem Bauernhaus das noch eine ganz alte originale Wasserschöpfung hatte. Ein aufrechter Pol und ein wagrechter. Ein langes starkes Seil an dem ein Kübel hing, den man tief hinunter in's Brunnenbett, zum Wasserspiegel zog, Wasser schöpfte und wieder aufzog. Eine langsam & mühsame Art, aber das Wasser war im heissesten Sommer ganz kalt & herrlich frisch. In diesem Haus war Ruhe, denn am Kögerl wimmelte es von Familie. Im Kögerl behausten wir jedes Jahr andere Zimmer. Im ersten Stock war ein sehr grosses und ein kleineres Zimmer, in dem wir in unserer frühen Jugend mit Kinderfrau hausten. Es hatte einen kleinen Balkon zum See hinaus. Ein Jahr, kann ich mich erinnern, hatte ich ein Zimmer mit Florette neben Grossmama das zum Bach war, also Süden. Das präuschen des Baches war meine grosse Begeisterung. Aber schauderbar war's, wenn nach Tagelangem Schnurlregen der Bach ganz voll und in riesiger Schnelligkeit und erdfarbenem Wasser sauste und man rollen von grossen Steinen hörte. Auf der Brücke über den Bach hielt man sich dann nicht lange auf. Ja diese Brücke. Ob sie wohl heute noch so aussieht. Alles war Holz, etwas breiter als ein Meter. Da hielten wir uns oft auf und jeder der sie benützte kannte man. Denn es gab höchstens 6 bis 7 Häuser darüber hinaus. Eins war Tante Anny's Haus, ganz am See aber ein gutes Stück oberhalb des Wasserspiegels. Da wieder war ein Brunnen, diesmal ein grosser eckiger länglicher Trog, indem das Wasser ununterbrochen ran und was zu viel Wasser war, in einer versteckten Röhre hinunter in den See ging. Auf dieser kleinen Wiese standen Zwetschenbäume, die wir zu Ende des Sommers halben abnehmen. Da ging so mancher gute Zwetschke in unserem Mund. Die waren ganz süss und der Stein löste sich ganz leicht und rein vom Fleisch.

**Hirschstetten.** It is not a fairy tale what is written down here; it gives you a glimps into the time of our youth, the years from my birth 1908 until 1928 when I married. I have not completely forgotten them. They were years of continuous happiness. We had an ideal setting in Hirschstetten, a large house, not built originally to live in, no, and you would not guess either what its purpose was. A brave commander of an army, who was lucky enough to achieve great victory, was given land beyond the Danube, outside Vienna. And what would he do, but build a house with 3 big halls, in the middle and left and right from it, each a 3 story tower. And all he used it for was to spend the night there with his guests, after a long day of hunting deer, as in those days it was not yet much cultivated there along the Danube, only woods. The nights they listened to music and also, mainly, they danced. Look up the exact history in the book I put by and there also you see the photos of the *Schloss*.

In the years, Hirschstetten passed through many hands until [1868] my grandfather Peter Pirquet and his wife Flora Pereira-Arnstein, bought it. The inside of the *Schloss* was, in those years, taking slowly the shape we knew. Not entirely to modern demand, but we loved it as it was. Much more attractive for children than a modern house. Alone the attic, monstrous beams to climb over, wooden floor between partitions, so ideally suited for hide and seek. All the buildings had cellars, used for all sorts to store. Coal, wood, various food cellars and even deeper ones where meat kept best. Corridors with built-in cupboards and chests. All of great interest and providing playgrounds on cold & frosty or dark evenings. We roamed everywhere about. The big chiming outdoor clock, if you were nearby when moved its fingers or it prepared to chime the time, made gruesome noises. In Hirschstetten we lived from late September to early July, when school holidays started.

**Rindbach.** Then great preparations for our train journey to Rindbach, near Ebensee on the Traunsee. This lake was so called because of the river Traun, that comes from the surrounding mountains and glaciers, and [flows] out of the Lake at the other end at Gmunden. So you had clear water, sweet and full with the most various good fish.

The journey there was always in a big group. We children, 7 of us in the later years, the cook, our Anna, our Mother and many big cases filled with bread, flour, grain, when the war was on and long after. Food was scarce in those days. The year when I was born the *Kögerl* was crowded with family. Grandmother and her sister, uncles, aunts, cousins and all. In July my mother moved out into a nearby cottage, in those days with a deep drawing well. Tante Hermine. the sister of grandmother Haimberger, was a painter in aquarelle, and made a nice painting of this house [as also of the *Kögerl*]. But I don't know where it is, nor to whom it belonged. Every drop of rainwater was collected to do all household washing, as long as there was rain. Otherwise you had to draw it out of the well. You had to lower the chain till you heard a splash and felt the water filling the bucket. Then you pulled it up and had sparkling clean, fresh cold water, even in the hottest summer. No machine, no motor needed. Nobody in small villages in those days had running water. Even the *Kögerl* had none. The water had to be pulled from a deep well and carried up to the house and up to all the floors.

[Jan 1981] I wanted to write down a few things of my younger years... my memoirs of childhood, written for my grandchildren, [for] whom I now hear it will all sound unrealistic, as so very different from their time. But still, there it is and they can believe it or not. For me it was reality.

**Hirschstetten.** We grew up in Hirschstetten. With the house and towers, stables, garage, gardens, outhouses, stable yard, fields & tree nursery.. we had ample space to roam about and find activities and were never lacking ideas of what to do. Yes, so much so that we had no time to do much study. Not even the boys, who were more severely watched, as the teacher would otherwise go to father and complain. But we two, Florette & I, did not lose much time studying. Even when we were expected to be in for teacher, we really forgot and found out only when it was time for the teacher to get back into the tram to go back to Vienna. No great wonder, what bad results we showed. Then and to our great regret, we had to go to a school nearby when we were about 10 & 11 years old. This was then when we had very bad inflation, revolution, shortage of food and everything else, though this did not bother us children. Being lucky to live on a farm, we never went hungry. We had the products of the farm. Milk, never butter nor eggs. Pork on Sundays, later a few times a week. But the bread was from our own grain and baked at home. Big round loaves about 1½ ft in diameter [45 cm]. Before cutting this in half the sign of the cross was always made on it. And we did not get dainty little pieces either. Real chunks, and the crusts often gave cause for mild or not so humble grasping.

[18-01-1981]

You would think we were spoiled children but, in fact, we had to go without a lot of things your children would not even understand. Clothes had to be handed down, until they were in rags. Socks were rare. Shoes from the boys for us girls, until the cobbler refused to mend them. All distances had to be done on foot. There was never any other way of transport, unless we had to go to Vienna, which was even by tram a good hour. Toys we had to find ourselves, but we never lacked sticks, blocks of wood, string, old pots, trees to climb, hide in, or fix a rope on for a swing. One swing I remember was put up for us by the soldiers who were housed in the hall, who came for convalescence, being looked after by my mother, her maid & our Anna. All helped to make them comfortable and happy, and they were, we children even felt this. The swing (put up by them) was on 2 high trees and had a good range to swing out. I guess it must have been at least 10 metres high (30 ft). On it you flew through the air and felt like a bird and very happy. Many other games they provided for us. In a way we were spoiled having these things, which really made us happy children.



Postcard sent 2-VII-1916 by Silvio & Johanna to:

*Hochwohlgeborenen Herrn Hofrath Prof [Anton] von Eiselsberg, Wien I, Mülkerbastei 6.*

*Front row from left after Silverio senior: mother-in-law Friedericke, Toni, Annamirl on Johanna's lap, Hubert on pony.*

That was all until we had to go to school, a daily walk of 1 hour for Florette and me. The boys then soon had to go daily to Vienna to the *Schottengymnasium* run by Benedictine monks [*founded by Irish monks of the 12th century, invited by the ruler, Heinrich II of Babenberg, when he transferred his court from Klosterneuburg to Vienna. If they were known as Scots, that is because Ireland was the original home of today's Scots*]. Although we two girls were amongst the weakest in the class, we loved going there and, as time went on, we caught up and did not feel so dim. We had excellent teachers who knew how to get children to grasp, whatever the subject. My favourite lessons still were arts (drawing, painting, needlework), arithmetic & gymnastics. The hours were long, from 8 to 1 o'clock, 6 days a week, and, a few days a week, 2 hours in the afternoon when we had to return to school. This school took you only up to your 14th year. Then what? But I think I described the following years in the other part "for the grandchildren". Tomorrow is another day, it is getting bedtime.

*[Interlude 1981, Minster-in-Thamet, Kent]:* In the morning Mother Prioress always reads [*aloud*] for a few minutes. On Sundays it is always from the weekly bulletin. Suddenly I had to prick up my ears. Who was mentioned but Erich Fromm. I will try to get this paper when the week is over and send it to you.. So far I met nobody who could give me any information or hope to get a book. But it seems he is in the news [*he had died in March 1980*]. I will pluck up courage and ask Father Martin, he may have information or even a book. [19-1-1981]

**France 1926.** To come back to my youth. When we finished school with the Sacred Heart nuns in Riedenburg on Lake Constance (a lake we never got to see, although the grounds reached it), it was summer and I was 18. We went of course to Rindbach. The boys and some of their friends came from time to time and also boys that flirted with us girls. Among them also your father. Summer was never a time for holidays for him, but he managed one weekend. I [*had*] met him 2 years ago in Hirschstetten, where he was invited by [*my brother*] Toni to play tennis, and he was a good player too and Toni wanted to profit from him. It was then that Eugen seems to have had an eye on me. He being so shy, nobody noticed anything about it but I.

Nothing was said and I was sent to France in September, to Besançon, where a course at the University was arranged for foreign students. Only six turned up and, when the Professor saw this, he said good buy to us. It was not worthwhile for him to hold the course. So what then? Some went home, but a Hungarian boy, an Italian girl and an American boy stayed on for a while and then I was left with the American. We two spent half days long, walking around in the neighbourhood, talking French, he much better than I. But this did not satisfy me and I went to the *Lycée* (high school) asking to attend some of the girls classes, which was granted. So in the mornings I listened in, when literature was given. I still remember what they studied: Molière's *Misanthrope*, taking every character to pieces for analysing. And I think I really profited a bit.

Christmas was nearing and, though I was meant to stay over the winter, I returned, not to Austria directly but, to a Swiss friend who lived with her parents in Milan. I had no money and did not dare asking for some. So I asked girls from the school whether they would like lessons in German. And quite a number turned up. Though I charged very little, I got enough money together to buy the train fare to Milan. [24-01-81]

**Italy.** I inquired at a travel agency what papers I needed for Italy and was told: none. So packing up my suitcase and saying good-bye to all the people in the *pension*, the journey was on. Coming along the Swiss Alps it was very cold but beautiful. Then in the *Simplon Tunnel* the French guards left and the Italians came in, demanding passport and so on. Innocently I showed them my passport, then a chatter began between the 2 guards, and trying to tell me something, I having no idea what they wanted. They told me to get off the train at the next stop and return to Brig, where a consul was, who will issue me with the required Visa, which I was told in France I did not need. So back I had to go with the next train, through the very long tunnel, that smelled like all of them do. Arriving at Brig it was past midnight. What should I do? Money I had just enough to pay the fare back to Brig (I still remember: 1.50 Swiss Francs). So, in the waiting room which was icy cold, I lay down on the bench, all alone, when after some time a uniformed lady came to tell me they had bunks in the station to rest on. Relieved, I followed her and climbed into a bunk. Just a board with a blanket provided, and I slept fine.

Next day was Sunday. Went to the Consul's house and rang the bell. A grumpy person told me to come back Tuesday, as Monday was also a holiday. With no money, with heavy luggage, an empty tummy for two days was not a cheerful prospect. In spite of the lovely old town surrounded by snowcapped mountains on all sides, I felt miserable. Somebody suggested I go to the convent school and ask them to give me board & lodging. Whom it was I spoke to I can't remember, but soon I was installed in a lovely room looking to the mountains. They asked me to meals and to see their play (just going on). The next day I spent wandering about in the town and surroundings.

The Consul next day gave me my Visa and off I went again by train through the long tunnel, coming out by day, via Domodossola, a wonderful landscape, passing Lago Maggiore, I think. Arriving in Milan I asked my way through to my friend's house, carrying my heavy trunk all the time. Tram or porter I had to refuse as I had not a penny in my pocket. They lived in a posh district on the periphery of town. Ida Hartmeyer was my friend's name (Swiss living in Italy). For one or two years she was with us in Hirschstetten & Rindbach as paying guest and we all loved her. She showed me around Milan. One night we went to *La Scala* where Toscanini conducted a Mozart Opera. It was breathtaking. One evening Ida and a boyfriend of hers and I went to a bar, having quite a nice time together, but I, innocent of Italian dishonesty, drank a glass of wine, which they had refused but did not like to tell me that it was a bad sort. And oh, how I had to suffer very soon. We rushed home and, my luck, I was violently sick in the bathroom, and by morning felt fine again. So, beware what you drink. Afterwards I heard that this was done also in Vienna, but my brothers, who always guarded us, knew which place was safe and sound to go to.

**Rindbach.** I stayed no more than a week, I think, in Milan, as Christmas was near and I wanted to be with the family, who all came to Rindbach that year and of course, Eugen came too. But nothing was mentioned by him. For some reason we all stayed on for a long time in the Kögerl that year and I fell ill with ear-ache. I had to stay in bed. Among the letters of boyfriends, one very thick one came, of which I did not even guess the handwriting. It was many pages long and signed Eugen (your father). I was excited to read it. A very sketchy outline of his family background, his studies and present work, income and outlook and hopes for the future with a proposal to marry. My head got hotter but my mind was in no doubt of what to answer. As was the custom in those days, I asked my mother before answering and she was most astonished, never having noticed our mutual love, and said "it is out of the question, you are only a child". My father was not there and so I left it until we went back to Hirschstetten.

But my father never contradicting my mother, considered the question and suggested a wait of 2 years. This seemed to me a bit too long. In the meantime I helped my father in the office, with the accounts, doing columns of it and, more often than not, never arriving at the same result twice. Then a good idea came, to send me away again

**Berlin.** This time to Berlin, to live with my Uncle Dorl [*Theodor*], his wife Enole Mendelssohn and their 5 children. By the way, she is the only one still alive [1981], living now in America where her daughter Nora looks after her, over 90 years old. All the children younger than me, but with the oldest, Mimi, I got a very good friend. There was not much to do for me. They had somebody to look after the small children, so I did odd jobs and sewing. The evenings I read most of the time, taking books from their very well stocked library. What interested me most at that time were the Russian authors, Tolstoy, Dostojewsky etc. To give me joy Tante Enole arranged tennis coaching for me in the grounds of her parents, also in the Grünewald district. A lot of invitations from her family came, for various birthdays or other social occasions and so, I got to know the large family of all the Mendelssohns better than in Rindbach.

[photo: Eugen circa 1920]



**In Rindbach** we met them in their big house when invited to musical evenings. Often they had famous musicians in, and family members, many of them professional musicians, giving the most beautiful performances of chamber musik. The atmosphere of this large room, with one side only windows, looking onto a well kept garden and over the lake, was just perfect. Of course their grand-uncle's music was played, and how well it fitted this scene. Grandpa Franz Mendelssohn was still playing and very well too, considering his age and being an amateur. In later years we spent many evenings in Tante Enole's house [*the Dreyeck*] which was nearby, playing cards or all joining in some intelligence game, like putting on 2 corners of a piece of paper words that rhymed and folding this in so the next person did not see it and had to fill in the leftover 2 corners with another pair of words that rhymed. Then the next person had to make a poem out of these 4 words in the corners. Then very often the funniest verses were produced and we all had a good laugh. This sort of social life was repeated in the holiday houses of all these families in this little village, including the Kögerl, the Dreyeck & the Mendelssohn house [*Fichteneck*]. Also other friends coming for their summer holidays we visited in the evenings. All the village visitors knew each other.

By day we met on the bridge crossing the [*river*] Rindbach, by the Kögerl; then down at the shore of the lake or even on the lake, in all the various sizes and shapes of water transport. Once every summer Grandpa Mendelssohn would hire a motor ship (I think called *Luitgard*) and invited whomsoever of the family was there, to sail to Gmunden and go to *Grellinger's* (a famous *Konditorei*) where we got ice cream, which was made with real cream & fruit and allowed us to help ourselves to delicious cakes. For us Pirquets this was a unique pleasure. Nobody else ever invited us, [*we*] being so many. Sometimes we went by motor boat to *Hoisen*, a restaurant under the Traunstein, with its speciality, a cornet of meringue filled with chocolate cream, never to be forgotten.



[above: Fichteneck salon. The house was demolished in 1965] [below: Ludgard & Lenau at Ebensee Landungsplatz]



[Interlude 25-I-1981, Minster-in-Thamet, Kent]. January 21st was the twentieth anniversary of my First Profession [on entering this monastery]. And this year Sister Patricia cooking the community's lunch, and I being lazy, am reading eagerly the book I thought never to come across. By chance mentioned it in the presence of Sister Benedict, who owns a copy. So today I switch over to the psychological cum phylosophical theme, from yesterday's pleasure & family & *gourmandises*. And paradoxically all very much connected, according to the introduction of Erich Fromm's book: *The Art of Loving* [1957].

Behind ALL is Love. The grandmother giving to all her family outings over the lake, never forgetting the stomachs of all of them, the pleasure of being together, the wonder of nature. At least I felt the latter most strongly. The colours of lake & mountains in various stages of the sun's progression, with what comes in the Psalm: "Lord, part the clouds, touch the mountains and they shall smoke" [perhaps Ps 144.5]. This toward sunset when the tops of the higher ranges become the likeness of fire. The gurgling sounds of the bows of the motorboat breaking through the water. This was one of my reasons for preferring the motorboat to the *Dampfer* [paddle-steamer]. Though this too had its special charms, with the strong movement throughout the ship from the turning wheels. Then coming home on a day with hardly any other passengers, you could roam about everywhere. From the captain's high bridge right down into the bowels of the ship, where the smell of hot mashine oil stuck to your nostrils, the giant arms of the mashinery that got the big wheels going round, working away to the calls of the captain and, when slowing down to make a landing, suddenly reversing the wheels to make the ship stop dead. The throwing out of heavy ropes to anker the ship to a safe rest. then bumps and a big bridge run out to the landing stage, emptying passengers down or up the bridge, according to water level of the day. [Photo: paddle-steamer *Gisela* built 1871, photo 1938-45]



.What I connect here with Erich Fromm is the feeling of belonging, of family, including villagers, even the District. This feeling hardly makes an impact in our present age, when every holiday is spent somewhere else. How happy this made my children when, after absence of over 10 years, they went on board the *Dampfschiff* and by the cashier were treated as children of one of the *Kögerl* inhabitants, charged local resident's fare and greeted in broad Upper Austrian dialect, as he mistook Anna's English accent for his own. Happiness is belonging to a place and its people.

**Marriage 1928.** Now, back to my engagement. The Berlin episode was shortened as Tante Enole & Onkel Dorl must have written home, to say I am quite balanced and serious about Eugen, and they did not see why there should be another year of delay to marriage. I was happy in Berlin but, when hearing I can return, was even more so. This must have been spring 1928 and for this same year, in September, the date was arranged for our wedding. The family this year was still in the main part of the Schloss with our *Saal* in good condition as Papi had, the year before, got smartened up all the lower half inside, which had got rather shabby during the years of the soldiers using it as sleeping quarters. My mother was very generous in providing me with a dowry [\*\*\*], and also our dear Tante Änny Zitkovsky and Tante Enole Mendelssohn, who took a great part off my parents shoulders. Money was never flowing richly in our family and where it came from eventually is not known to me. Somebody had to suffer, I am sure. I got dozens of linnen sheets and other necessary things in this category which filled a big cupboard. The *Rosenthal* China all in 3 dozens. Glass from the famous *Lobmeyer*, silver cutlery from the *Pinschof* family and when we moved away from Hirschstetten to Vienna, Stadiongasse 4, my father let me take out of 'Ten what I needed and liked, to furnish our 3 room flat. Most of them inlayed and hand-carved pieces of various periods.



### Hochzeit von **Netti Pirquet** und **Eugen Pinschof**, Hirschstetten, 16 Sept 1928

| <i>Mitzi Pinschof    Front row, from left</i> | <i>Annemirl v. Pirquet</i>   | <i>Back row</i>             |
|-----------------------------------------------|------------------------------|-----------------------------|
| Theodor v. Pirquet                            | Karl Pinschof                | Maria v. Wienerwelten       |
| Hermine v. Janda                              | Ditti v. Eiselsberg          | Hubert v. Pirquet           |
| Silverio v. Pirquet                           | Ernst Dehne                  | Florette v. Pirquet         |
| Johanna « Netti » v. Pirquet                  | Fritz v. Haimberger          | Rudolf v. Wienerwelten      |
| Silvio Pirquet (junior)                       | Eva (Pinschof) Hochfilzer    | Molly Everitt (later Orley) |
| Eugen Rudolf Pinschof                         | Anni (Haimberger) Zitkovszki | Toni v. Pirquet             |
| Johanna (Haimberger) v. Pirquet,              | Toni Gerstner                | Maria v. Tavonat            |
| Pfarrer von Kagra (parish priest)             | Louise (Pinschof) Gerstner   | Fipsi Pinschof              |
| Mathilde v. Herzfeld                          | Konrad v. Konradsheim        |                             |
| Fritz Pinschof                                | Harry v. Zitkovszky          |                             |

**Our wedding** was a great occasion for all participants; I think we were 50. The Gerstners, related by marriage to a cousin of Eugen's [*Louise Gerstner, née Pinschof 1900~1992*], provided the layout plus all food, drinks & service. I hope that they, being among the guests, could enjoy it, as all went off flawless. Our little chapel (photo next page) was just the right size and gave the whole ceremony its intimate warm atmosphere. On a photo you will see who all was there. All family speeches by various members and by my father, who was a bit moved to let me slip out.

[\* **note, regarding the dowry:** a big railway goods container, packed full with all sorts of costly things, was awaiting shipment in Trieste when war broke out. So there it stayed safely for several years until Allied troops approached and it was urgently transported back to Hirschstetten just in time to be destroyed by the bombing. Trieste was not bombed].



Schloßkapelle

But I did not leave straight away anyhow, as he gave us the tower to live in and furnished it for as long as we had not our flat. Even in those days it was very difficult to find living quarters in Vienna, where Eugen had to work in the very centre of town, opposite the *Stephansdom* in Thomas Cook [Wagon-Lits] Travel Agency, Bank department, where he worked after his studies. Vati was never happy with his job, nor was it of his choosing, but by necessity had to take it and stick to it, as there was also great unemployment all over Austria, and only owing to personal references he got this post. The Pinschofs were well off financially before the Great War, owning the Pinschof Bank in the centre of Vienna [Spiegelgasse]. Vati's father Anton died when he was 4, and his mother when he was 13 [both from TB, 1904 & 1913 respectively], and financial affairs were given into the hand of a solicitor who later managed to lose every penny for them, and they [Karl, Eugen & Eva] had a hard struggle to get through their school years. An aunt, Mizzi Pinschof, replaced their mother, looking frail and very timid and not at all fit to cope with three children, surprised everybody by how well she managed. I liked her very much, though she was not at all my type. Her complete unselfishness and modesty gave her the power to do her job well.

[Below: first floor sign in the Spiegelgasse, Vienna, date circa 1900, now under Denkmalschutz, close to the Graben. Although the Pinschof family lost everything, their good reputation was useful enough to BREISACH PINSCHOF & SCHOELLER Bankkommanditgesellschaft until 1984, after which the business was renamed simply Schoeller Bank]



**When we moved from 'Ten [Hirschstetten] to Vienna,** it was not easy for me to be stuck between high houses. But, doing the housework by myself, I found enough to occupy me and learn, to keep me from moaning. It had its attractions. We had all the social facilities at hand. The opera round the corner nearly, the *Burgtheater* opposite, a small but famous theatre a few streets up from us, many friends and relations living within walking distance. So we were well drawn into the social and cultural life of Vienna. We had some anxious times, when I realised no child was on the way after 2 years. Then our dear house doctor, an uncle of Eugen's, sent me to a gynaecologist who, after a long series of injections and an operation, succeeded, and we had our first child Anna on 15 May 1934 (nearly 6 years after marriage) in the Loew Sanatorium, where Maria and John also came into the world [\*].

[\* Anna was Silverio senior's first grandchild, but, was almost pipped at the post, one day later, by another (in the illegitimate line which his brother Clemens had adopted in 1926), namely Hans Peter Pirquet on 16 May 1934, at the *Rudolfspital*, Wien XIX]



**Bisamberg.** In the days of waiting we [had] started saving for a property in the country. Every Sunday Eugen and I went out into the country, getting fresh air and nearness to nature which both of us hungered for, when one day we went over the Danube and landed in the village of Bisamberg which we found delightful. How it was that we found out that a property was for sale I cannot remember. In 1933 we bought a strip of land on which in the next year we started building our house. An ideal spot in our opinion, in a village, but looked in [upon] from nowhere as the 2 long sides were vineyard and orchard. Down at the end of the ground was the small village side street from which one could not see where the house would stand and, on the other end, on the top of the hill, left and right, were the roofs of wine cellars; and we had our strip closed up by a big wooden door. Soon after Anna was born we took a small flat for the summer in the house nearby our ground, to see how the building went on. Prior to building we had a water diviner, to find for us where to dig a well. Just about 3 yards away from the intended house, he pointed out a spot and the digging started. It took a long time and was a difficult job, but one day they struck water, touching the channel that ran across our ground; they call it the *Ader*, the vain [vein]. Just prior to that some ingenious pump had been manufactured, to be put into the water, and was installed and worked flawless until after World War II and may still do so, but I did not inquire about it. [2-02-81]

We took a young architect, husband of the youngest Tavonat girl, Elisabeth. He did everything well, and the house was planned so that we could, without disturbing the original layout, extend it if we got too many. Downstairs was kitchen, small bedroom & sitting room and a little room with built-in benches as dining room. When Opapa & Omama came on Sundays, we still had enough room for others to sit at table. Upstairs was one big room and one bed built into the sloping roof and all around built-in cupboards [behind which later were found spaces for hiding girls from the Russians.. so I was told]. Yes, and one small room was upstairs too, where Anna & Maria slept.

**The garden** was a long strip, 1/3 above the house was flat, and below the house 1/3 was a steep slope on which many fruit trees & *Ribisel* [red]-currant bushes stood. The middle third was flat. We had so much fruit that even with jam, bottling & juice making, we had loads over; so once we sold some. The fruit I miss was apricots of various varieties, & raspberries. All very sweet. The ground was ideal for growing. Opapa's head gardener came to help us planting, grafting the fruit trees of less good quality, and years later we had the luck to sample some when

Susi [*Leitmeier*], Karl Pinschof's wife, brought us a hamper full. Delicious pears, mainly from the grafted trees. Her sister Lotte, who acquired the property in 1939 when we had to leave, still spends winters in Bisamberg. [3-02-81]

**The house** had some special items, like the hand-wrought iron door handles and, wherever wood was exposed, we had it born-sealed [*Ronseal?*] only, so that when one of us visited after the war (not me) he said it all looked exactly as when new. One aspect I especially liked was **the view towards the valley of the Danube**, and in the foreground the very typical church steeple. Then a brought [*broad*] stretch of agricultural land and a hill closing this in, with a Castle we sometimes visited as children, with Opapa who knew the owner [*Count Wilczek*]. I think it was called *Kreuzenstein* [*photo at start of Part II*]. It was kept like a museum, all the old furniture still in. The inner court, as it was in olden days, with open staircase to the upper quarters, holes in the wall for shooting at enemies. The rooms all furnished with medieval furniture. A collection of very good old statues. Going about was learning by seeing, how people lived 500 or more years ago. In the big ground floor kitchen was a solid oak table, so long and thick that one must assume it was brought in before the walls were closed up, as the very small windows & doors could not have been the possible entry. It was another day excursion [*from Hirschstetten*] per horse drawn wagon and all the household taking part. Bringing food with us, kept warm in hay boxes, and eating it beside the dike surrounding the castle. The drawbridge closing behind us (raised with strong chains of iron) making a most frightening clatter. This was a most strenuous day for the horses, being many kilometres away. You had to go through Kagran & Floridsdorf, then a long way past Bisamberg, through the long stretch of fields on both sides and the Danube not far away, while not seeing it, as at this part of its course a broad band of bushes separated it from us, called the *Auen*. Bisamberg village was small, consisting of smallholdings, living modestly from producing wine, corn, potatoes & asparagus. The hillside on which stood our property was very sandy soil and, all long the steep and narrow humpy lane, it had its wine cellars built underground in long narrow tunnels. [15-02-81]

After the Second World War, when Russian troops first occupied this part of Austria [*the 4 Allied Powers occupied Austria until 1955*], the soldiers went about on this hill with long iron rods, pushing them through the sandy soil to find the cellars, then dug up an opening and drained wine off the big barrels until they lay dead drunk under them. Another good feature in this village was the baker. He produced large round brown bread, that was a mixture of three different kinds of flower [*flour*]. It was tasty, moist and kept well. I introduced him to our Delicatessen shop opposite our Vienna flat, and it was not long before he had plenty of customers from sending his loaves regularly in. You must know the size of these loaves, diameter not less than 1½ feet. It took some days to get through it but it never got stale or dry, with a lovely taste. Nowhere in Austria have I found the like. The wines produced in these villages were also of very good quality and in late summer the farmers put up tables & benches outside the wine cellars and people brought sandwiches and had a good sip. Singing and laughter with fresh air gave the townspeople a good evening out. It is called a *Heuriger*, meaning the wine newly made of that year's grapes.

**Silvio junior** [1919~2006]. Before writing about our sudden departure from Bisamberg, I want to tell you a bit more about our years in Vienna, in the Stadiongasse 4, between *Parlament* and *Rathaus*. In the earlier years we had our dear Silvio, my youngest brother, staying with us for his school days, Monday to Saturday. For Sunday he went to our parents in Hirschstetten. We got on very well, he being such a nice, considerate, modest, interested boy. Should we be out for the evening, he would insist on making his own supper, which was always semolina milk pudding. He loved doing it and said he liked it, I think he really did! When the babies arrived in quick succession he was still with us, not minding the change of life they brought into the flat. All was dominated by them. Constant baby-care was going on, as is necessary, and Silvio watching and not minding that he was not now our only focus.

**With the children in Vienna.** When Maria was born [2-IV-1936] I had to have help for the time it took, in the sanatorium and during after-care. In those days the doctors insisted on the mother staying in bed for at least 3 weeks. I am sure the practice nowadays of getting out of bed after a few days is much better. It made me more tired and lame. We divided the various duties. I kept mostly to looking after the children, every day shopping and dragging the 3 children and pram for at least 2½ hours to the nearby parks. In summer this was easier but for the cold season it took time to get all the warm leggings, coats & shoes on. If cold you could not sit down but had to push the pram round all the time. I was lucky finding my cousin Elisabeth Starlinger [*née Eiselsberg 1904, killed in an air raid 1944*] was there too, always with 2 more children than I had. Then I made friends with a German mother, Annelies Dorn., who had a girl in Anna's age and they played nicely together, or with all the Starlingers and we all went about together. Some days our Anna, the girl we had for helping, took the children to the park and I did the housework and cooking. Your father saw little of his children. When he left in the morning often they were still asleep. At lunch time they were put to bed for an hour and, in the evening, father was seldom back before you were put to bed. Only on Sundays could he be with you. As babies, father was not keen to pick you up in case you slipped out of his arms, not really being used to gripping you securely. But as soon as you ran about, he was keen to play with you and go for walks in woods and lanes, especially when we came on weekends to the Oed.



Bisamberg  
1939



[photo rechts: das  
Pichlerhaus in der Oed,  
Mathilde Trauner 1941]

**Die Oed im Piestingtal,**  
Niederösterreich,  
was 2 hours train journey  
from Vienna to the south  
where a quite formidable  
group of mountains was  
[still is]. The Oed was in  
the group of lower  
mountains with lots of fir  
trees, planted for gathering  
resin, to give the people in  
this district a little income,  
as it was mostly steep hills  
& narrow valleys with a  
stream running through. In  
our day you still got trout  
out of these rivers but,  
soon the chemical  
industries polluted them  
[especially the canal serving  
the metallurgical industry,



formerly belonging to Eugen's Rosthorn ancestors, starting with Matthew Rosthorn of Preston, Lancashire 1721-1805. Family legend has him fleeing persecution of Catholics, becoming a Protestant in Austria, making a fortune supplying brass buttons to the military..]. Not only the fish died, all life around died and the [canal] was stinking, ugly and slow flowing. When you came by train into the [valley] you passed miles of flat stony landscape, where nothing used to grow [hence the name Oed] until our Empress Maria Theresa had made investigations to bring some livelihood for the poor people in the deserted land. And she succeeded, by finding a new kind of potato that would grow there and soon became popular in Austria, for the famous Kippler Salad, a Sunday lunch regular. A longish twisted sausage-sized greasy potato, really the best kind for this dish and this district was very grateful for this find.

**Before you children were born**, we often went for long outings. I can still remember one with Karl Pinschof and Susi. Towards late afternoon we went with the train that ran through the valley to its terminal, about half a hour's ride, and started our climb to the summit of the *Schneeberg* (almost 7000 ft: circa 2000m). It was a lovely clear day and, as it got dark, we had a deep blue sky and stars just coming out of the last group of trees; suddenly we all stopped to look up at the sky as a flash of light drew us to it. And what did we see? A bright long tail flashing through the sky for perhaps 5 to 10 seconds, only to disappear as sudden as it came. Great astonishment for all of us. It might have been a meteor, far away. Next day some papers reported on it, but not many people saw it, as it was already dark. We walked on, now seeing better, since no trees or bushes obstructed our view and, after a few hours climb, we arrived at the mountain hut. But we did not rest for more than a couple of hours as we wanted to go to the highest point to watch the rising sun. And we were in time to see this and never will I forget the beauty of it. But this outing had another excitement. We did not go right down but stayed on the shoulders of several mountains all going in the direction of the Oed. A most charming walk, changing from shrub trees to meadows, all fresh green and herb scented in the warm sun, when, just going on the crest with meadows on one side and forest on the other slope, meeting a herd of goats. None of us being very happy but, not saying it, went on when suddenly a he-goat ran wildly towards us. Nobody except me had the slightest defence to hand. When I saw this herd I picked a long strong thistle and my luck, the goat's face did not like this and after some struggle, we two parted. Karl and Susi nowhere to be seen. As soon as we were safe we sat down and rested at the edge of the forest. Karl had discovered a sandy patch with a deep hole. [2-III-81]

In it was a cruel spider, that would reach out for small insects that could not climb up any more, as the sand rolled them further down with every movement, and then out came the long fingers of the spider and got his victim, to devour it. It was a full day's walk on the crest of several hills, in the most various vistas you can imagine, so full of beauty, that we never felt tired. My most beloved Larch trees, herb scented meadows, dark pine woods, with the little earthenware pots hanging on the stem, with a channel carved down to catch the resin, which gave off a lovely scent. When you think, in Canada they do the same to the maple trees and get sweet honey! [31-III-81]

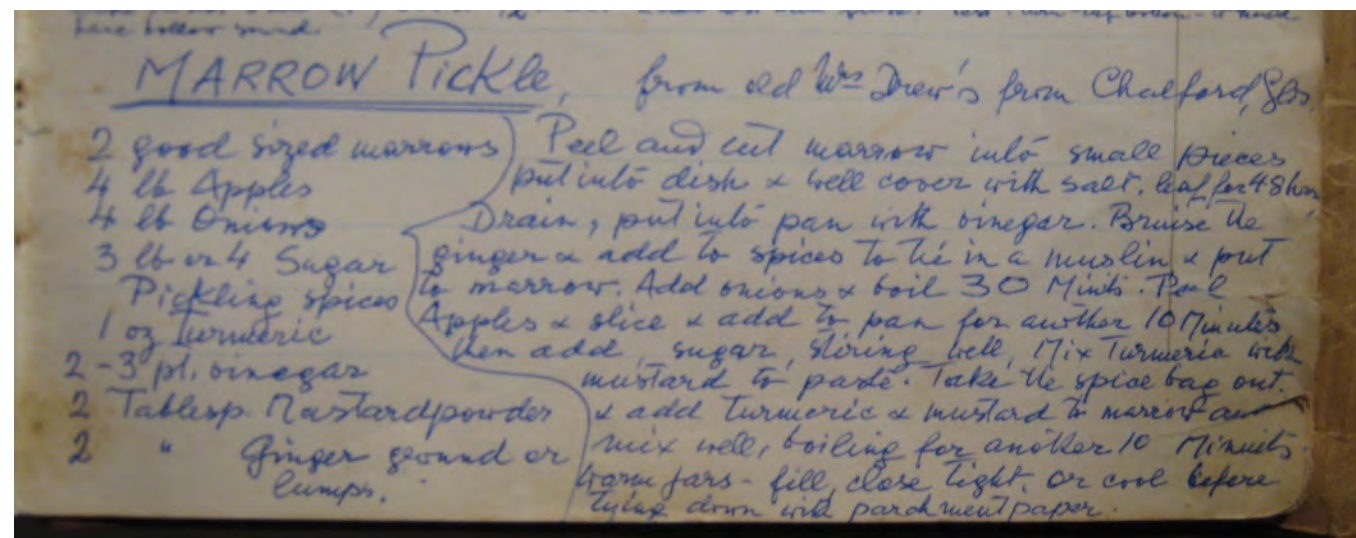
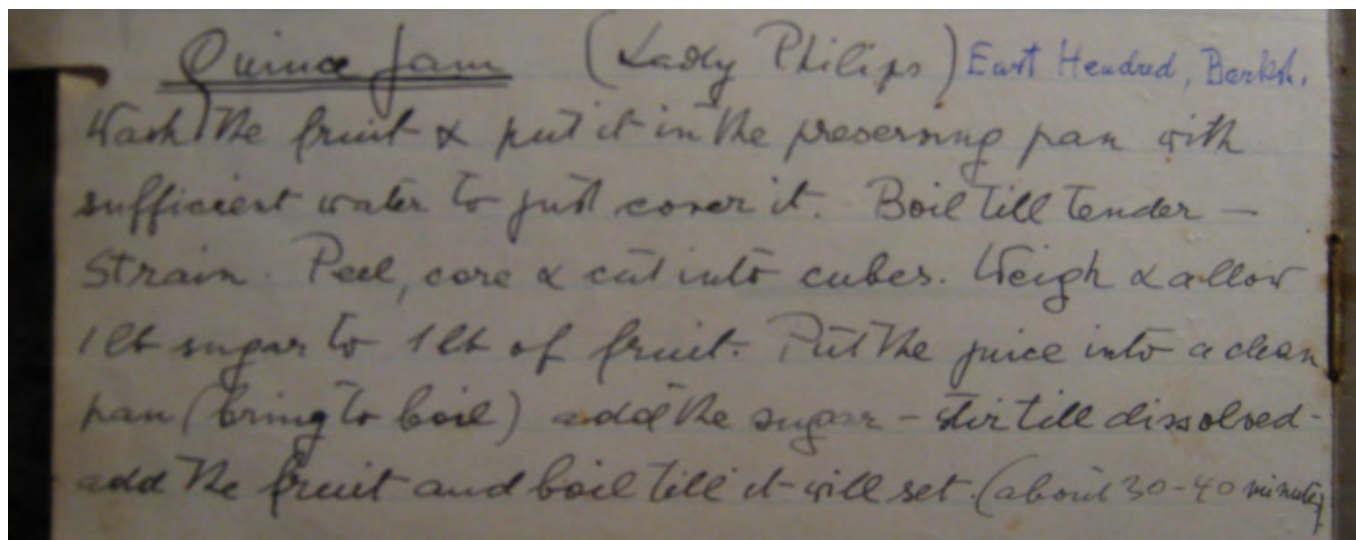
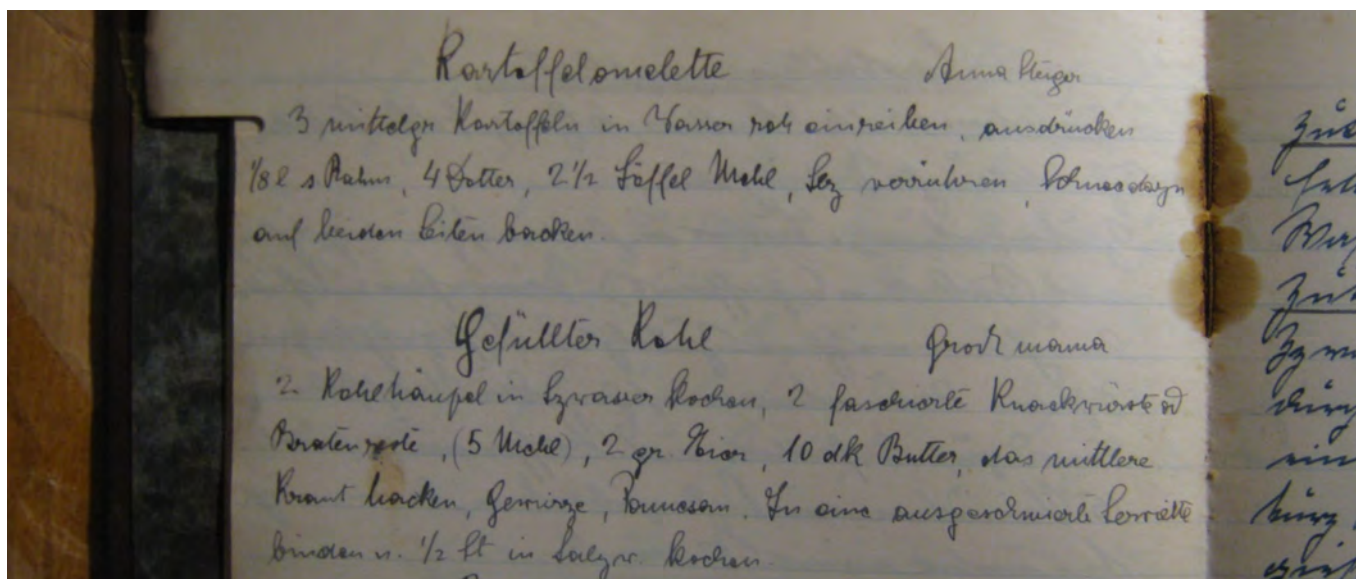
**Since married I only went a few times to Rindbach**, as Eugen's *Tante* Mathilde Herzfeld, a sister of his mother, invited us every summer to her house in the Oed. She was a teacher of English (also tried it on me, with only a short duration, seeing I was not so keen nor as quick as her very select pupils, all on a much higher level and with urgent motives). She was a very loveable person and adored all her nephews and nieces, the only near relations left to her. My father joined us for weekends, when the children gave him great joy. Anna about 4 then, Maria 2 and John 1. I made some really good photos with Opapa and you three in the pine wood above the house. Aunt Mathilde lived all the [rest of the] year in Budapest. Her late husband [Victor] was a musician playing mainly the violin. They had a rare Bösendorfer concert piano, not the very long ones. Anna should have got it, but the war was on and Auntie died [12-V-1941, Silvio junior representing the family at the funeral, in Wehrmacht uniform] and nothing could be done; the piano is still with friends of Mathilde's in Budapest, who use it, which is only good. Karl would know their name [distant cousin Pál Kertész & daughter Noemi, whom the editor visited 2008, knew nothing]

**The Herzfeld house in Oed** was built about the same time as the Kögerl and, if I am not wrong, it was a butcher's house. Solidly built with a huge door and a passage through the house into a small courtyard, and a covered back yard where surely the butcher had his horse and cart. When it was a Herzfeld possession, they built a story on, to take all the family in the summer. Now it is sold since a good many years, the Oed having lost its charm and attraction, through the polluted river. But the factory is still working, or better than ever, I heard once. What they produce I do not know. This huge building was also no attraction. The Dehne family also had a house there but it was much nicer situated, higher up, hidden in woods. Onkel Robi Dehne was our G.P. and an uncle of Eugen's. They belonged to our circle of friends and had three children in our age, each a great friend of one of us. This link was for me a help, when being introduced to the Oed with its large family: Rosthorn, Pichler & Leitmeier, in whose house Eugen was very much at home [see sketch of Pichler house above]. They had a tennis court and on this we often played. But I really preferred wandering about in the romantic atmosphere of its surrounding hills, meadows & pinewoods. Very much easier to negotiate than even our most modest walks in Rindbach. [6-IV-81]

Having spent all my summers in Rindbach, we were used to the more sombre, harsh, rocky & steep mountains, so you understand why I use a word which is not in my line: "romantic". Compared with such narrow confines as we were brought up in, these were low hills, all smoothly rounded with soft underwood vegetation, trees of quite a different character too, low, with mostly naked stems and umbrella like top-growth. The famous pines, which gave a delightful scent when the sun was out. The flora was also quite different, herbs too, which gave some places a lovely atmosphere. And what astonished me was the scarce population and the poverty of the local people. So you could go for a day and meet [meet] nobody, see no houses or Alms. It seems the ragged [rugged] Upper Austria found more opportunity for her people. Was it the Lakes that did it? Perhaps the salt factory and soda and other mineral quarries. Fishing produced only a small percentage of food per year. This latter, I hear, after the [Allied occupation 1945-55] and the disastrous elimination of all fish by American soldiers shooting them [hand grenades in fact], got a phantastic lift up by careful planning of fish breeding by Austrian fishery experts. A lot of this breeding was done [at a place] just on our way down to the lake. We knew the fisherman who was the keeper of these pans and he tried to explain many details to us. But not enough to really understand, as it is a process over several years. Mr [Ferdinand] Nussbaumer who lived for years in the Kögerl, whose wife [Lilli] for years looked after our parents in their old age and then Opapa until he died, was an amateur fisherman. Now I hear he gave up his office job and does only fishing, which gives him pleasure and, what's more, a better income. All Upper Austrian lakes, I hear, have become full of good fish and give the local people a good money. And as it is with all crafts, they do it now with excellent method, reducing backaches and time of work. Here again, out of an evil some good came. [photo: Maria & Hansl links, Anna rechts, mit Opapa, Sommer 1938]



Wurstkarte  
Zutaten: 300 g Rindfleisch, 2 Eier, 180 g Zucker, 200 g Butter,  
 400 g Mehl, 1/2 l Pfeffer, Pfeffer, 1 Teelöffel Salz, 200 g Mehl.  
Zubereitung: Man vermischt Zutaten in angegebenem  
 Reihenfolge, rührt dann von 2 Eiern das Eiweiß  
 in Mehl in Vorform in. Rührt die Eiers  
 mit folgenden Teilen. Man rührt 500 g Mehl in  
 1/2 l Milch einrühren in vermischt dies mit 600 g Rindfleisch  
 und 500 g Zucker.



### PART III

**Leaving Austria.** Your father came to England in April 1939, for political reasons. He worked for *Thomas Cook Wagons-Lits*, Banking Department [*in Vienna*]. When Hitler came to Austria [*March 1938*], Vati knew it won't be long and he will lose his job, and so it was in the early months of 1939. His firm called him to London to discuss possibilities of transferring to another town where they had offices, and so they found one. It was just coming out shortly before war was declared, Vati was offered the directorship in Paris, the Head Office. From April he had been in London and we followed him only a few days before war broke out. [7-III-82]

In early September [*late August in fact*] we – Anna 5, Maria 3, John nearly 2 yrs old and I -- left Opapa in Hirschstetten, heavy hearted, to take a train to Ostend, ship to Dover & train to London, plus 2 very large hanging cases, packed for all of us with all-year-round garderobe, photo albums, a few books even, endless shoes, even some towels, all of which I had to carry, as at that time no porters were to be seen. It was a frightening journey, as the stories came through of people being taken out at Aachen (the frontier station), having to undress completely, to be sure we did not smuggle valuables out of the country, some then sent to concentration camp, children and all. But I trusted and prayed, and then fell asleep, as the children did from the moment I had put them into the bunks. Only to be woken up at Aachen by officers asking for our papers. A long wait followed as it was a long train, packed full. Eventually, after return of our papers, the train went into motion. I listened with anxiety, trying to see where the train was going, but in the end I calmed down as the speed reached its normal tempo. I went back to sleep too. After a long time we reached Ostend and got into the waiting room ready to go on the ship, dragging all the luggage and the children helping (except John) as much as was in their power. The crossing was good, but John was tired, being used to an afternoon rest which he did not get, and was (unusually for him) restless and unhappy.

**England.** At last we arrived at Dover and a large crowd on the quay. Dragging nearer to the steps leading down and out, we all looked down, and suddenly John shouted *Vati..!* and soon we all saw him. He managed to come up, not easy as all traffic went down. John [*Hansl*] flung himself round his neck, leant his head on his shoulder and was instantly asleep. With one hand Vati secured the boy and with the other picked up one of our cases, so we had an easier exodus and a quicker run to the waiting train, which soon started off. All three children very tired but happy to have again Vati among us. In Victoria Station, Tante Florette awaited us. Our destiny was to travel further than Florette's. It was thought out, lovingly & considerate, that we should reduce our number destined to emerge on Carmen [*née Pinschof*] & Arthur Harris [*in Gloucestershire*]. So John, it was thought, was to go with Florette to our friend Molly Orley, who had also a little John of the same age, and spend some time there until Aunt and Uncle got used to the invasion of Pinschofs. But we had to shorten the time, as John could not settle down happily. He did not eat, hardly slept and was very unhappy. One consolation he found in Molly's household. They had a young kitten and this John would hold behind his back by its tail, and so, wandering up and down in their small garden. But Florette saw it was not good for John and phoned us up. Immediately Vati fetched him, to bring him to us in Gloucestershire. But the scene at Victoria Station on arrival from Austria, when we had to take 2 taxis, I will never forget. Florette and John had to take a train from another station than we, and when the 2 taxis started, they soon had to separate and John, noticing this, gave a terrifying cry, which pierced each one's heart, but we could not stop any more and hoped he would soon forget about it, knowing Florette very well and loving her. After all he was only two years old. But even when we had him back with us at Skateshill House, he was greatly changed. The happy, easy going boy he used to be, was now fearful, untrusting and always behind us. He would not go to sleep alone for a long time and for many years after, and would not leave me out of sight. [8-III-82]

**Chalford**, Gloucestershire. So Skateshill House was our first stop, thought to be only for a short periode, until Vati would get his new job, but things turned out very differently. We had just about 8 days of getting used to Auntie Carmen and Uncle Arthur's house and new routine, when the radio started giving out ominous news, which ended in the statement of England declaring war on Hitler's regime. None of us could swallow down our supper. Faces were anxious and pale. Luckily the children did not realise the impact this would make on everybody's future, and we not only were in a foreign land, we were without a penny nor a job in sight for Eugen for a year. Not only did he automatically lose his newly proposed engagement for Paris, he was not allowed to work for payment. So there we were, stuck, but never a sigh or hard word from either Carmen or Arthur. They soon lost all their young domestic staff and we tried as best we could to replace them, though for me a certain time had to be allowed to see to the childrens various needs, The garden was a big one, so afternoons I went out doing jobs which Carmen wanted done. First Vati joined us, but soon a neighbour chicken farmer asked him to help all the day and he did so gladly for all the time we had there.

**Skateshill House** was a big roomy building, with 4 double bedrooms and 3 single, as well as large kitchen, larder, scullery, laundry and servants dining room. A large dining room, hall, parlour & smoking room. A most exquisite staircase to the 2 upper floors in the middle of the house with a glass dome to give it light. In and outside [Georgian] architecture most cleverly designed. Straight lines and good proportions. We had one double and one single room to ourselves on the top floor. But there were still a number of empty rooms. Wartime regulations made it necessary to take people in from the danger areas. A nephew of Arthur's with wife & two boys in same age group as our children arrived soon, and two families from Birmingham. So now the house was really fully occupied. In spite of everyone trying to make the Birmingham families happy, it soon showed that they hated living in the countryside, being real town dwellers. Also the relations of Arthur did not like country life, and they went back to their homes in town, which by then had a good amount of bombing, but they took the risk. So the months flew by, the war got fiercer and the news worth [worse]. The danger of invasion was real, as the Germans battled through France & Belgium. We (Vati & I) had to go before a tribunal, to be classified as to our integrity, being foreigners [enemy aliens]. But Vati had good references from his former employers, so we got a free pass.

**The Cottage.** Christmas came and Carmen excelled herself in making it as homely as possible and we all had a very happy few days, and the children very happy as Auntie got them all exciting presents. The bombing and the fighting on the land got fiercer and more people wanted to get out of London. But we still lived with Carmen, and when the first year was over, Vati was allowed to look for payed work and soon got some in a beer factory in Stroud. The chicken farmer gave us a cottage nearby, we got furniture & other household necessities in a sale, terribly cheap, otherwise we would have had no chance to start up on our own. We tried to make it habitable and even got the garden dug and planted potatoes & vegetables before we were ready to move in, so as to survive on our very low salary. It was good of Auntie and Uncle to have us for so long, but we felt we must do what we can to take this burden off her shoulders, housing five of us. We never got the feeling we were unwanted, and our departure was with a feeling of getting on our own. We moved into our cottage which had one upstairs room under the roof and one longish rather dark downstairs room, as the windows were very small. The kitchen was very primitive, to say the least. It did not matter as we could not afford exorbitant meals anyhow.

**Florette**, who worked in Stroud hospital as nurse & midwife [photo], visited us soon after we moved in and, what did she bring along, a kitten. Of course the children loved it, but I was not happy and said nothing. The kitten was not house trained and left the most ghastly smellings on our new concrete floor in the kitchen. You know how I detested these smells. But after 2 weeks, she started to understand better and even I got fond of her. You will soon hear why.

**Internment [16-V-1940].** It must have been nearly 3 weeks after we moved in when, at 7 a.m. we were woken up by fierce knocking on our front door. Opening it, still in dressing gowns, we found two policemen who told Vati to get ready to go into internment. So I packed him a small suitcase with what I thought would be practical for the situation and he departed from us with great anxiety. Not a word of where he was to be taken nor why. All our questions were cut short. I don't think the children grasped really what happened. I could not understand it at all as, not long before, we got a free pass given by the authorities, which was marked into our passports. I don't think the policeman even looked into the passport. This was not his job. He was only ordered to fetch Vati.

[15-III-82]



So now, heart sunk deep, I was faced [with the question:] to live on what? What I felt hardest was that they did not tell us where Vati was taken. He gave me his salary from his last week at the brewery, which was all he had and I tried to get through somehow and keep us alive. [Less than] A fortnight later we got another very early morning knock. I woke up trembling [27-V-1940], opened the door, this time a policewoman, sternly telling me to pack up for me & the children, to go into internment, for an unknown length of time. So again it was our large suitcase, that had to take all we most needed. Aunt Carmen heard of it and came to suggest she take one child into her house & care. My decision had to be instantaneous. Anna, the oldest (6 yrs), I thought would be best, as I feared so much a terrible life to come, which she with her 6 years would experience and suffer from more than the 4 and 2 year-olds. With a very heavy heart I gave her over to Carmen. Not that I feared Anna would be badly treated but, how will she take it and what would be the outcome. But all had to be done in a hurry, and giving the kitten to the neighbours, we had to leave. The house was locked up and the policewoman took the keys with her, all our belongings left in it. I mention the kitten because we got very fond of it, even I. It had been when sitting alone at night, the children asleep upstairs, I lonely & worried, having to write letters, when Kitty would jump on my shoulders and push her paws against my pen. If I tried to get her down, next minute she appeared on the table to again scrape against my fingers and pen, until I gave up and then she sat near me and burred. Years later I heard she was found dead behind the house. She would not take food from the neighbours and was too young to know how to catch mice.

[15-III-82]

Now began a seemingly endless journey of great variety. First hours of waiting in Stroud police station, with patches of new internees coming until, late in the afternoon, we were bundled into coaches for a longish drive to where, nobody knew. After a lot of villages and a big town, we faced again into the countryside. But not for very long, when we stopped and saw newly built long wards, big-windowed. It was a newly built hospital and the Stroud contingent was put into one. Mattresses were brought in and we had to settle down there as best we could. At last a call came for tea and sandwiches, served by kind WVS [Womens Volunteer Service]. Good thing, as we were starved and ate what we could, though some people hardly touched them as of course they were not filled with delicacies. Yes, in Stroud, who would join us but Florette and soon another Austrian girl from Gmunden OÖ, and we felt we were enough of us not to let our hearts sink. It was cold in the night and of course we only had our own clothes and very few thin blankets. But the children slept through happily. Early next morning we had to get ready to leave again, and were told to roll up the mattresses. But oh, we could not get them off the floor! They were stuck, as the floor was newly painted and still wet. I think it was varnish. Poor matron, she looked so unhappy when seeing this.

Coaches waiting outside to take us further, and somebody recognised Bristol. It was then an endless drive before we stopped outside very derelict looking old barracks with no window glass but boards over them, which made it even worth. We stumbled up some steps and had to go into an large longish room, at one end were a few very small cubicles with double bunks inside. Tea and sandwiches again. The lavatories in a deplorable state, blocked, wet and dirt everywhere. But I had taken a potty with me and was glad to have this for the children as they were soon put to sleep in the bunk allotted to them. John and Maria were a joy not only for us, but the crowd near us. They played and laughed and smiled whenever they got a chance. This was Liverpool, not far from the harbour, where next morning we were driven to a ship. Funny, I don't remember what kind of ship it was or any detail, probably because by that time I was exhausted.

**The Isle of Man.** We landed at Douglas [31-V-1940], and were brought to Port St Mary, to live there for 1½ years in a private guest house, with 2 young girls and an oldish father as owner and filled with most of the Stroud batch, 20 people, among them 3 children. Florette & Austrian friend in one room and I with children in another, one double bed and one child's cot. All nice and clean with bathroom on every floor. Soon we organised a chores routine among all of us. Cooking, cleaning house, common room, stairs & laundry etc. We soon found that the other group, Germans, all belonging to Rudolf Steiner's Antroposophes, just did not turn up for any job except meals. So, rather than quarrel, we did it ourselves and still found time to have lovely walks along the coast. An ideal place for children. Port St Mary itself was situated along one of these wide sandy bays and we made good use of it, swimming whenever it was warm enough. One week I was on kitchen duty and managed to slip down to the beach to have a dip, and had to run a long way out in shallow water. The water was not clear as a good wind blew and, running through very quickly, I did not notice a big boulder and knocked my right foot, which was very painful but, I went out with all the pain and had a swim. Coming back to land, walking and strapping into my sandals was no fun. Having no time to squander, I had to ignore it and do my duty in the kitchen. A lot of swelling round the big toe, which three weeks later one of the internees with whom we got akwainted, seeing me limping, examined it and said it was broken but, too late to do anything. To this day, especially when the frost starts, I feel it. In winter it could be rather unblest along the quay, when the wind blew the water right up to the houses and one could not open the front door for pressure of the gale. I did not fare well then, as I got very strong headache and later it was explained to me why. On this coast the water is especially rich in iodine, that causes this.

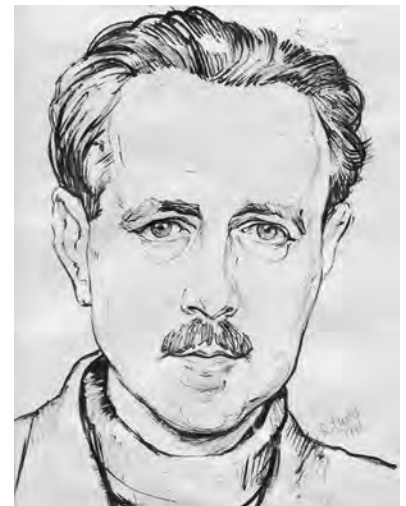


[«Hirschstetten, 28-I-1941, Liebe Netti, liebe Florette, diese Photo ist ein Schnapschuss den ein Strassenphotograph im November 1940 von uns gemacht hat und zwar am Stefansplatz. Im Hintergrund rechts wirst du das erzbischöfliche Palais erkennen. Also so schauen wir daweil noch aus! Bin neugierig, ob uns die Enkelkinder erkennen werden? ... Papi ». Posted in Budapest]

**And while nearly a year passed by, we still did not know where our husbands were.** Suddenly news came, we are going to see them, as we shall have to decide whether we volunteer to be shipped to Australia. Some senior military official explained this to our men, and so, besides the great joy again to know where they are and even that we shall see them, this unwanted decision was spoiling the great meeting. It was held in St Mary 's hotel, a few houses along from us, where all the Jews had their quarters. We had to leave the children behind. Wopp Dehne, married to Fritz Eirich, was stationed in this hotel for some unknown reason and also joined our meeting. She is still and he too living in America, after some exciting happenings for him. To be good citizens we all agreed to be transported to Australia, more or less under moral pressure. I will never forget this meeting, Vati looking very thin and pale. After a couple of hours all was over and the men sent back to Douglas [prison] where they were stationed all this time, though we did not know. But now our anxiety started. What about Anna? I went from one authority to another, waiting for hours in long cues in Port Erin which was a longish walk from our place. It took a month to get our wish granted and Carmen was informed to have Anna and her luggage all ready for a certain date at a certain port. It was one of my many nightmares, fearing it won't work out and we shall be forced to ship without her, when suddenly the news seeped through that the first boat with only male refugees on board was torpedoed and sunk, and only a handful survived. Among these was the doctor who examined my toe, an Italian. But poor Wopp heard that her husband was sent off without her, and you can imagine her state. But he got to Australia, being among the lucky survivors on this ship. So many died, as it was overcrowded... We were the lucky ones and our Anna stayed at Skateshill House and we here in England. *[After diligent research, including of passenger lists, the Editor cannot determine which ship this was, among the many that were lost in the Atlantic and elsewhere].*

*[left : Isle of Man, interned enemy aliens with their host on the front steps, Netti in back row, second from left, Maria & John below. Photo from Manx National Heritage Library, seen by chance on BBC-TV by John Pinschof in 2007]*

*[right: Eugen Rudolf Pinschof 1899~1949, charcoal sketch 1940, artist not identified. Original chez Maria Pinschof, Islington]*



**A few months later the husbands joined their families** and Eugen came to Port St Mary. It was lovely to have Vati among us. Not long after, the commander of all the internees had us (Vati & me) summoned and started rather shyly to say how sorry they are to have us among the internees as we should never have been collected, knowing we had a free pass. But it was now done and, as I have mentioned in previous notes, we were the richer for it, not in money but in experience and what resulted from it. Vati became a really happy man and enriched through an Austrian priest who was in his group, having also lived near Stroud [*Clement Sandkuhl, 1898-1971, who later joined the Benedictine monks at Prinknash Abbey, Gloucestershire, where he taught theology & history*]. Later when we visited Carmen for holidays, Vati often went to Prinknash and finally became an oblate of theirs. On one of these visits he took John with him, then only 8 or 9 years old. They spent a few days living among the monks and taking part in many daily routines, sleeping in one of their cells. When I asked John how it was, I got radiant answers; and asking among other things, how was your bed? But Mami, they have bunks with straw as mattress and a rough blanket. Did you sleep? Lovely..! I doubt this would be the answer I would get these days from John. One year Vati and I managed to borrow bicycles and rode *[there]*, always keeping to the top of the hill, from Chalford until very nearly at the Abbey, then a short descent into the valley where the Abbey was situated. Beautiful views continually changing with valleys full of grazing sheep or cattle. Woods, nice Cotswold houses with stone walls all around and, whenever a green patch could be managed, this was surrounded by these typical stone walls, made by skilfully interlocking the local stones or even big boulders. But it was a long way there and back. I could not do it now any more. *[MS 22-III-82]*

**Another time we cycled down to Cheltenham**, which we would visit a few years later when Hans Hochfilzer came to visit us after Eugen's death, to give us all a treat. He hired a big car with chauffeur and drove us to nice places, staying overnight in their hotel at Cheltenham, at the end of the famous main street through the town, with its very nice old houses. Auntie Eva [*née Pinschof*] was also with us; I don't remember stopping at Chalford at Carmen's. Perhaps she was not there, or we did visit just for a cup of tea, as I think there is a photo of Eva and all of us with Carmen at their front door.

**Return to mainland : East Hendred**, Berkshire. Now back in the Isle of Man, we were told by the internees commander we can leave the camp, if we had a job on a farm, or I as a domestic, so we wrote letters to people we knew in England. One kind lady who had known Vati's mother, a Mrs Lacey and her husband, got me a job as housekeeper in the village where they lived, but had nothing for Vati yet. So, we decided I should go with the children and I look around for him. And this proved right. We were not long in East Hendred, Berkshire, when a lady (Meikel..) filled out a form for Vati, to employ him on her market garden (which had only just started). Both Miekell and Vati were only amateurs at producing vegetables. But the authorities did not bother to look into the matter and so all was starting anew for us.

The house of Mr & Mrs Colt [our lodgings] was a lovely old house where we had 2 good sized rooms to ourselves, the former servants quarters, with neck-breaking steep & narrow winding staircase; water and loo downstairs. Anna was still with Auntie Carmen, at boarding school in Stroud, with Dominican sisters, and a Norwegian nun, Sister Ansgar, as House mistress. She was and still is a wonderful person. Gifted with children and artistic and very kind to Anna, who was not happy there. She was only 7 years when she went there. An Australian singer, acquainted [with Carmen] and living at Chalford as lodger, paid for board & schooling; Antonia Bettini, I think not her real name but, as a singer, known as such. [23-III-82]

**We loved this little village** of East Hendred, with its old cottages and its inhabitants. All friendly, helpful with a very nice Catholic church and good little school, where Maria made her first steps as a scholar. She did not like it very much, not yet speaking English at the start. We kept up with the Lacey's and, when I had a half day off, went up to them, enjoying their lovely garden & house. Vati followed us after we [had] lived there for about half a year and started his gardening job, for which the lady could not pay him much. So Mrs Lacey got a lady who had a vegetable & flower garden behind her old cottage, to [have him] work one afternoon [a week] for her, beside an old experienced gardener, who gave Vati many a useful hint, how things were done, and this knowledge served him well when we had our own small garden in Purley. It was amazing how much it helped us over the winters, with fruit & vegetables.

That winter in East Hendred was a very wet one, and Vati often got home soaked, too often, and got stiffer and stiffer until, one morning, he just could not move and stayed in bed. The doctor traced it to ischias and wrote a letter to the authorities concerned with foreigners working on the land, to say that Vati could on no account go on working with spade and fork and must be redeemed from this kind of work altogether. After two weeks Vati could move about and went to London to seek work. My brother Peter worked at that time in the Dorchester Hotel and told Vati their [cashier] had been called up [for military service] and they were looking for a replacement. Eugen got this job, with a clause saying that when the former [cashier] came back from the army, Vati has to give his job back. Now I was again without him and we were looking about for some new solution, to live as a family and have Anna also with us.

**FEMALE ENEMY ALIEN—EXEMPTION FROM INTERNMENT—NON-REFUGEE**

(1) Surname (Block capitals) PIRQUET  
 Forenames Franziska  
 Alias B.B.W.  
 (2) Date and place of birth 11.9.1896 in Vienna  
 (3) Nationality German  
 (4) Police Regn. Cert. No. 202472 Home Office reference if known  
 (5) Address prior to internment Convent of the Sacred Heart,  
Upper Drive, Hove.  
 (6) Normal occupation Nun  
 (7) Present occupation Nun  
 (8) Name and address of employer  
 (9) Decision of Tribunal Exempt from internment and Date 21st. Oct. 1939  
Special restrictions.  
 (10) Whether exempted from Article 6 (a) (Yes or No) Yes.  
 (11) Whether desires to be repatriated (Yes or No) No.

(7045) 28717, 825 15m 0/30 14 & 8 704

[over]

**MALE ENEMY ALIEN—EXEMPTION FROM INTERNMENT—NON-REFUGEE**

(1) Surname (Block capitals) PIRQUET.  
 Forenames Peter.  
 Alias  
 (2) Date and place of birth 19th. November 1912. Vienna. 2/12  
 (3) Nationality Austrian.  
 (4) Police Regn. Cert. No. 860684. Home Office reference, if known  
 (5) Address Dorchester Hotel, Park Lane, W.1. A/14  
 (6) Normal occupation  
 (7) Present Occupation reception clerk.  
 (8) Name and address of employer Dorchester Hotel.  
 (9) Decision of Tribunal not to be interned. Date 15th. November 1939.  
 (10) Whether exempted from Articles 6 (a) and 9 (a) (Yes or No) Yes.  
 (11) Whether desires to be repatriated (Yes or No) No.

15m 9/30 (7701) 31522/876 30m 10/30 4070 G & S 704

[over]

[Certain "Enemy Aliens" were exempted from internment: Note that Franzi is here registered as a German national. Austria became the III Reich's Ostmark after March 1938, so Austrian passports became invalid. Peter is nonetheless here given as Austrian. He volunteered for the British Army, probably N°10 (Inter-Allied) Commando, X Troop, recruited from Germans & Austrians etc., including Jews, and all given false identities in case of capture). Peter is reputed to have been on the notoriously ill-fated Dieppe Raid of 19-VIII-1942. Ed]

**A lady in Woldingham**, needed a gardener, so I went there for an interview and she agreed to have me and give us a small cottage free of rent for my couple of hours work in the garden. It was Red Roof Cottage, which in 1982 looks very different, when we glimpsed it from John's car on the way from Maidstone where I had been recuperating staying with John, and then with Florette & Franzl Breuer. It was by now a good sized house, so much was built on.

I was not sorry to leave my old couple at East Hendred. He was over 80 and she not far off. But that was not the bad side as they were healthy, but both were so stand-offish and stiff. Never a smile in their faces, even when one day I carefully poured the customary hot coffee into their cups and clear water came out. I apologised grinning all over, who would not, but not they! A stern voice told me to bring coffee, not water, in a voice deeper than the lowest base. The cooking was done on a paraffin stove. A very small baking oven over another flame and that was all I had, to get them a regular daily full course dinner & supper. I could not do it any more today. When I left nobody would come in to cook even one meal, seeing the equipment; and so they got a brand new electric stove, so as not to starve. They had plenty of money, but sat on it. My salary was reduced to a minimum, over which I did not grumble knowing I had my children's extra food and a short time with Eugen also. I think it was only a year we were with them, and again we had to pack up.

**Woldingham**, Surrey, 20-X-1943. The move to Woldingham was not difficult, as we only had the few pieces of luggage we could take to internment. So I started as gardner. The garden was large, long beds, and both sides framed by climbing roses, not cut or weeded for some years. So I had good practis in this kind of work, taking first all down, cutting mountains of branches and fixing young ones along the posters. One long bed of standard roses, with nasty weeds, and a very long bed with herbaceous plants. On top of keeping this clean, edges drimmed etc., she once gave me a really hard job. Somebody had planted a big area with apple bush trees, each sitting on top of a heap instead of on level ground with roots under the earth, not exposed to the sun but, cold and getting no food. Of course they did not thrive and she was astonished to learn, were planted wrongly. So I got this job also. Not easy as the trees had been in several years and I had first to dig a deep wide opening so as not to injour the still living roots. But the job was done all right, I heard afterwards. It was not too hard to get hours off from my work, as the children were at school all day until tea time. A very good school we found in nearby Caterham, which the children reached by bus. It was run by *Notre Dame* nuns; they came there to escape London and opened their primary school not long before we came. There Anna, who now joined us, & Maria made their first communion and, the next year, were confirmed by Archbishop Amigo.

*[Interlude in the present: Minster-in-Thamet, 25-III-82]:* Still a few minutes left for scribbling. It is a holiday, the *Annunciation*, but I squandered half an hour away reading Monica Furlong's [1980] biography of Thomas Merton [1915~1968]. Most challenging on all sides, and how easy to misinterpret Merton's or anybody's religious life, when one has not been part of it. Besides, a dead man cannot protest or clarify himself.

**Back to Woldingham.** Vati came about twice a week, lodging otherwise in the Dorchester. This was good for him, as he wanted to get quickly a degree in Literature. First he had to revise Latin, Greek & some other subjects to get his English Matura [*school certificate*], though he had this in Austria in 11 subjects. He got this in one winter and then went to the university for his degree. All the study filled his free hours, otherwise he would have felt rather lonely. Of course it was all brain work and the time spent with us was very short. I could see coming, it is too much, but there was nothing else he could do, to be ready for the moment of dismissal from the hotel. But he did not win this race and, when the war was over, of course he lost his job.

Meanwhile we left Woldingham, as this place got rather much of the doodlebugs, as we called them [*from June 1944: "V.1." missiles*]. They were small pilot-less jet aircraft [*which came down after the engine cut out, becoming dreadfully silent, and exploding on impact. Ed*]. The first ones that came over really frightened me as we had not heard of them before. One night I woke up at about 1 a.m., hearing an unfamiliar noise, though I was a good sleeper. I jumped out of bed, and there was a little plane just barely avoiding our roof, and all I could see was a longish body with its back open, spitting out fire. It was not long and there was a mighty explosion. Soon another of these monsters passed us. Living on the hilltop was not the best thing in this case. Very soon the army put up big barrage balloons called elephants, tyed down by strong wires pegged into the earth in all directions. The idea was for the wire to catch a part of the doodlebug and bring it down [*before it reached London*]. And many exploded in mid air, causing enormous pressure, breaking windows, lifting roofs off or, as one we watched, catching a wing, turning & falling near a few of poor cows, causing their death. Eugen was unhappy knowing us alone up there, and told a friend. She, being an active kind lady, promised to do what she can. On holiday in Gloucestershire she had a bright idea to go to the nearby convent and tell Reverend Mother Emmanuel about our situation, who at once thought it could be an answer to each one's troubles. All her young teachers had gone for army service, and she was left with a small staff to look after all the jobs in a place like hers. I was called for interview and she angaged me on the spot, telling me to bring the children and whatever possessions we had and start in September. And so it was that we were again on the move.

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|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <p><b>Vergangenheit</b>      <i>(für Anna, geboren 1934)</i></p> <p>Und wenn für mich mein Kind ins Leben schreitet<br/> Von meiner Mutter Namen sanft geführt,<br/> Wenn mir dein Name ein zweites bedeutet,<br/> Wesenhaft zweimal mein Dasein berührt,</p> <p>Wenn ich an ihren Namen dich gebunden,<br/> Wenn ich in dir vergangenes empfunden,--<br/> Stumm ist das Gestern dir, du bist das Heute,<br/> Jung deines Lebens Last, jung deine Freude.</p> <p>Dir ist der Name neu, neu der Begleiter,<br/> Und das Vergangene kann wenig bedeuten,<br/> Neu auf des Lebens lebendiger Leiter,<br/> Leicht darf die Jugend das Leben beschreiten,--<br/> Bis sie im eigenen Erdenlos findet,<br/> Was dem Vergangenen neu sie verbindet.</p> | <p><b>Folie</b>      <i>(für Maria, geboren 1936)</i></p> <p>Und wenn sie deine Heimat dir gestohlen,<br/> Des Sonnenhügels sonnenhelle Weiten,<br/> Die gold'nen Trauben, gelben Aprikosen,<br/> Für dich bestimmt seit allen Ewigkeiten,</p> <p>Und wenn du es in jungen Jahren wusstest,<br/> Dass Fried' und Treue hier nicht heimisch waren,<br/> Wenn du in einen Herzschlag lernen musstest,<br/> Was wir erst zögernd litten mit den Jahren,--</p> <p>Die Welt, mein Kind, wie du sie hast gefunden,<br/> Sie wird im eig'nen Sein nur überwunden,<br/> Und was sich wendet von des Lichtes Quelle,<br/> Die Schatten sind's, sie sind so gut wie nicht;<br/> Vom dunklen Grund hebt sich erst voll das Helle,<br/> Lass sie zur Folie sein, sei Du das Licht.</p> |
| <p>Eugen Rudolf<br/> Pinschof,<br/> 1899~1949</p> <p>Chalford,<br/> Summer 1947</p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                           | <p><b>Vertrauen</b>      <i>(für John, geboren 1937)</i></p> <p>Weisst du es Kind noch, wie du mich begrüsst,<br/> Wie froh du lachtest meiner Wiederkehr<br/> Aus jenen Banden nach so langer Frist,<br/> Als ob ich nicht das grosse wunder wär?</p> <p>Und mich, der ich ans Ende schon gedacht<br/> Und zögernd deinem Wiederseh'n erwacht,<br/> Und mich, der ich zu hoffen kaum gewagt,<br/> „Wo warst du denn“, nur einzig hast gefragt?</p> <p>Weil du vertraut, wie Kinder vertrauen,<br/> War dir, mein Kind, wie war es dir klar;</p> <p>Und wär ich gestorben in jene Tagen,<br/> Das wunder, es wär dir nicht sonderbar;</p> <p>Musstest nur eines verwundert mich fragen,<br/> Wo ich gewesen denn, der ich noch war.</p>                                    |
| <p><b>Untergrund Station</b> <i>[cave dwellers]</i></p> <p>Am bombensichern Lagerbrett,<br/> Doppelschichte, Bett für Bett,<br/> Vorbei an kauern den Gestalten,<br/> Männern, Weibern, Kindern, Alten,<br/> Stürze dem Zug zuleibe,<br/> Der in diese Schreckniss brüllt,...<br/> Wage endlich, einzuathmen,<br/> Von dem Grauen noch erfüllt,<br/> Dass die Oberwelt<br/> Sie nicht oben hält,<br/> Weder Heim noch Herd<br/> Die Gefahren wert,<br/> Dass wir in den grauen Zeiten<br/> In den Höhlen angefangen<br/> Und wieder in die Tiefe gleiten,<br/> Zurück den Weg, den wir gegangen.</p>                                                                                                                                            | <p><b>Toni</b>      <i>(Geburt 1946; Gedicht 1947)</i></p> <p>In diese müde alte Welt,<br/> Die Tür leis aufgemacht,<br/> Die alte Welt so traumgequält,<br/> Schlüpfstest Du sacht,</p> <p>Was eh war jung, wie müd und alt,<br/> In Scherben ist die Pracht !<br/> In dieser müden alten Welt<br/> Hast Du gelacht.</p> <p>Und sieh, was Gott am ersten Tag<br/> Gefiel, weil's gut gemacht,<br/> Die ganze Welt mit einem Schlag<br/> Ist aufgewacht.</p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                               |

[Eugen Pinschof in exile developed an aversion to writing German prose, but not German verse. Here are 5 of his 60 poems. During internment he also drafted 18 chapters of a book in English, now subtitled: Wartime Reflections of an Exile from Central Europe, as yet unpublished, which can be made privately available on request to the Editor]

**A nightmare journey** it was, with everything moveable we had, including six very healthy chickens. The guards on the train did not allow us to put these animals in the guard-van and I was forced to take them with me in the passenger compartment. It was one of those narrow 6-seater cubicles and a full train. The children had partly to stand and I with a big box on my lap with these smelly beasts. I had no idea they stank so much, only keeping them in the shed. The compartment soon got empty as the passengers sniffed and coughed. We had to change twice and were glad at last to get out in Lechlade. To top the chicken affair, the sister who looked after their own chickens was not happy with our gift, which I could not understand and soon, one after the other died, starved to the bone.

Now we were again without Vati, but were out of the danger zone of doodlebugs. Concerning them I must mention one Sunday afternoon [*in Woldingham*]. Vati was out on the golf course with the children for a walk and play. I was in the living room, when I heard a doodlebug approaching very low and, seconds later, a lot of noise followed by a mighty explosion. I jumped into the corner of the room, where no furniture stood, instinctively getting away from our large windows on 3 sides of the room. Next minute I was covered in white powder and bits of plaster, in the only part of the house that got a little of the ceiling down. But I was quickly out to see to the family. Vati, acting quickly, had thrown himself flat down on the grass and made the children do the same, and that was good as otherwise they would all have been very sick, and so they were only pale because of the shock. [28-III-82]

[*John & Maria told the Editor, in Ebenezer 16-V-2015, they clearly remember another incident when they were in the garden: a missile came straight towards them, they dived behind a 2-foot hedge, but it flew over and exploded two miles away. Maria remembers seeing Netti coming out of the house looking dreadfully pale..*]

Yes, I must also mention that the first step for moving from Woldingham was that our Landlady gave us notice to leave, as her brother was due back from Afrika and she had offered him the cottage. Though war was still on and Vati so much away, we had a happy period up there and enjoyed the lovely countryside, going for long walks, John with his short legs never getting tired. He was only 5. On one of these walks we went down through a lovely mixed wood with beech & oak, all of good old age and in Autumn colours, really delightful, and landed up in an old once beautiful high-walled garden with espalier fruit trees along the wall and elaborate garden outlay, but deserted.

A few years later, when we still lived in Purley after Vati had died, the curate of the Purley church invited me to visit Woldingham Sacred Heart Convent, where my cousin Franzi Pirquet was a member of the community. Toni was with me (the big children being at school), what a surprise it was, that they lived now in the place which a few years before we had walked through, now the gardens and all in best shape. That summer Tante Franzi, as we called her (being 10 years older than me) invited us to Brighton whereto she had moved. The convent was up a hill in Hove, a large house and school which years later they sold. It was good warm weather and we went on Brighton beach and enjoyed it, though I cannot understand its attraction, with its big stones, oil all over and exposed to wind. How much better suited are the various beaches of [*the Isle of*] Thanet (Pegwell Bay & Ramsgate, right round to Minnis Bay), fine sandy or [*smooth*] rocky beaches. [29-III-82]

**Lechlade**, Gloucestershire. Vati moved now for good to the Dorchester and we to Lechlade. This was a convent school run by mostly English nuns but founded in France after the revolution (as also were the *Sacred-Heart* & *Notre-Dame*). These were named after the foundress Saint Clothilde and had a boarding school of rather small size. When we were there, 60 boarders were the most they had. We were given 2 rooms, one good sized room with large window facing west for Anna, Maria & John. I slept in a tiny dark room on the same landing. It was really the infirmary. Lucky that in those 3 years no serious illness broke out and we stayed happily there with dear Sister Josephine, the old German nun. In the first term I helped with 5 and 6 year-olds, then taking all classes for needlework, looking after the children during recreation, in the evenings supervising the study room.

Saturday afternoons I took the bigger girls for long bicycle rides along the lovely lonely country lanes. Once we witnessed a rare sight. A large group of hares dancing & jumping in a large circle, in and out around several stationary ones and exchanging places. Nearly always we landed in a small village and looked at the most interesting old churches and courtyards. This countryside is rich in beautiful big houses and farm buildings. In summer we often went swimming in the Thames, who was just behind the village houses with an old stone bridge. Often we hired boats and rowed up or down the river and swam whenever it was inviting. A stately pair of swans lived on an island in the river by the old round tower. But we were careful not to irritate them, as they could get very fierce when fearing attack, especially in the breeding season. On walking along the river downstream, one came to a lock and often we watched the long process of filling up, to bring the boats to the same level as the river, to be then released. Nearby was an old inn called *The Trout Inn*. When we had a lot of time out, we would bike to the little old towns of Fairington (*Faringdon*) or Fairford. The latter's church had famous glass windows. Each time we went out we immediately crossed into another County. Lechlade was itself still in Gloucestershire, with Berkshire and Wiltshire very near, and the Oxfordshire border also not far away. I went on my own for shopping sometimes to Cirencester, but it was a good 15 miles. I wonder whether one of you will ever have a chance to roam about in this part of the country. I was in many places, but never found so beautiful towns, villages & country views. Of course on a bicycle you have the time to see and appreciate them. Cars are too quick to really get the atmosphere of these places. How lovely it was to come down to Bibury or Burford. A long ride on my own was to East Hendred, to visit our good friends Mr & Mrs Lacey, near Wantage in Berkshire. [30-III-82]

**It was near West Hendred** that Vati had his start as vegetable gardener and where Anna later made her first steps away from school and never any more was depending on our home. After a year I got her into an Agriculture & Horticulture College in Studley [Warwickshire]. I still remember a long journey there to have the interview with the manager lady. And another time, a few years later, I visited a niece of ours at Studley, the daughter of my cousin Elizabeth Starlinger, who married an Englishman called Blackwell and had then three or four children. She eventually had six. Her father Fritz Starlinger is in his high 80's and still writes every Christmas. His daughter from his second marriage, Regina, was here for 3 weeks helping in the guest house. I loved her very much and she also sends me news & photos of her three children. They live in Vienna. [1-IV-82]

**I must wind up our Lechlade stay.** The war at last was ended. Now it was time to rethink, how to restart again on our own as a family. Vati seeing us only in summer holidays, Christmas & Easter, was still studying, but soon had to face the end of his job at the hotel. And so it was. At the end of summer term he told me he has to look now for another job. Nearly finished with his studies which, of course, he would not give up, as already his tutor encouraged him to go on, saying he would surely get engaged by a university. *John Fisher School* in Purley offered him a very modest teaching job. It was to teach French to all classes in the school. He would have loved any other subject but French. There was no alternative. In the holidays at Skateshill house you saw him, at all moments he could get, with a French grammar in hand, to brush this up. In Lechlade we had to pack up, determined to move to Purley, and Toni was on the way. Suitcases were again packed.

**Purley, Surrey** (Autumn 1946). Vati had to find us a place to live, which was not easy as our funds, when scraped together every penny, were only £350. A big sum for us but not for buying or renting a house. Again & again Eugen went from agency to agency. It was end of August and high time before school term began. One agent in desperation offered a house which had stood empty for 3 years after the first doodle-bugs came over and had 3 holes in the roof. The garden a jungle and the inside of course not inviting. We had no choice and moved in the moment we got all formalities behind and our luck it was, our money was enough to pay on [a deposit] and take a mortgage. Eugen was extremely efficient and got us each a bed, chair, two easy chairs, bedding, crockery and cutlery. A gas cooker brought from the gas company, with 3 flames, one of the oldest models but very functional. Later on, Florette got some furniture over from Austria through our cousin Otto Eiselsberg who was at the [Austrian] embassy in London and had his belongings brought over to London, with it also my mother's electric sewing machine, a real boon to have. It was great rejoicing when we arrived from Gloucestershire and found our new palace, or so it felt for us. Our own house, home & all the family. What did it matter how it looked! Everything was sunshine and our hearts beat double for excitement & joy.

**For Maria and Anna** we found a nearby very good school and John had to run along with Vati and his longer legs, up the hill to John Fisher School, where Vati was now to teach. And teach he did. His first time doing this, and well he did it. The boys and other staff, who were mostly young priests, all loved him. I was left alone during the day and cleaned, scrubbed & polished, and sewed curtains which, later on, when we had to move, served to make aprons and overalls. Sewing was at first my biggest sideline, as the girls needed [school] uniforms, which were still cheaper in those days when [if] you bought only the materials. Vati spent all his free time clearing the garden and managed to get us vegetables very soon. Apples we had of one tree and very good Cox's too, and walnuts from a big tree in the back garden. So life soon went very smooth and happy. Aunt Florette came to visit us several times. She worked then as a nurse in a nursing home in London and lived nearby in a rented room, where I visited her once and we enjoyed ourselves very much.

**Toni's birth** (10-XII-1946). My time of giving birth came near and Florette promised to come and help for a fortnight. But we had to have also a midwife as relatives should not take on such a responsibility. So one evening my time came to rush upstairs and, lo and behold, it was clear that we should get ready, with hot water, call the midwife who only lived 2 houses further. So Eugen was sent, knocked at the door, no answer, rang the bell furiously, no answer. He came back and said she can't be in. But Florette insisted he try again as I was getting on fine and was known to do the job quickly. He had to go back. This time the lodgers of the midwife's house got impatient and knocked until she opened. Poor woman was so tired that she had fallen fast asleep. Someone was sent for an apparatus used in those days, something with gas & oxygen the mother has to breathe in, which was used and, not long after, a baby boy emerged, had his cry and then bath. All was happy and fine. No complications. In the morning, before the big children trooped to school, they all came in and sniffed at the tiny baby. Great joy. And Florette took command and mostly the hard work, while I lay and did nothing but sleep. The children kept so quiet that I hardly knew they were in. All was done in the kitchen. It was a happy time. No one minded the furniture was made up of tea chests and cases of all sizes.

Christmas was soon here and I was soon fit and could prepare a few goodies, and presents from our good relations made it all very happy. Toni was only 2 months old when he, from his cot, pushed himself up with the hands and looked out when he heard the rumbling past of the Southern Railway, on a high bank at the end of our garden. He was a very easy baby, no feeding problems, neither he nor for my part. So as not to be in a dilemma for a name, we made up our joy before birth and took Anton or Antonia, a much liked and used name in both families.

**Life at Purley.** Then suddenly snow started falling and reached an unusual depth for this part of the country, about 1 foot. This was not so bad, but the temperature was below zero for 6 weeks and what was weak in pipe fittings had to burst and the inflow of our water from the mains froze. The plumber had to come in and I watched him work and it was not long before another water burst occurred. I tried to do what I saw the man doing and it worked. Our pipes were made of lead, which is soft, and when you hammered gently on the hole, with luck it closed up. Several times this had to be repeated. We had to be very careful with our water consumption, as all we had was our one tank in the attic. With now 6 of us and a formidable weekly laundry load, besides the daily nappies & bath of baby, one had to be ingenious, plus throwing overboard all extreme hygiene fancies, and it did work. We kept clean and our laundry too. I still have today an uneasy conscience seeing a water tap running unnecessarily or anything wasted in material or food. You have to be very careful, to survive, when father's earnings come to £3 and 10 shillings/week [ $£1=20s$ ].

The next winter had also its story. First, one after the other, the elder children had chicken pox, followed soon with measles. Poor Maria suffered most, she could not breathe through, and coughed very much. To end up John had scarlet fever, which he caught at the girl's school where he went to watch their annual play. His neighbour on the same bench had it. As Eugen was teaching in the boy's school and Maria & Anna attended the big girls school, the doctor decided to send John to the isolation hospital, as a precaution against a major break out of this infectious disease. John did not have a heavy attack, but hated the hospital and especially the food and all he would take there was, at tea time, a slice of bread and butter and could not get even a second slice. When he came home our bouncy boy was a skeleton.

**The piano.** In the first year of Purley in the Spring, I saw an advertisement on a house, going to our church, a sale notice, and I had to look in to see what could be of use to our still rather empty house. Anna had started piano lessons as Aunt Carmen insisted she should go on with it and she would pay for it. We found a teacher, but had no piano for Anna to practice on. And I saw one in this sale. When the day for it came, I went, never really thinking I could afford it. When the starting price came, 1 shilling, I winked to the auctioneer and he tried to wind it up higher, but nobody wanted this number and the hammer came down and I got the piano for 1 shilling. A kind man who did the transport for the other people got this cumbersome piece of furniture to our house for just a tip, and we enjoyed ourselves in turn on it. From time to time, when Vati and I passed the many antique shops on the way to Croydon, we looked around and found quite some good pieces for also incredibly cheap prices, as nobody seemed to buy anything in those days. So when we had to roll up our beds again after Vati's death, on the way back to Lechlade, we had quite some pieces to bring along.

[photo: John, Toni, Netti & Eugen, circa 1948 >



A great joy was when that rare uncle, Peter my brother, came out to Purley. He was just a perfect uncle with whom it was easy to get on, love and play with. Onkel Toni who lived in Canada also came once to see us. But more often came the Imbergers, George the godfather of Toni, with his wife Hedi, both Germans. Vati got to know George while in internment on the Isle of Man. He was a very good painter, formerly Professor in München and could use any material and method to obtain good results. But, who would in wartime buy pictures of real art? So, when war was over, they went to Kenya where he got a good job teaching art at a college there [*Prince of Wales School, Nairobi*], and stayed a good 10 years in Africa.

[6-

IV-82]

**Eugen's death** (April 1949). Vati & John every day during school term went up to John Fisher School, but no more on bicycles as Vati was not sure any more of holding balance. He suffered a lot of headaches & dizziness, which was thought to come from his eyes. He even got an appointment to an oculist but, was told to come back in 6 months. In the meantime his sight got very bad and he could read only with great effort and for short periods. But he carried on teaching, having worked out a system, where he neither had to correct the pupils exercise books nor read, and the boys loved it, worked double hard at all lessons, learned more in consequence and got through exams flying. The boys had to do the work themselves and correct each other's written work. One boy would be at the board and go through the lesson and write all the difficult parts on the board and the others correcting. Nobody played silly tricks or left the room. It was far too interesting. But one night Vati was very ill and, when it was time, I got up to see to the breakfast and the children appeared but, no Vati. When I came up, I found Vati listless. After a while, he stumbled [*mumbled*] painfully, he feels very bad and I should go and ring for his doctor. Meanwhile I found out that half the night he was unconscious. Soon the Doctor was there and when he came out from examining him, told me that I must not expect Vati to come back from hospital. It was what he always expected [*suspected*], a tumour on the brain.

The ambulance was called and Vati was carried down and away to a hospital. But, they could not tell me yet which one would take him in and I will be notified. I could have gone with him in the ambulance, but had Toni there alone, and the children were long time gone to school. So I had to say good buy, but luckily Vati did not know anything any more, being again unconscious. It was hard, this verdict, and I was glad to be left only with Toni who did not understand yet what happened. He was 2½ years old.

Now, how and what to tell the big ones what has happened, was very hard. I did not tell them how serious it was but, I think they all sensed it. One day went by and no word from hospital, and another day until, about 4 pm. when I was just looking out for the big ones to come back from school, a small boy, about 10 years old, approached me with a hospital slip in hand, asking where our house was. I told him this is it and I am the one mentioned on the slip and, handing it over to me, he disappeared. On the slip stood that I should come at once to such and such a hospital in East Croydon. Luckily the big children came just along. I told them to look after Toni and make themselves tea as I have to go and see Vati. [12-IV-82]

When I asked for him, of the matron in charge of his ward, she told me not to be disappointed as Vati was nearly all the time completely listless. Nobody got a word out of him. But to my surprise, when I came through the big glass door, I saw his head looking towards me and he recognised me and, what was more astonishing to the ward sister, he could speak. Not easily, but enough to tell me what had happened the night before, when he wanted a priest, not for the first time either, when the nurses could not make out what he meant. But this night he had an idea how to get what he wanted and folded his hands as in prayer and a little African nurse understood and sent for a priest. He was not very long, though in the middle of the night, and Vati made his confession and had Extreme Unction and spoke quite a lot with the priest and was very consoled. So, when I arrived, he was most anxious to tell me how happy he is and that he knows he will soon die, and did not flinch at all when advising me how to carry on without him. I too had to be strong and pretend absolute readiness to accept whatever comes out. The good thing was I was sitting, as I was trembling all over. He told me in a few words, as by now he got so tired that his words did not come easily, I should ask the Lechlade nuns to take me back with all the children, except John who had to have a boys school. I should write to the Abbot of Prinknash, who took Vati as an oblate, and he would surely find me a place for John in one of the Benedictine boarding schools, free of charge. This would be really difficult I feared, and so it turned out. I wrote but, got a negative answer and so, I went to Canon Burn at John Fisher School for advice. Without hesitation he offered a free place for all John's remaining years at his school. At least it was not a change of school for John but, it meant a separation from the rest of us. He was then 12 years old. [13-IV-82]

**Return to Lechlade** [Autumn 1949]. Eugen died in April [Easter Saturday]. The children went to their respective schools until the end of the term in July. The nuns in Lechlade I had not even asked to take us back; on hearing of our loss they wrote by return of post that we should come. So now the question, what to do with our house, as to find a buyer so quickly was unlikely. But I found a family who wanted to rent it. Now we could all leave Purley and I arranged with the solicitor to find a buyer as soon as possible, as we needed our furniture and belongings, to establish ourselves in Lechlade, where the nuns would give us a 4-room flat over the stables which were only used as store rooms. We did not like leaving Purley and our now redecorated and repaired house of which we had got fond and our little garden, but it had to be. Many dear friends also we had to say good-bye to. Packing up was not as easy as I thought. Three years accumulated a lot and sorting was not a nice job. First we had to take only our personal clothes and things, as we let the house out, and all bedding, furniture etc. stayed behind.

In Lechlade the nuns [initially] gave us our former quarters in the main building. It was holiday time and the schoolchildren away. I was exhausted when arriving in Lechlade and had felt on my last legs but, as with work decisions, the strain on nerves and mind all played their part and only later I found out I had a slight lung infection which showed up on an X-ray. No wonder I felt so rotten and ashamed of my weakness, never for a moment thinking of going to bed. [14-IV-82]



[links: Brüder Peter & Silverio Pirquet, deren Gattinen Clara & Johanna, Annamirl & Netti, in Bregenz, Autumn 1949]  
[rechts: Toni & Florette in CH-Zuoz, Canton Grisons, Sept. 1949]

**Trip to Switzerland & Austria.** Then came an invitation from *[my sister]* Tante Amia *[Annamirl Bally née Pirquet]* to pay for me to visit them *[in Switzerland]* and bring Opapa & Omama back to Rindbach after a long few months visit to Amia. Toni was *[already]* with Florette in Switzerland, invited by her in a children's home *[photo above]*. The nuns were kind enough and said they would take the 3 big ones under their wing. I was not too happy with the plan, but went, hoping a complete change of air might give me a pick up, and it did. I flew to Zurich and next day we got into a car with Papi and Mami and drove to Bregenz to see Tante Clara and Onkel Peter Pirquet (a brother of Papi's) who were dears *[photo above]*. It was not very much later, one or two years, and they both died. And dear Tante Clara left us quite a sum of money in her will, which swelled my shrinking bank konto. Then from Bregenz we drove in one day to Rindbach, where I stayed about a fortnight. *[After over four months in Switzerland, Toni came back to England just before Christmas 1949,].* I was lucky with finding a buyer for our Purley house and sold it with a good profit even. The furniture and all the rest of our stuff was sent to Lechlade, to furnish the new flat. *[15-IV-82]*

We were by then all fit for a new start, this time with familiar surroundings and people, just a gap of 3 years. I got heaped upon with duties to fill my whole day completely and I was glad not to have much time to think about our own affairs. Toni was very good. The first year there again he spent a lot of time alone, playing in his pram or, when it rained, in any a room that was empty. May be this is the reason that, when he was older, he preferred to be on his own, even when in a crowd of children he managed to occupy himself with anything, but not joining the others. I tried again and again to bring him into a his own age group circle, but to no avail. Even in his glassroom he kept that hermit habit. One year I was his class mistress when the majority was 7 years old but he nearly a year younger and, there too, I could not get him out of this habit. Though kind to all children, he never made friends.

**Holidays in Austria.** In Summer I managed to go with them *[?]* to Austria to be with Opapa and Omama. But only one summer was Omama still there and did not like us leaving, crying because she said she will never see us again and right she was. Next April she died *[1951]*. But we went on every Summer to Rindbach and lived with Opapa *am Kögerl*. This word *Koegerl* [=small Koog or tumulus] comes from the house being on top of a small steep hill. It was here where I spent every summer together with all of us with Grandmother Friedericke Haimberger, my mother's mother. So you my grandchildren are the 5th generation from her. If you are interested in genealogy, you must ask for the Haimberger family tree and you will find dozens of them, as in olden days the families were very numerous. *[photo: Johanna & Silverio senior,*  
*under the same madonna as Florette & Netti in another photo a few pages further on]*



Anna did not come with us any more from the time she was 16. She started working first in a riding school of a friend we had in East Hendred, who was Vati's boss for one year as vegetable gardner. Then she started Horticulture College, Studley *[Warwickshire]*. One summer *[1953]* Maria and John hitch-hiked to Austria and we all joined together on the Wolfgangsee *[Sankt Gilgen]*, where a friend of my youth *[Lis Bader]* invited us to use their boathouse. It was great fun to go to bed over the water, hearing the sound of the water splashing on the poles it stood on. Onkel Hans & Tante Eva Hochfilzer (Vati's sister) came there too, living nearby in a hotel. We all went one day on one of the surrounding mountains, I think it was the Schafberg, Toni coming with us with no trouble, a long climb and down again. Then Hans & Eva brought us back to Rindbach in their car, giving us first a meal in Traunkirchen. They were going on, I think, to Tirol from where the Hochfilzer family came. Maria *[aged 15]* worked in a Gasthof of theirs one summer, having to make *Schlagobers* every day in the cellar, the only cool place. Not very interesting and the family Hochfilzer was far too busy to be very hospital. So Maria was not very happy, but still went off by herself in her free time to explore the lovely country side. Onkel Hans then went back to USA (St Paul, Minnesota). *[16-IV-82]*

**Opapa lived in the Kögerl all his later years** and was happy to have children & grandchildren visit him. In this house everybody found a bed, or slept in an out house next to the Koegerl *[Rote Stadl]*. Numbers did not bother anybody. Food was provided by the one that occupied the kitchen first in the season and one arranged it so that each one could have a turn at cooking a meal. Also the *Gasthäuser* nearby often found some of us taking a meal there, as they charged very reasonable and all was cooked well and tasty. *[photo: Silverio senior, Patience-legen, 1954]*

One summer Maria, John and I went on a big mountain tour *[Totengebirge]*, although a bit too much for Maria. From that time on she was never any more to climb. The bad luck was that the weather turned thundery and we had to hurry to get down and therefore did not take a rest in between. We got down on the Gössl side, where Onkel Franzl *[Breuer]* and Florette spent all their summers, but, in that year they were not there and we soon caught a bus to bring us to the railway station and got back to Rindbach late in the evening. One night we had slept up in a mountain hut and, on the Offensee, we had a swim before attacking the steep high rocky mountain of the Totengebirge. The flowers up on this high mountain are something very special.



The colours are so strong and the grass so very green up there. Then swamps, out of which grew light feathery fluffy flowers bending gracefully in the breeze. Well, just like a colour photograph book of Alpine Flora. You will like it! The Traunsee is rather cold, even in summer, so one could stay in the water for only a short time, but this was always much liked. You were ready to go for a long walk or climb afterwards and get a good appetite. The lake's water came down partly from a glacier (Dachstein) and down from the high surrounding mountains, in small rivers, that wound their way through dark valleys, never a chance to warm up. [20-IV-82]

In the evenings one sat round the table with dear Opapa, who was then well over 80, still very interested in each of you, the world affairs, the new things discovered in science, technology, chemistry and of course everything concerned with farming and tree nurseries, as that was the main job when he was still active. As soon as he had finished his *[game of]* patience, we all settled down to a card game in which all could take part. *Tarock* or Bridge, or *Canasta* which was going strong in those days. During day time Opapa would do something practical, as soon as he had read the papers and done his correspondence. In making small useful boxes, he became an expert. Your daddy can show you perhaps some. Look at the various ways he fixed the lids on. Omama, when she was still alive, had to embroider the initials of the one for whom the box was destined on to the linnen which would cover the next box. Sometimes even the dates. I have still 4 boxes in use, for pencils, odds and ends, sewing box for needles and threads, knitting needles and a box with a cartotake *[cartothèque]* for various cooking receipts (John, I checked this last word for correct spelling, and lo and behold, it was written correctly and I found it in the dictionary). The time in Rindbach with Opapa was always too short, though we spent all our summer holidays with him and a long train journey was just not my fancy. It took in all 24 hours. Now you fly and make it in a few hours, if you are lucky and live near an airport as with Mother Prioress's family *[von Waldburg-Zeil]* who come in their own plane *[from their own airfield at Leutkirch, Württemberg]*, landing at Manston airport, and a taxi brings them down to Minster in 10 minutes.

**Leaving Lechlade.** But, we are still in Lechlade. After one year, Anna finished her schooling there and, after another year, Maria went on studying in Oxford *[coming home at weekends]*, so that by the 3rd year Toni and I were the only ones left. But even he had to go *[to a boys school]* and I had to leave to find a new way of earning our living. It was now that it began really to pinch. To find a good boy's prep school and a paid job was not easy. Besides, I got to love Lechlade having spent so many years there. [27-IV-82]

**Wembley, Middlesex (1954).** *[A place was found]* through my cousin whom we Pirquets always addressed as Tante Franzi, she being 10 years our senior, tall & stately in her movements. But not at all haughty, a very good, sweet & clever person and most kind to us orphaned Pinschofs, doing what she could to help solve my problems. Not all turned out successfully, not her fault but mine. The first was when she found me a place to go at this time, when leaving St Clothilde *[Lechlade]*. It was a parish priest looking for a housekeeper to replace 3 German girls who had done this for several years. It was in Wembley, near the famous stadium, in a real slum area. My hope to send Toni to the nearby Ealing monastery school had to drop, as it was too difficult to go there daily, with 3 changes of bus, and Toni only seven, not brought up in town with all the traffic. But the priest was keen to have Toni in his little private school. So we moved to Wembley having brought some of our things there from Lechlade, and the bulk Franzi took into the cellar at Hammersmith Sacred Heart Convent. For several reasons it did not work out happily and soon we left, Tante Franzi housing us and belongings in a room reserved for visiting priests. Now what next? [29-IV-82]

**Porlock, Somerset.** Now a wandering around various employment offices, and they could get me nothing. But Franzi had something for both of us this time. A job for me as housekeeper, mainly cooking, for the family of Lord Lytton in Porlock, Lillycomb, Somerset, where we went after only one night in Hammersmith. We arrived later than expected through no fault of ours. Lord Lytton came down from the hill on which his house stood and had to go back without us. We arrived 2 hours later, and I had to telephone him as there was no other way to reach him than by car. No taxis anywhere. Lord Lytton was not amused and let me feel it too, but these are the typical trials, where one must keep calm and swallow. Toni and I were given a room near theirs and their children. A girl 2 years older than Toni and a baby of about 10 months. The wrong start proved to be the right omen. We never could get homely there, though they shared everything with us. We were cut out of conversation. I don't think once Lady Lytton talked with me, except giving me orders what to cook or do besides. Toni was not to play with the girl, as much as both would like it. But one day they did go off together without anybody knowing. The girl went for blackberries the year before and wanted to do the same again. Took a small leather and a basket & Toni, and off they went after tea. After an hour or so, we discovered their absence and looked for them but with no success. I could not get away having cooking on, and so Lord Lytton looked but, did not find them either. Then we telephoned neighbours and soon we got news. Yes, they were seen climbing over fences with their leather and picking blackberries. By then they made for home and slowly, not in the least aware what alarm they raised, walked into the house, full of all the things they saw and found, but of course, hardly any blackberries. Not long after, we were told to leave. *[Toni remembers kestrels flying in terrific wind, and the thundering of the ocean that one could not see]*.

The countryside was glorious up on those hills. Very wild and left completely unused. Not many animals like sheep, cows or horses. Very few small houses of smallholders. It was no surprise and no heartbreak to go back to London and start all over again, as also I was told there was no school in easy reach for Toni and they definitely did not want Toni to join their daughter's school which was a Catholic private school. I made Toni do some work every morning for several hours, but it was not enough and he just played on his own. A bare 3 weeks we were there. [30-IV-82]

**So, we packed up** and went to London. This time good Florette found us a room in the house; they occupied the first floor and we were one floor higher, rented from a music teacher. No access to kitchen or bathroom. For that we could come down to Florette. Then we looked through all possible adverts to find a place for us. The 3 big children had each made their own arrangements. John still at the Purley school, Maria in Oxford lodging with a young Austrian professor and his wife, who taught Maria Latin & Greek at a school up the hill from Oxford [*Rye Saint Antony School, in Headingly*]. Anna was still at Studley College.

**Leeds**, Yorkshire. A place with a young Jewish family in Leeds was found but, they would not have Toni, their home being really too small. So, with a heavy heart I accepted an offer of a young family near another school of Sacred Heart nuns in West Hill, which Toni could walk to, sharing family life with a kind family who had 3 little girls, about Toni's age. I had to bring Toni there, very unhappy about this as I had forebodings that it would not be a good or happy situation, and so it turned out. In the new school Toni was doing well. I found my Leeds stay not too bad, but could not get away for Xmas. Florette, as ever, helped out with Toni at Xmas and took him to herself and did not send him back to the family afterwards, finding him too unhappy and nervous about it. So Toni went to school by bus on his own from Florette's place. Luckily my people gave notice as they too were going to move away and so, I came to London to Florette. Franzi duplicated my references and details, to be ready to answer replies to an advert we put into one of the papers. Only very few came and only one came into question, and this accepted me, with Toni as well.

**Abbots Bromley, Staffordshire, 1955.**

It was a private girls boarding school of 400 pupils and 30 resident staff, wanting me as housekeeper. But first they had to give notice to their resident housekeeper and they wanted me to come all the same so as to help the matron. So we did, and Toni attended the school in Uttoxeter, whereto he travelled by bus. We had a nice room in a house away from the main building. All ground level. I also had to keep an eye on the girls sleeping there (about 20).

**Abbots Bromley was a village of smallholder farmers.** Very kind and friendly people and we got to know a few very well. One couple invited us to stay with them one short holiday and John spent a short leave with us. He was at this time training in the army. The only drawback in the farmer's house was the bedding. A feather mattress and a heavy feather sack to cover. The result was that we had to constantly change between freezing and sweating but, how I don't know, after the first nights we found a happy way out. There I also saw one of the first washing machines and working perfectly. The system similar to present ones. A wooden barrel with an arm to push the clothes back and forwards. The only difference was that the arm was put into action only by human action. The fields were ploughed by one horse, which had to do many other jobs too. Carting products around, weeding, rolling, raking, everything you can do now by tractor running on petrol, while the horse ate grass and barley, all from their own little property.

My assistant matron job was mainly helping to sort out laundry, helping to mend, and to supervise evening baths. Then the matron was given a holiday and I was left alone and of course, as always in cases like that, something happened. One evening, one dormitory after another reported violently sick children. It was food poisoning and the Doctor prescribed castor oil for all of them that felt very or slightly ill. So in their common rooms they sat and I had to give these poor green looking girls of all ages this frightfully nasty medicine, and I was amazed how well and brave they swallowed it down, poor mites. I was glad I was not housekeeper then, as it is hard when such things occur, and surely it was not all her fault. No explanation of the cause was given. The matter was cleared by the time matron came back and I was glad, as I was really tired afterwards, as there were other consequences esp. in the lavatories. The cleaning ladies only came from Monday to Fridays, and bad luck, the worst happened at the weekend. [7-V-82]

**In Staffordshire the climate is much harder.** The winds blew over these hills ferociously and snowdrifts were near to 3 yards high. Toni and I had lovely walks at weekends, and as soon as I got a free afternoon. There used to be a lot of game in this district. Good woods, but when the war was on, the young pilots of nearby airfields used these high old trees to learn shooting from a flying aeroplane. And they certainly did aim right, as these trees looked all bare, tattered, half burned, a painful sight.

When I took over housekeeping the next term, life was not so easy any more. The catering was all by telephone as we were miles away from town, the menus a week ahead. The 20 or so lady cleaners that arrived every morning except weekends, had to be attended to; the financial side grew to be a formidable job with bills coming in and each cleaner on a different scale of earnings as ages and responsibilities varied, and every month the books had to be correctly added up and balanced. In the first month I sometimes sat until late at night to get these right and, when I came to Toni, thinking him fast asleep, there he was wide awake, his toy [*clockwork*] railway laid out and making the most intricate journeys under the beds, table, tunnels built from anything to hand. I had to be stern with myself to scold him, in my mind taking the lovely little engine and having new routes and changing points worked out and, on my knees, myself playing with it. But all of it had to be dismantled and cleared away and to bed he had to go.

When school holidays came and all the children gone, the domestic staff, bursar and I had to stay behind and give the whole complex a clean up and tidying, which nobody liked. Then we would go of per buss to Auntie Carmen, Uncle Arthur having died. She had sold Skateshill House and moved to a much smaller house on the opposite hill in Minchinhampton, which had a tiny front garden. Inside very compact. The living room was done in a ship ceiling construction with lots of beams across. The builder was a naval officer, to explain this extravagance.

In **Minchinhampton** we spent several years school holidays. Poor auntie was very ill and, though she wanted to have us as she liked the children, and I got on well with her always, I saw that it tired her out. We therefore came only for the 2 shorter holidays of Xmas and Easter. It was then that John finished school and had to join the army and off he went. The first years he moved around the camps but in the 2nd year it got exciting, as he was ordered to Korea. We got long detailed letters from the ship, one where they barely missed a typhoon, and then about his landing in Japan (Kyoto I think), where life became dull. But, getting leave from time to time, he went to interesting places and once even to Tokyo, where he spent a lot of money to bring home exciting presents. Lovely silk material, a case with full tableware layout with a design of fir twigs. But for whom? The verdict was, for the one that married first. It had to lay idle for a long time as none of them jumped into it.

This was now a long detour and we are still in Abbots Bromley. It was again Toni's schooling which made me think of moving. I heard of a nearby boy's boarding school wanting a housekeeper and applied for it. This had the advantage of a nearby Preparatory school run by Irish nuns in Alton Castle.

**Abbotsholme, Derbyshire [near Rocester, Staffordshire] 1956.** So we were on the move again. This time the journey was not a long one. Uttoxeter was still our town, but from a different direction, and we were not in Staffordshire but [just] in Derbyshire. The school of Abbotsholme was up a hill, looking down on meadows and, criss cross winding through, a river that was quite deep in some places and you could have a swimm [*Dovedale*]. Behind the school fairly high hill country, partly wooded. Another good spot for walks. Toni's school [*10 miles away by bicycle..*] was a 19<sup>th</sup> century castle built on the ruins of an older castle, with steep narrow winding staircases. Deep down below, a river. Toni can tell you about it. He was two years as a day pupil and then two as a boarder, when I was again on the move.



[Florette & Netti am Kögerl 1957]

This boarding school which I lived in with Toni was run on similar lines to Gordonstoun School in Scotland. Abbotsholme was altogether nice. Toni had his own room and I a good sized one on a different level, but not far away. There was only one drawback: the two promised live-in cooks never existed and, when I arrived, I had to frantically search for even one. But, being in the country and a good walk from the nearest bus, nobody would come. Time ran short and the boys arrived and still no cook. In the end a nice elderly local woman volunteered to try what she could, but had no idea of cooking for such numbers. A family of eight children she had, we were 250 boarders and 20 staff. The bursar was also new, who should have engaged the cook. So what? I had to do breakfast alone. Then give out all the quantities we needed for the various [*lunch & supper*] dishes, with detailed instructions how to proceed. This besides looking after the many daily cleaning ladies, each doing different parts of the house and needing every week supplies of soap, polish etc., of which they demanded a terrific amount. Then the infirmary was away from the main building and needed daily supplies of food etc. Two farm boys had to be fed extra substantial food as they worked hard. But all went well. Even cooking supper extra for the staff and different for the boys, all by

myself. After one term we got a local morning cook for lunch. She was experienced, but had a bad reputation. I took her in and kept an eye on her and had a good talk with her and she was a Godsend, and we got on splendidly. But she had to look after a husband and did not come Sundays, as also my first cook. We had German girls to do the dining room work with one local girl who knew the run of it and this was fine. *[the Editor remembers, at one time, some rather unruly Hungarian women worked there, refugees after the suppressed revolt of 1956].*

After 2½ years I was worn out. I got mumps for the 3rd time and the Doctor said I should not work so much “at my age” [49]. Toni was getting close to his “11 plus” exam and the Sisters *[of Mercy]* drilled these boys tremendously. He was also very ill and had to stay home a full month and was not allowed much school work. The first days back at school, he was just in time for the exam and, though not working for it, he passed with good marks.

**Summer holidays 1958, Austria.** I had a full time job there and was worn out at the end of each term, but did not want to go away as Toni still had two years to go in the Prep school. However, when Franzi sent a letter telling me of a job in Kent to open a new Guest House for Benedictine nuns, I travelled down one half term, and was delighted with the place. Although the job did not seem worth a salary, Reverend Mother was keen to start.

For a long time after this interview no news came, as Mother also had an Irish lady in view for this job. I decided to risk it and gave notice in Rocester and, when the summer holidays started, we left Derbyshire, went again to Florette, left her all our luggage and went to Austria, to Opapa in Rindbach. We stayed all the time there except for ten days in the Tirol where we met John to go up the Oetz Tal.

**Tirol.** We had booked a guide *[Martin Gritsch of Vent]* for a tour in the Oetztaler Alps. It was a lovely time, the weather was good and on the first day we climbed to a hut, stayed overnight there and climbed higher next day, when we reached the ice. We had an easy walk up and down over glaciers (for all of us the first time on a glacier) but, we had to be on the rope, as hidden gravices *[crevasses]* which the guide knew had to be passed over, the snow hiding them. Once he told us to put our ears down to the ice and we heard water gushing. So it was true, that deep ravins were there. By evening we reached another hut and this was much higher and I could not sleep at all. A poor German next to our room died in this night from heart attack and next day a helicopter came to take him down into the valley. We had a long day climbing the highest peak and a gripping climb at the crest *[Wildspitze 3768m]*. One side steep down ice & stone and, on the other, almost vertically down rocks. Of course we were on the rope. Sometimes John or Toni led, with the guide behind us, sometimes the guide led. Two Swedish ladies joined our party. From top we had splendid views, one side all the Austrian pieks and on the other side we looked into Italy *[Fineilspitze 3514m, Similaunspitze 3606m]*. In spite of glaciers and tremendous cold wind, we met sheep who lived on very little moss they found in the cliffs. As always, I found the going down more difficult. Maybe because you have the full view of the height and depth. The hut we spent the night in was crowded and I again could not sleep well.



*[Similaunspitze 3606 m]*



*[to the Fineilspitze 3514 m]*

The going down next day was grand. The glacier always on one side. The night down in the valley in the guide's house *[in Vent]*, we slept all fine, and to get down to the train we had still a long way. We put Toni and the rucksacks on the jeep and John and I walked this part where only the jeep could go, until we reached the bus station *[Sölden]*. Even then it was a long way right down into the valley. The place names, I am sure John can put them all in and also show you the photos he took at the various stages. But I must mention our near death, walking the road, which was narrow, one side steep hill and, one side, deep down a lively and full river. We just walked steadily along, when suddenly I heard the sound of wind coming in our direction down from the steep stony side, and a big rock coming towards us. I crouched down, John saw it too and crouched down. *[It split in two halves, landing on the road, one behind and one before us. Detail supplied by John in Ebensee, Saturday 16-V-2015].* Nothing happened to us, only both of us were shattered, our knees not working properly for a time, from the shock. *[13-V-82]*



<Wildspitze 3768 m

The Boots of 1958>



We got a train back to Innsbruck where we met Maria, also on her way back to England, and had a hearty meal at the railway restaurant. The *Kellner* asked what we would like to eat. I gave him the hint, that we all were very hungry but my purse nearly empty. "OK, I'll fix you up, only be patient, as I have to order it specially". It was not so long, or was it that we had so much to say, each full of exciting accounts. There was our meal. An even larger plate than those Dutch pancake plates in that London Restaurant, with many small and variously shaped compartments, each filled with something different: sardines, salami, anchovy, various salads & meats, olives and plenty of mayonnaise on everything that needed it. First we were sure that we shall never eat it all, but we nearly cleared it.

Coming out and going towards the centre of town, we met many people in local costume and found it was the traditional *Trachtenfest*. On a platform the various groups appeared, mostly dancing, and you could see them very well. Each valley had its own costume, from grandfather down to little girls & boys, each having different dances and melodies. Lovely coloured dress materials. It was a grand ending to our never to be forgotten glacier tour. Tired, we went to our beforehand reserved Hostel, with 4 beds crowded into one room, and had a good night's rest. Next day we had just time to look at the historic places and then we parted back at the railway station, where John and Maria took the train for Dover, and Toni & I first tried to hitch hike, but nobody would pick us up. So back we went and got a train to Salzburg where I wanted to visit Liz Bader and her two girls. Slept in a hostel again, and saw our friends and also our cousin Ditti Jordis [*née Margarete Eiselsberg*]. Tired, we made for home via Attnang to Ebensee and Rindbach. All the time Toni was as fit as one could wish for. No sign of strain or bad after effects. It was again hard to leave Opa, but it had to be and it was not to be my last visit to him.

**St Mildred's Abbey, Minster, Isle of Thanet**, East Kent, 1958. Back at Florette's in London, I phoned up Minster and heard with joy that I should come and so, I packed for the last time (not knowing this) and arrived in Minster. Mother Prioress gave me & Toni a room to share, as at that time the guest house had only 4 rooms plus 3 that were in the abbey. A new beginning of such nature takes time to get going and, in the first months, only a small few of people came. Xmas was full even then already, and my children except Anna came, and it was a nice time for guests and us. Toni's school problem we solved, by letting him go back to Alton Castle [*as a boarder for 2 years*] until he was old enough for Belmont Abbey School in Herefordshire, paid for by a legacy from Auntie Carmen [*Harris, née Pinschof*].

The summer saw the Guest House full and, by the end of it, I was really tired. My thinking it will be so easy did not turn out so. I got no help nor even a day off. Mother Prioress could not spare anybody and, when you do all the rooms, shopping, cooking, serving, washing up, laundry, it is non stop. Of course I had also to do gardening, wherever I found a bit of earth, and it was very good too. I could do this as I needed fresh air. The kitchen first was really tiny, unbelievably small. It was not easy for me at first, to make the menus up, being used to cater for institutions of up to 400, but gradually I got into it and the guests liked the varied dishes which derived from my Austrian, Italian & French experiences.

[photo left: Netti in August 1964]



In October 1958 I came to Minster [*to run the guest house*].

In 1959 I got the Minster bug and in January 1960 I entered the monastery as postulant. In Eichstätt [*Bavaria*], the mother house, I spent 3 months learning LATIN, with tears running down as it would not go into my head. Latin grammar, *Oh Kraus!* Habit-sewing, weaving, parchment, various departments I had to stick my head into, and took part in their normal every day monastic routine. Oh! cold it got in November! Never froze so much before, until the good sisters brought me warm home-made shoes, pants, vest, and stuffed my drawer full with cheese, sausage & butter, but the meals were so plentiful that I could not eat it all.

Now my wanderings are over and I only wait for my last trip and hope it will be as happy as all my life was, in spite of many trials. GOOD BYE, my dear ones!

[written 1982 after which Netti lived another 15 years, dying in 1997, having lived 39 of her 89 years in Minster-in-Thanet, and is buried there in the monastery's own cemetery]

Netti im Ruderboot von Tante  
Enole, Rindbach, Sommer 1959



postcard 26-IX-1961  
to Netti  
from Silverio senior  
aged 91

The photo of Rindbach  
on the other side of this  
postcard is reproduced  
at the end of Part I,  
together with a  
transcription of the  
message.



Netti with Nora Pirquet [photo Silvio Pirquet junior, July 1964]



Netti [photo John Pinschof, circa 1978-80]

