RECOLLECTIONS

OF

MARY PUGH NÉE DIACONO
(1918-2009)

Part 1 1918-1950

Edited by

Alex Pugh

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In loving memory of
my mother
Mary Pugh (1918-2009)

Figure 1 Mary Diacono, Nicosia 1942

Preface

Editor's Note, March 2010

For some years my mother and I worked on her *Recollections*, as part of a larger volume entitled *Documents Relating to the Laperre Family of Cyprus*.

An earlier version of that document was distributed in 2004, containing a portion of the recollections that now appear in this document. My mother was greatly encouraged by the response of family members and the people involved in the Kontea Foundation, to continue to expand on this earlier memoir. So, we continued this work.

My mother died in May 2009. During her final short illness, we worked together to complete as much as possible, which she saw as a legacy to our family, and to the people of Kondea and Cyprus.

At the time of death, her *Recollections* were mostly complete up to 1950, and covered the periods of her life in Cyprus and England, up to her emigration to Australia. There were also some segments incomplete relating to the latter part of her life up to 1955.

Since my mother's death, I have found it difficult to complete this work. I have produced this document to take with me on my visit to Europe this year, where I know the interest will be great. Any textual and consistency errors are due to my having rushed myself in this task, and will be corrected in later editions. It is my intention to complete this memoir, as the remaining years of her life were the completion of the person I knew and loved – indeed, there were the three of us involved: she, my dear father, and me. That story sheds a light on the development of her adopted country, Australia, through post-war migration.

As I go through my notes and correspondence, there may be further material to bring into this present account.

My mother's memory was prodigious in terms of both breadth and detail. There was a high degree of accuracy, but neither she nor I would claim she was infallible.

Our intentions were to provide a robust memory of lives and times in Cyprus, and during the War in England. This work is not intended to confront, offend or misrepresent, but was born out of affection for the people she knew. If you find anything amiss in what is contained here, please address your concerns to me at the email address below.

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Origins

I was born Mary Diacono, in Khartoum, Sudan, on 11th January 1918. My father was Louis Diacono, son of Frederic Diacono and Virginie née Lapierre. My mother was Despo Vlandi, daughter of Manolis Vlandi and Katerina Sty.

The Lapierre family were a French family established in Cyprus since the early part of the nineteenth century, and one of the principal familes of Cyprus.

Nona Virginie was the longest survivor in her generation of the family. My early life was centred around the family's estate, the tsifliki at Kondea, which is now in ruins. The fate of Kondea, and the development of the family, has been a great influence in my life.

In those early years at Kondea – we lived there between 1919 and 1928 – the members of the family actually living there were my grandmother, Virginie, her brother Emile Lapierre (he died in 1921), Emile's sons Jules and Georges, and Virginie's sister, Helene Lapierre (until she died in 1926).

When I look at my grandmother's generation, the lives of all her brothers and sisters were centred around Kondea. A number of them lived, died and were buried there. Most of them looked to it as their heritage, and returned there. A number of them owned parcels of land there, and in some cases their descendents still own them. Theirs was the story of a landed family, and their lives ultimately revolved around this hub.

In many ways the generations that followed them looked to Kondea as well. The failure of the estates meant that none were able to look to it for sustenance. From the next generation after my grandmother, each one had ultimately to follow his or her own direction, as the twentieth century took its course. There are now members of the extended family across the world, living very varied lives.

My parents and Uncle Jules spoke little about the families. So, I do not know how much they knew about their origins. I expect they knew much more than they told me.

The Vlandis

My mother's father, Manolis Vlandi, had estates in Asia minor, and my mother, Despo, was born there in 1892. Manolis was a native of Crete – he was related to the wife of Venezelos.

Manolis married Ekaterina Sty, a native of Kythera. Ekaterina was the niece of a bishop – I don't know whether his name was Sty, but her name was Sty – Styopoula in full. A cousin of hers was said to be Governor of Macedonia. (See further below)

Despo was born in Alexandretta, Turkey, the youngest of three daughters, her sisters being Eleni born in 1874, and Paschalia in 1882. There was also a brother, Nicholas, perhaps a year older than mother, but he died as a child.

Some time I think during the 1890's the Turks attempted to expel the Greeks from Asia Minor, and this was the occasion of great massacres. The captain of the troops that came to my grandfather's estates had been entertained previously in their house. He gave orders not to touch grandmother and the children, but that Manolis should be chopped up. However, Manolis was forewarned and hid in the wheat fields, while the Turks sought out the men and executed them.

It was night when the house was invaded. Grandmother sought to dress the children, so that they might be able to escape. Reaching under her bed for her shoes, she found the severed foot of one of her manservants. He had hidden under her bed to escape the Turks, but they had found him and hacked him to pieces.

Manolis was popular with his Turkish neighbours, who at personal risk helped him to escape in disguise to Alexandretta, where the Greek government helped him to take ship to Egypt.

Aunt Eleni was married to Andronicus Andronicou [1]. They lived in Port Said, where they had an immigration agency. It was probably through their influence with powerful British friends, that they were able to bring grandmother and the children to Egypt, where the family was reunited.

After he lost his property, grandfather traded in Arab horses in Egypt, and was an expert horseman. He was also a gambler, and drank. There is a story about him being pursued by a mob. He escaped by climbing a church steeple, and then leaping from there onto the back of his horse.

He was a bad-tempered man – I do not know how much of his character was formed by his great misfortune in Anatolia. My mother said that her mother had a very bad time with him – Ekaterina died in Egypt when my mother was still young. I think they were living in Port Said, but not with Aunt Eleni.

The Diaconos

My father's father, Frederic Diacnono, was a merchant, whose family line has been traced back to fifteenth century Venice.[2] We understood the family at some stage had become established in Malta, and later established themselves in Egypt in the middle years of the nineteenth century.

With the expansion of British interests in Egypt, through the course of the nineteenth century, culminating in Britain's their take-over of the Suez canal in 1882, the British encouraged the migration of Maltese families to Egypt. They had British nationality, from the Crown Colony of Malta, and they formed an economic hub in Egypt, able to trade freely in British and Egyptian territories.[3]

Frederic's father, Giuseppe, was a banker in Suez from 1886, and perhaps earlier. The family had inter-married with some of the principal Latin families in North Africa: the Nani (who held the phosphate concessions in Tunisia), and the Manche (who built the first electicity power station in Suez). Frederic's brother, Roberto, maintained the family interests in banking after the death of Giuseppe in 1900. There is still a street in Zamalek, Cairo, named after the Diaconos.

Grandfather Frederic had been previously married to an English woman, Louisa Wiss, who died c1879. There was a child from that first marriage, Cora b1878.

Widowed, Frederic married my grandmother, Virginie, in Larnaca in 1880.

In 1882 Frederic was involved with the British commissariat in the Egyptian Campaign, and again in 1885 he was involved again in the Sudan Campaign.

Nona Virginie told us that Grandfather Frederic was Britsih Consul in Suez, but we have found no record he received formal diplomatic accreditation. However, there is record that he and his father were involved in maritime agency.

Frederic and Virginie's first child, Edmee, was born in 1882, and she was baptized that year in Larnaca, Cyprus. My father, Louis, was born in Tanta, in the Nile delta, in 1884. The last child, Joseph, was born in 1885, and was baptized the following year in Larnaca.

Frederic was head of Forestry for the Famagusta District in Cyprus between 1887 and 1892. In 1890, he was present at the wedding of Marie Lapierre with Apostolis Xenis.

In 1892-3 he was assisting his father with his banking business in Suez, and with his

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1 I think Andronicus Andronicou. Cousins of his emigrated to Australia, where they became famous in the coffee industry.

2 We have been told that the Diacono line was traced by Yole Carletti, prior to her marriage with Roberto Olmi (we have been unable to find a copy of this.)

3 Under the Regime of Capitulations, British subjects were not subject to Egyptian law, and ould only be tried for civil or criminal purposes in the British Consular Court.

father faced legal actions in the British Consular Court.[4]

Frederic died on 22nd October 1898 in Kondea, apparently of pneumonia or similar respiratory condition, and is buried there in the family cemetery.

Mother and Father

Grandfather Manolis was also a herbalist, and made a profession from remedies to illnesses. My mother learnt her skill in medications from him.

It was in Upper Egypt that Manolis and Despo had ridden to the property of a cotton grower on the Nile. This man's daughter had been suffering from diarrhoea, perhaps dyssentry, for several days. She was reaching the point of no return, and no-one could help her. Manolis treated her with a mixture of cloves and brandy, and, after a number of days, nursed her back to health. In return, the cotton grower gave Manolis a fine arab horse.

Returning on horseback from the cotton grower's, Manolis and Despo saw a young man on horseback out in the fields, surrounded by agitated 'arabs' and defending himself with his riding whip. They rode over and 'rescued' the man.

This man was my father, Louis Diacono. Anyway, mother and father fell in love and were married in July 1910.

There was a story about my father that Uncle Roberto wanted to groom him for the banking business, and that he was sent to Egypt to live with his Uncle. However, this Cairo banking style of life did not agree with my father, and one morning he gathered his things tied in a piece of cloth, and escaped through the window.

When he met mother, father was a manager for an estate company. The fields from which he was 'rescued' were owned by the company, and were, I understand, cotton fields: he had got into some argument with the workers over their laziness. [5]

After their marriage, father found work with a company called the Sudan Times. There was a newspaper of that name, but I understand the company was, at least in part, a trading company. My mother told me afterwards, that father had a good job with the company. He earned about £40 per month, and was provided with a house and one or two servants, and meat. This was very well paid.

My eldest sister, Catherine, was born in 1912, and died at the age of 6 months. My brothers Fred (30th April 1913) and Harry (13th October1914) were born in Khartoum.

Marcus: Hero of Gallipolli, 1915

Father had a monkey called Marcus. He bit my brother Fred on the cheek, and they gave him away, because he was a biter. He was given to the Australian soldiers as a mascot, prior to embarking for the Dardanelles.[6] Afterwards father receive a letter that Marcus had been killed at Gallipolli, and had died a glorious death in the service of the King.

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4 AGP: In 1892-3 Giuseppe and Frederic faced legal actions in the British Consular Court in Alexandria. However, these matters did not proceed. I have examined the surviving court documents in a separate work entitled "Diacono Court Documents".

5 AGP: Louis' documentation showed that he worked for the Wardan Estate Comany (1907-10) and the Pyramids Estate Company (1910-11). From 1910-1918 he is shown as working on the Sudan, and then from 1918-20 in the Egyptian Army.
Cotton growing was a significant industry in Egypt and the Sudan at this time. The personal papers of William Lawrence Balls (1882-1960), botanist, cotton technologist, in the library of St John's College Cambridge, includes: 38. 'The development & properties of raw cotton'. Review. Cutting from: Sudan Times, 5 May 1915\
http://www.joh.cam.ac.uk/library/special_collections/personal_papers/ppapers/msballs.htm.

6 AGP: The Australian Infantry Forces spent a period training in Egypt, prior to embarking in April 1915 for Gallipoli. This would indicate the family was in Egypt around this time.

Khartoum 1918-1919

I was born in Khartoum on the 11th January1918. Mother said mine was a very difficult birth, and said she would dedicate the child to Mary, if she survived.

My earliest memory is of a park with swings. When I described it to my mother, she said it was a park in Khartoum. The year would have been 1919.

Mother must have taken us to Kondea in 1919, as she was photographed there with nona Virgine, and we were there on 19th January 1920, when my sister Ada was born.

When Uncle Emile died, in January 1921, Uncle Jules, his son, wrote to father to come home to Kondea, as he couldn't manage the property on his own. Uncle Jules had lost his arm in the Great War. My father returned, but instead of finding the place as he'd left it, he found it was £8,000 in debt, and much of the land alienated.

Apparently Uncle Emile had gone guarantor on a number of loans, and it was the custom of the more unscrupulous money lenders of the time to add a zero or two to these notes. It took many years and extensive litigation to reduce this debt to £2,000, but by this stage both father and Uncle Jules had had to leave Kondea to find work elsewhere.

My sister Kitty (Catherine) was born at Kondea on 25th July 1922. Gigetta (Louise-Ida, Louigietta) was born on 14th December1928, when we were living in Larnaca.

Kondea 1919-1928

Death of Uncle Emile, 1921

My next memory is the funeral of Uncle Emile, who died 1st January 1921. I was almost three years old.

When Uncle Emile died my mother asked Maritsa the daughter of Christophis to look after us – she was a nurse – and we were taken into grandmother's house. When they were bringing the coffin out, Maritsa wanted to see the procession. She left us thinking I was asleep, but I wasn't, and I ran after her. It was winter, and I was standing in the doorway, without any shoes, only my nightie. Someone saw me, and cried out "The baby, the bay, she'll freeze." So they picked me up and took me back into my grandmother's house. And that is the first memory I have of Kondea. I remember still my nightie, made of white silk idare (cotton woven with silk).

It was a very large funeral. The coffin was carried down the stairs, of the tsifliki. The whole village was there, hundreds of people, assembled around the inner courtyard, and outside along the road. The coffin was carried across the inner courtyard, through the archway to nona Virginie's courtyard, the main gate, and then out towards the road to the chapel. The priest came from Larnaca for the funeral.

On the return from the funeral, the people came up through the garden gate, up the steps, and in the corridor the servants were holding baskets of bread, and olives. As people passed they would take a piece of bread, and an olive, and say "May God rest his soul." This was the Greek custom.

I have a faint memory of when Uncle Emile became ill. It must have been sudden. I remember him being laid on his bed, and Rothu, Maritsa'a sister, pulling his shoes off. His eyes were bulging.

My mother saw a dream that there was a fire started at the property of Sandamas, and that it came towards the tsifliki, where Uncle Emile put it out. Mother, who was superstitious, thought some harm would come to Uncle Emile. Later the daughter of Sandamas was taken ill with meningitis, and she died. A few days after that, Uncle Emile caught meningitis and died. He was the last to die in that outbreak of meningitis.

Aunty Louise

Louise Lapierre, the sister of my grandmother, died in 1918, the year I was born, and I did not know her. There was also little spoken in the family about her, although my mother must have met her when she visited Kondea in 1916. Jimmy Murat's aunt, Inez Murat, told me that Louise went to Paris. She was very beautiful, and was feted in Paris society, and had many beautiful dresses. The Pisani family introduced her to Paris society.

Inez said that Pisani was minister for Finance for Napoleon III. However, we have been unable to establish that a Pisani held such a position. [7]

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[7] An Alexandre Pisani (b. Constantinople 1814, d. Paris1885), was a Russian diplomat and Conseiller de Cour (*http://gw4.geneanet.org/index.php3?b=marmara2&lang=en;pz=marie+anne;nz=legoux;ocz=0;p=alexandre;n=pisani*) His father, Paul Pisani (1786-1873), was Conseiller d'Etat - Directeur de la chancellerie commerciale de Russie à Constantinople. (*http://gw4.geneanet.org/index.php3?b=marmara2&lang=en;pz=marie+anne;nz=legoux;ocz=0;p=paul;n=pisani*) . His father, Nicolas Pisani (1743-1819), was Premier Drogman de Russie à Constantinople (*http://gw4.geneanet.org/index.php3?b=marmara2&lang=en;pz=marie+anne;nz=legoux;ocz=0;p=nicolas;n=pisani*). The Pisanis knew the Constantinople Lapierres through the diplomatic and Catholic community of Constantinople, which was centred in the Galata district, and where both

Aunty Louise never married, and lived on the tsifliki until she died, aged about 68.

Christophis "tou Lapierre"

In one of the courtyards of the tsifliki there were three rooms, in which lived an elderly couple called Christophis and Eftihia. Christophis insisted that he was the natural son of Georges Lapierre,[8] and he was signing his name as Christophis tou Lapierre ("Christophis of the Lapierre"). He said that was why they were given the rooms. Christophis had one arm.

It was said that the Lapierre brothers wanted to take him to court, to stop him using the name "tou Lapierre". I don't know what happened, but Christophis continued to sign his name thus.

I remember Christophis and Eftihia were still in those rooms as late as 1931, when Aunty Edmée returned. I don't know what happened to them, but Aunty Edmée later took part of the rooms and made a toilet and kitchen.

They had four daughters, Rothu, Maritsa, Androniki and Lili, and a son called Antonis.

Rothu worked for the family. Maritsa became a nurse, in one of the hospitals, either Nicosia or Famagusta. Androniki married in the village. I don't know what happened to Lili. Antonis was very studious. He finished his schooling, and got a job with the Land Registry Offices, where he advanced to a very good position.

Nona – Virginie Lapierre (1855–1937)

My grandmother was a pupil at St Joseph's Convent, Larnaca, which had been founded in 1832. One of the nuns there was Antoinette Fenech, the niece of the mother superior, Mere Therese Fenech. Virginie's brother, Georges (II), fell in love with Antoinette. The story among the family was that Virginie changed clothes with Antoinette, to enable her to elope with her brother. The event cannot have been too acrimonious for the Church, as the pair was married at Terra Santa, before going to Egypt.[9]

Virginie was among the first of many Lapierre family girls to be eduated at St Joseph's. The role the convent played in educating the Catholic and other girls of Cyprus was enormous. Education for females had been very poor, and a number of the early ones could not sign their names. This was part of a long relationship between the Lapierres and the Convents of the Order in Cyprus, as I shall describe later.

Nona told us that when she was a young woman, she was in charge of the money for the tsifliki, when they had the monopoly.[10] She said that instead of counting the money, they used to weigh it. The money was kept in a chest, and her father used to trust her with the keys.

Virginie was reputed to have been a very beautiful girl. She was 25 when she met my

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families were associated with the church of St Marie Draperis. Apart from there being Pisanis and Diaconos in Egypt as part of the Maltese community, we have been unable to establish a more credible connection between the families.

8 Christophis in about 1927 looked very old. To be a son of Georges Lapierre (1789-1846), he would have to have been at least 80. To be the son of Georges Lapierre (1847-1905) he would have to have been about 60 in 1927. It is hard to tell, because I was only a child of 9, but he looked older than that.

9 AGP:- Ugo Bayada says his mother, Ines, told him that Mère Therese placed a curse on Antoinette, and that was why there was such great misfortune among her children.

10 AGP:- This must have been in the late 1860's. The monoploy was long gone by that time, but they must still have had a lot of money in revenues from their properties. I have heard somewhere, that at the time of the monopoly, they used to bring the money to Kondea in carts, where it was weighed, and stored in the tsifliki in a special room. But I can't remember who told me this story, and my mother does not remember any such things.

grandfather, Frederic Diacono, and they were married at Larnaca in 1880. Frederick's first wife had died the previous year, and he had an infant child, Cora.

The family spent periods in Egypt, where Grandafther Frederic was involved in his father Giuseppe's banking business (see earlier), but were in Cyprus when Frederic died in 1898.

My mother told me, that grandfather always complained that he never saw his wife in a coloured dress.[11] It was because there were so many dying in the family that she was always wearing black. Of course, after grandfather died, grandmother always wore black.

We were walking going down the road in the village one day. The villagers used to get to their feet when she passed, but this day a man did not. He was sitting in front of the coffee shop with three chairs, sitting on one chair, with his leg draped across another. Grandmother went up to him and said, "Do you know who I am? I am the daughter of Lapierre, and the grand-daughter of Rey."

Nona's Last Years

Grandfather, when he left Egypt and married Nona,[12] was given a garden of 40-50 acres at Kondea, and planted a beautiful garden there, with fruit trees, like apricots, bordered with cypress, and with plenty of water. When he died that went to my father as his patrimony. When Aunty Edmée went to Italy in 1915, she was in very dire straits. Nona wrote to my father and said I'd like to sell your garden, and give the money to Edmée. In return she'd give him the garden of Orcos, when she died. My father eventually agreed, although my mother was much opposed to it. When I was a child this garden was owned by Tremetousiotis, and this was the name by which we knew it.

Aunty Edmée returned from Italy in the summer of 1930. Father had written to her that Nona was not well, and was giving her fortune away, and if she didn't come back there'd be nothing left. Nona was giving property away to the wife of the grandson of Nona's wet nurse. She would sit with Nona, and bring her food, and make her cups of coffee, and tell her how hard up they were. Among the property she gave away was the garden of Orcos. Other property went missing at this time, like the books from the library.

So Aunty Edmée came back to Cyprus, and to Kondea, with Gigetta her daughter. They moved into Nona's house, as the old tsifliki was becoming unsafe. They started legal proceedings to recover the property. I don't know how much they were able to recover. Aunty Edmée later sold the water rights to Prastio.

About this time Gigetta met George Vassiliades. In about the summer of 1932 he came to visit at Kondea, and had lunch with the family. After lunch Nona had a nap. After waking she saw George sitting on the terrace outside, and said to him, Have you come to visit us? and Who are you? George thought she was having a game with him, because they had just had lunch together. Then she saw Gigetta, and did not recignise her. She'd had a few lapses before, like putting chocolate under her pillow, but this was the day when they realised she had become ill. Perhaps she had a stroke that afternoon.

When Nona came to stay with us in Larnaca in 1933, she was sitting with Angelou on the balcony, and asking her who is this one, and who is that one. Angelou would tell her she did not know. But she kept on asking, about everyone who passed, and she said to

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11 My mother never knew my grandfather, but she did know his brother, Uncle Roberto, who she met in Egypt. Uncle Roberto was a banker, and he was married to a very beautiful woman. He was the grandfather of the Comtesse de Rochefoucauld. Uncle Roberto's daughter married a Mattossian - they were wealthy cigarette manufacturers in Egypt. Their daughter married the Comte de Rochefoucauld. There was a programme about her some years ago on television, trying to keep the Rochefoucauld estates going.

12 this was at a time when the Maltese were expelled from Egypt.

Angelou, You don't know anybody in this town. Angelou came to realise there was something wrong with her. So, she started telling her, I don't know him, he's an Armenian. Until Nona said to her, Goodness me, this town is taken over by Armenians.

Nona stayed with Aunty Edmée at Kondea. She would come and stay with us, and see my father, first at Larnaca, then later at Famagusta and Xeros. They looked after her very well, but my mother and Nona really never got on.

Nona died in 1937 at Kondea. We went to Kondea for her funeral.

A Place of Ghosts

My grandmother always was talking about ghosts.

She told me that a very violent man had once been kept chained. She always spoke about his ghost being in the laundry downstairs, and that at night she could hear the chains clinking. That was the famous ghost of Kondea, but of course we never saw ghosts ourselves.

Another ghost she saw was grandfather (Frederic). When we went to Larnaca to live, we used to come to Kondea for our school holidays. Once she told us that she was sitting in the hall upstairs, when she saw grandfather passing by. He told her he had finished his penance, and had come to say good-bye. She took it, that he had finished his time in Purgatory, and was going on to another place.

Then there is the story of Black Maria.

In other generations, my brother Fred used to see ghosts, and Yole as well, Edmée's daughter. But nothing to do with Kondea.

Black Maria

Maria, a negress, was married Constandis. I am not sure where they lived when they were married, but after Constandis' death Maria became a sort of concierge or door keeper, with a room underneath the long staircase that led up into the tsifliki. I do not remember her, and I think she must have died some time before the times I can remember. I remember her bed in the room under the staircase. When we used to wander off, as children do, my father would tell us to be careful, or "Black Maria would get us". So we were naturally afraid to pass the room of Black Maria. She was always spoken of as a trusted and honoured servant. She was buried just outside the family enclosure in the cemetery on the property at Kondea, next to the grave of my grandfather, Frederic Diacono.[13] I remember the mound of earth over her grave, which means she must have died not long before the time we were living there.

One night, when I was about five, our servant, I think it was Kakoulou, took us to the toilet before we went to bed. We were walking along the roof terraces of the tsifliki, when I took a wrong step and fell into the courtyard below. The servant called my father. They were very distressed, because it was a big fall and the threshing machine was kept there – they thought if I had landed on the machine I would surely have been killed. When they reached the yard, they found me crawling about on my hands and knees looking for the lamp. I had fallen on soft earth, and had not been harmed. I told them that I was afraid to go to the staircase without a lamp, because of Black Maria. I remember my father shouting, "She's all right. She's all right. She's looking for the lamp."

Larnaca – the first stay 1922-1923

In 1922, Jules became an agent of the Messagerie Maritime in Larnaca, and it was decided that we would all go to Larnaca to live. We did not stay long there, because father was going back to Kondea all the time to look after the property. We returned to Kondea by September 1922, where I commenced school.

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13 My grandfather Frederic, grandmother Virginie, and my father Louis are buried in the same grave.

Death of Aunty Hélène, 1926

I remember Aunty Hélène, at the end of her life, as a very quiet, gentle woman. Her house contained the family chapel.

Aunty Helena had married, I think to a professor or teacher, but she refused to consummate the marriage, and it was annulled. She had a maid called Anglia [14]. Aunty Helena used to keep pigs, and graze them on the moors at Kondea. A Russian emigrée went up to her while she was looking after her pigs, and asked her if she could go to her mistress and tell her he wanted to speak to her. She replied, "Can't you see I'm the mistress. Can't you see I'm wearing a hat!"[15]

Aunty Helena was diabetic. During her last illness she stayed in the tsifliki, because it was easier to care for her there. She had an ulcer at the back of her head from the diabetes, which couldn't be cured. My father asked the doctor, "Can't you do anything for her?" The doctor replied, "Ine cotjakarie" – "She's an old woman".

I was swimming in the pool with the other children, when it came to me that something had happened to Aunty Helena. Then Kakoulou the maid came to say that Aunty Helena had died. We went upstairs to her room, where she was alreay laid on the bed. She was buried in the family graveyard at Kondea. She was not that old, about 66 years of age. I do not remember attending the funeral, only when they came back to the house, and the people attending were given bread and olives to eat – the Greek custom.

Aunty Helena's house was attached to the family church at Kondea. As a child, it seemed an awful long walk from the tsifliki, but, when I went back there in 1953, it was not so far. Now it would seem a long way again.

Of an evening we would sit out on the terrace of the tsifliki, and watch the sun set, sometimes just the family, and sometimes with friends. There were hundreds of frogs in the pools and fields around the tsifliki, and their chorus in the evening was deafening. One evening they were sitting there, when father saw someone carrying a lantern near the family church. This was long after aunty Helena's death. He saw the lantern walked from the church to the family cemetery, where it ceased to be seen. Puzzled, he went to investigate who it might be, walking about at such an hour, but he could find no-one. He thought then that they had seen a ghost, and believed it was Aunty Helena.

The Russian Emigrees

Following the revolution in Russia 1921-1922 a number of Russian aristocracy were given asylum in Cyprus, and about twenty of these were billeted in Nona Virginie's house, while she was in Italy. They were there for a few months. My mother was horrified that they would swim naked in the swimming pool near our chapel, men and women together. Later on they found jobs and they moved away.

The moors

The moors appear frequently in this account. They were called "καυκάλα", pronounced "kafkalla", which means "crust".[16] I think they were named this because it was hard and dry, like the crust of the bread. They were also called "μαρράς", pronouned "marras", which had the meaning "moors".[17] There were large areas of flat stones called "πλακατσιές",

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14 or "England", because she was very blond, and born the year England took over Cyprus.

15 The villagers never wore hats. In 1922, after the Russian Revolution, 26 Russian Emigrees stayed in grandmother Virginie's house, while she was in Italy. They scandalised the people at Kondea, because they swam naked in the pool, men and women together.

16 AGP: or "καύκαλο"

17 AGP: The word "μαρράς" does not appear to be of Greek origin. It may have been of European origin, with some confusion in the etymology. The English word "moor" is of Germanic origin, and

pronounced "plakatchess", which means "flat stones". These stones were not very deep – they could be lifted and there was soil underneath, that was quite fertile, and could be cultivated.

The moors stretched to the south-east of the tsifliki, as far as St George's church to the south, and area of several square miles.

The moors remained in the possession of the Lapierres, and, as far as I know, are still held in common by the family.

The Tsifliki

"Tsifliki" or "chiftlick" was a Turkish name, literally "mansion". It referred to the main house, for example the "tsifliki" as opposed to Nona Virginie's house on the other side of the Inner Courtyard. But it was also used for all the houses and lands belonging to the demesne; for example, all the Lapierre property of Kontea, or if someone wanted to speak of the olive groves, they would say "the olive groves of the tsifliki".

The name Kondea or Kontea comes from the French La Contée or La Comtée. During the rule of the Lusignan Kings of Cyprus (1192-1474), this was the name given to a summer residence of a Viscount. The tsifliki main house dates from this period, perhaps fourteenth century.

The story in the family was that when Georges Lapierre first came to purchase Kondea, he asked the Turkish official in charge of the sale how much land there was, and that the official replied: "As far as the eye can see." So it is, that to this day one can stand on the terrace of the tsifliki, and looking west, see what Georges Lapierre saw.

The following extract from a school history book describes the origins of the tsifliki:

> The name of the village is foreign. Kontea is a new village, which came into existence during the Turkish occupation. During the French occupation it was a villa, where lived a high-ranking officer called Viscount. These villas were given as a grace and favour by the French King, but they were not hereditary. Archbishop Kyprianos, in his History book, writes: 'These Comites or Konteas were given for the benefit of their operation only, and not to pass on to the family of the incumbent.' (392)
>
> "According to village legends, the villa passed into the hands of the Kykkos monastery during the Turkish occupation, and then to the Archbishopric of Cyprus. In 1797 a nephew of Archbishop Chrysanthos was District Bishop of Tamassou. The Archbishop was a very old man, and the District Bishop took charge of the Archbishopric's affairs. It was then that many renovations and repairs took place. This is indicated by an inscription on a marble plaque dated 1797.
>
> "In 1821, immediately after the Turkish massacres at Nicosia, the dependency of the Archbishopric at Kontea, as well as many other Church possessions, were seized by the Turks, and used to enrich the military and civil functionaries. On the 16th of October in the same year, Archbishop Joachim bought the villa for 12,750 piastres. In 1823 the Archbishop sold the property to Mme Louise Lapierre for 15,000 piastres. In the documents of that time the villa was known by the name Kontesa. Apart from the underground water channels, it consisted of 696 acres of land[18], 77 olive trees, fig trees, mulberry trees, 285 animals, 29 stables and barns. The remarkable fertility of the soil attracted the new owners. The result was that a village was formed for the workers of the farm, and it was named Kontea. Gradually most of the land passed to the hands of the

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means a heathland, not necessarily boggy, but in some places associated with boggy ground ("morass") eg., Dartmoor. The French word "marais" (English "morass") today means a marshland, probably from the Latin mare = sea, although not necessarily salt marshes: Le Marais or marshland area of Paris was cleared by the Kinights Templar in the 12th Century. Although they had spings beneath, the Kondea moors were dry in living memory, and as high ground were well-drained.

18 1 square mile = 640 acres (*http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Square_mile*). So, 696 acres = 1.087 squarre miles.

villagers, and the family of the Lapierres remained in the villa buildings, and with a small holding in and around.

"The French family had their own teachers for the education of their children. When the village was first formed in the middle of the last century, the first teacher was Papacharalambos, who taught at his home the church writings." [19]

The words of this text mask a more complex set of property relationships than the English concepts brought in the colonial period. Just as the Contée had originally been held by grace and favour of the Lusignan King, and later by the church, so the properties of the original inhabitants of Kondea were held from the landowner, the Lapierres. With the passage of time, the superimposition of British Laws covering title based on continouous usage and the payment of land taxes, or by purchase, or by gift, side-by-side with the decline in the fortunes of the Lapierre family, were the inhabitants of Kondea to come to own their homes and fields.

The extent of the Kondea lands is also unclear:

1) The text above mentions 696 acres, or a little over 1 square mile. The source of this information is unclear, and the area of the moors alone would suggest it was much larger.
2) The Report of Her Majesty's Commissioners in 1879 puts the extent of the Lapierre lands at 5,066 donums "in the district"[20] or 2.62 square miles.
3) What was said in the family was that the boundaries of the property, at their maximum, extended to Prastio in the north, included Kouklia in the east, bordered Xylotimbou and Pyla[21] in the south including Pergamos, included Lysi and Arsos in the west ,but excluded Tremetousia. In all this was an area of about 6 miles x 4 miles or 24 square miles. The stories of villagers I have spoken to from Kondea, Lyssi and Xylotimbou support some of these boundaries.
4) The cochain for Kondea[22] did not specify an area.

A vaguenees about the extent of the land appears to have been part of the arrangement with the Turks, and may have been to the Lapierre's advantage in the assessment of taxes. I imagine that the British were a different kettle of fish altogether.

The Tsifliki – Layout in the 1920's (fl)

The following satellite photographs show the relationship of Kondea (centre) and Lyssi, the layout of the village and the tsifliki.

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19 **Error! Reference source not found.**

20 **Error! Reference source not found.** In Ottoman Cyprus the donum appears to have been 14,400 sq ft (*http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Dunam*); So, 5,066 donums = 5066x14400 = 72,950,400 sq ft = 2.62 sq miles

21 Pyla was always said to be a separate property, as I assume was Limnia.

22 **Error! Reference source not found.**

Figure 2 Satellite photo of Kondea (centre) and Lyssi to its west, 2009, showing the two villages and surrounding terrain.

Figure 3 Satellite photo of Kondea, 2009. The tsifliki is in the centre, Kondea village to the north-east, the fields of the tsifliki to the west, and the moors to the south in the direction of St George's Church.

Figure 4 Satellite photo of Kondea Tsifliki, 2006: note ground markings

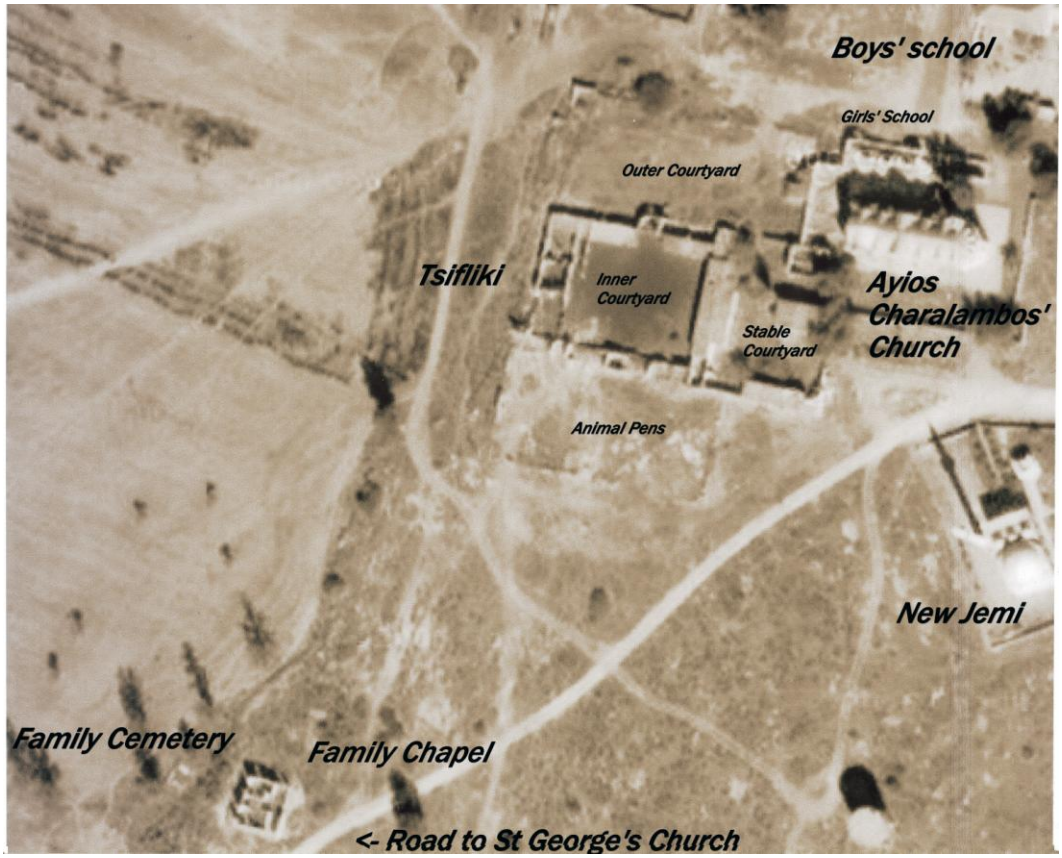

Figure 5 Satellite photo of Kondea Tsifliki, 2006, with labelling of the site– drawn by Alex Pugh in conversation with Mary Pugh April-May 2009

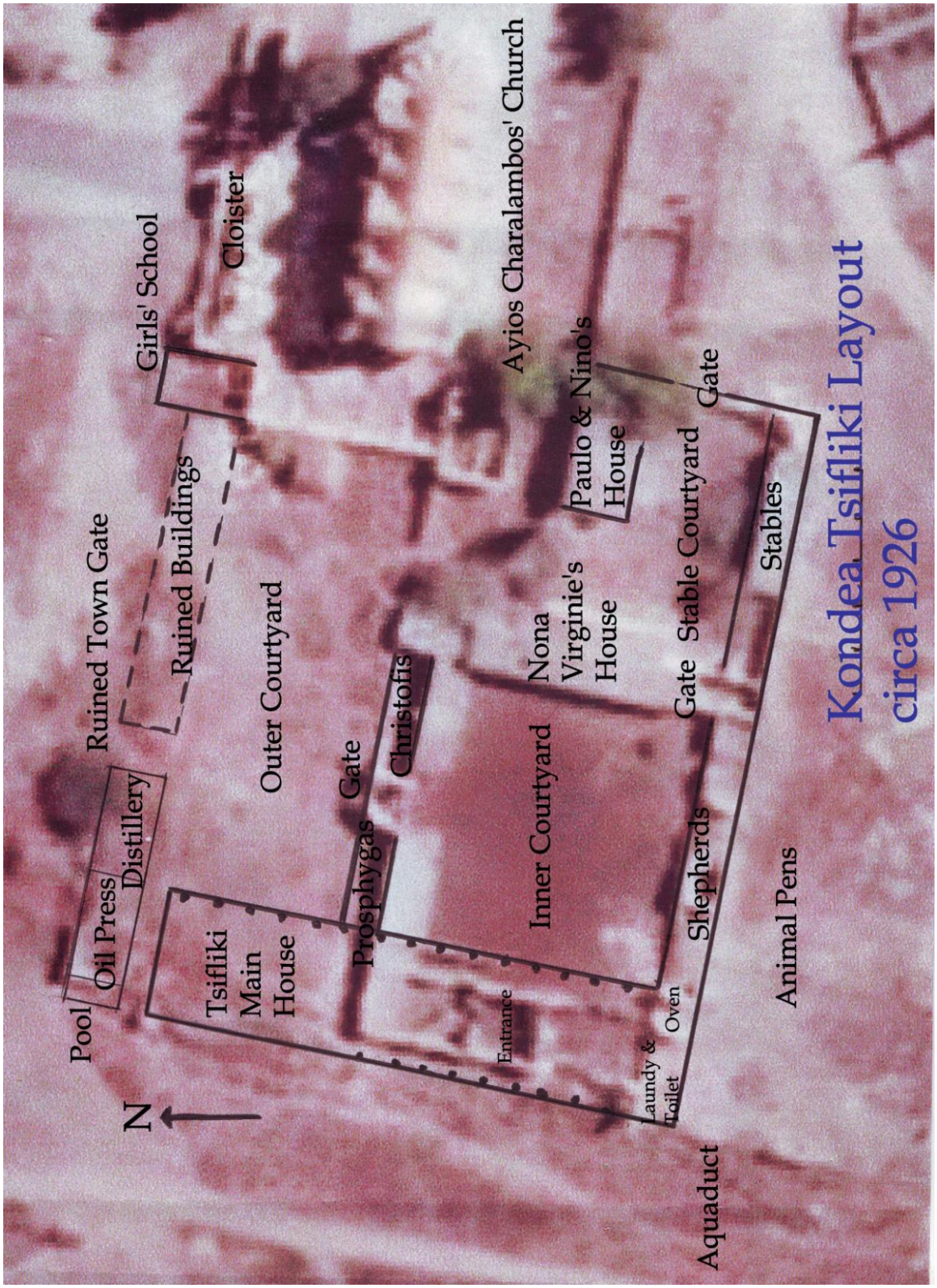

Figure 6 Plan of Kondea Tsifliki c1926, superimposed on 2006 satellite photograph – drawn by Alex Pugh in conversation with Mary Pugh April-May 2009

Description of the Rooms in the Tsifliki

Editor's Note re Plans of the Tsifliki

The plans of the tsifliki were put together using the following method:

1. *Rough planand textual drescriptions in conversations with my mother, during her final illness, April-May 2009.*
2. *Plans scaled using satellite photographs, and therefore are approximate.*
3. *Ground lay-out and interior walls cross-checked against satellite photographs.*
4. *Plans cross-checked against surviving photographs from c1928, and against photographs of the ruins taken in 2004 and 2007.*

General Description of the Main Tsifliki – Ground Floor

Figure 7 Tsifliki Ground Floor – General Layout c1928 – drawn by Alex Pugh in conversation with Mary Pugh April-May 2009

Courtyards
There were three courtyards:

1. The Outer Courtyard
This was at the northern range of the tsifliki, closest the village. Originally, it would have been completely enclosed. But in our time, the "Village Gate" was in ruins, and there were ruined buildings on the other side of that. Also, it is clear that the main building was once joined to the building containing the Oil Press and the Distillery, enclosing the courtyard. Part of the main building must have collapsed in some structural failure. In our time there was a narrow passageway between the main house and the Oil Press, through which we could walk to the pool.

Figure 8 Gate between Outer and Inner Courtyards, 1963 (photograph Henriette Lapierre)

2. The Inner Courtyard
A gateway separated the Outer and Inner Courtyards. In our time this was locked at night, to secure the Inner Courtyard. The Inner Courtyard was the centre of the life of the tsifliki. The threshing machine was kept on the southern end of the Inner Courtyard.

Colonnades
The main house had Colonnades facing east towards the Inner and Outer Courtyards (I think ten and five columns respectively), and facing west towards the fields on the opposite side to the Inner Courtyard (I think ten columns including those built into the walls at either end). There were no colonnades facing west opposite the Outer Courtyard – these had been enclosed, perhaps at the time of the structural failure previously mentioned.

Figure 9 Tsifliki c1919

Figure 10 Tsifliki main house and colonnades, west face c1928 – note bridge over aquaduct and buttress. (photograph from album of Andree Feneck)

Figure 11 Tsifliki main house and colonnades from Inner Courtyard c1928. (photograph from album of Andree Feneck)

Figure 12 Tsifliki main house and colonnades from Inner Courtyard 1963 (photograph Henriette Lapierre)

Figure 13 Tsifliki main house and colonnades from Inner Courtyard 1963 (photograph Henriette Lapierre)

Laundry and Toilets
The laundry was at the southern end of the main house. The toilets were part of the Laundry building. The steps to the toilet were at the end of the Terrace on the outside of the buildings where you descended into the chicken yard. About six steps down there was a landing, you turned left, about three more steps and you walked into the toilet. There were two seats, like thrones – this was probably from the monastic days, but I never knew more than one of the family members to be in there at a time. When it was dark we used to carry an oil lamp, as I related earlier. The toilets had pits underneath, and these were cleaned every 2-3 months by some lucky servants.

Storeooms
The underneath of the main house were storerooms. The storerooms at the northern end were the large vats for olive oil, wine etc.

Entrance
The Entrance was beneath the Summer Dining Room, with Black Maria's Room at the foot of the stairs. The door to the east led the Inner Courtyard. The door to the west led to the Outer Colonnades, a little bridge over the Aquaduct, and then steps down into the gardens and fields. Both these doors were locked at night to secure the house.

Shepherds' Rooms
The buildings on the southern end of the Inner Courtyard were used by the shepherds, and adjacent to Nona's house by Aunty Helena for her pigs. I think that at least one of these rooms opened onto the animal pens outside to the south. Apart from Aunty's pigs, animals were not kept in these rooms.

Figure 14Family group, Tsifliki c 1928: Rothou, Apostolis (son of Kakoulou), Photou (daughter of Rothou)?, Harry Diacono, ?, Ada Diacono, Eleni (daughter of Kakoulou), Mary Diacono – in the backgroundare the shepherds' rooms and the harvesting machine. (from album of Andree Feneck)

Nona Virginie's House (later Aunty Edmee's)

The layout shown for Nona's house is very approximate, as my recollection is poor. I remember a large dining room, and a corridor on the east side leading to three bedrooms. The house was used by Aunty Edmee following Nona's death. After she had evicted Christofis, she made a kitchen in part of his old house. I think she made a bathroom in one of the shepherds' rooms at the southern end.

Figure 15 Ruin of Nona Virginie's House, 2004, showing outline of gate leading to the Stable Courtyard (photograph Alex Pugh)

3. The Stable Courtyard

There was originally a gateway between the Inner Courtyard and the Stable Courtyard, but by our time this had been enclosed to form one of the bedrooms in Nona Virginie's house. The outline of that gateway can still be seen in the wall of Nona's house. The Moor Gate led past Ayios Charlambos church to the moors. There were, if I remember, three cedar trees in the Stable Courtyard outside Nona's house – two white cedars, and I think one red.

Paulo and Giovanni's House

Aunty Edmee built or refurbished a house for Paulo and Giovanni (or Janis, Gigetta Vassiliades' sons) in the Stable Courtyard. Their library was in that house. They were both lost in boating tragedy, and their bodies never found. I am unsure whether the building was used after that. It is still standing, but much dilapidated.

Figure 16 Paulo and Giovanni's House 2004 (photograph Alex Pugh)

General Description of the Main Tsifliki – First Floor

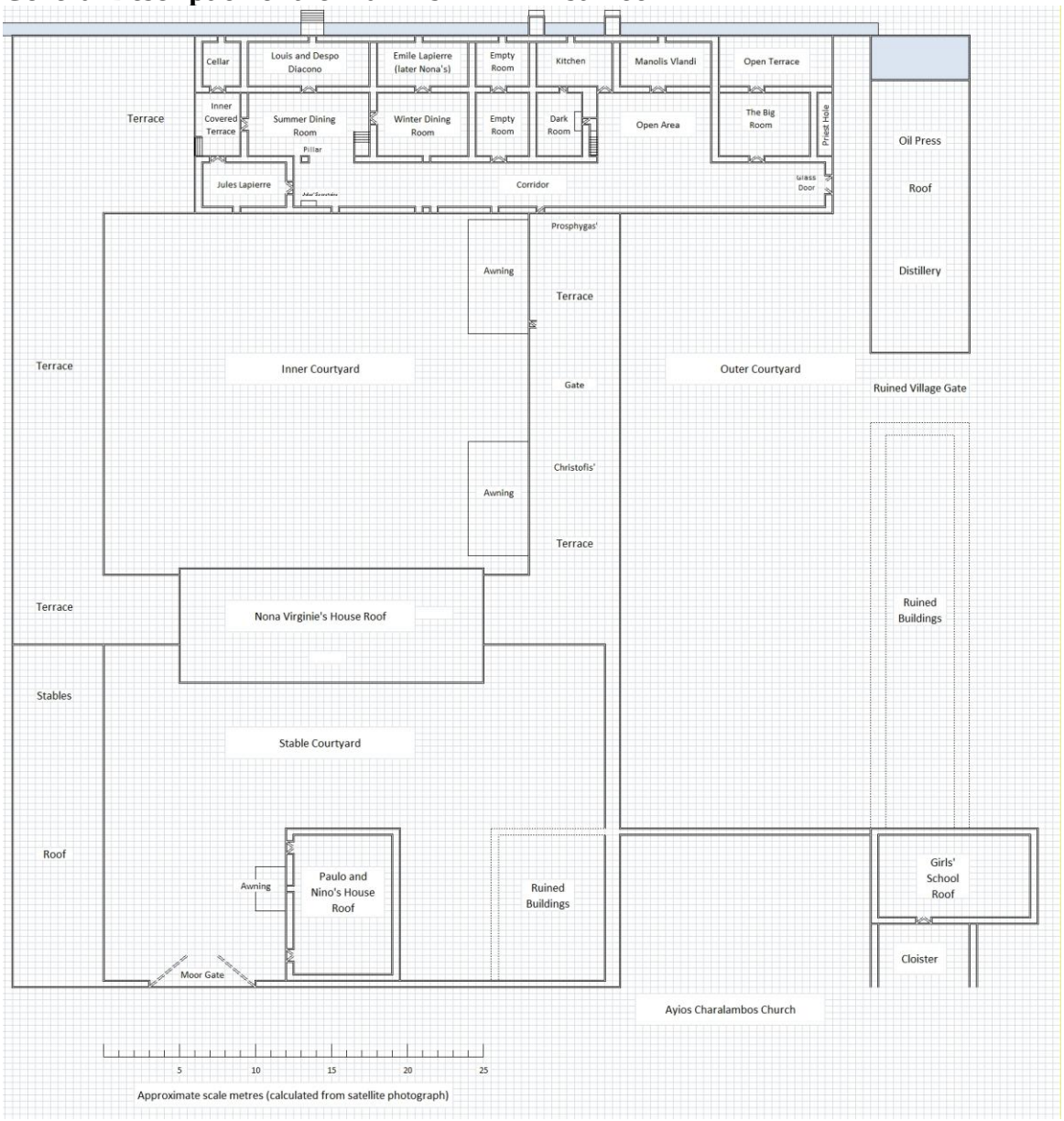

Figure 17 Tsifliki First Floor and Rooftop Level – General Layout c1928 – drawn by Alex Pugh in conversation with Mary Pugh April-May 2009

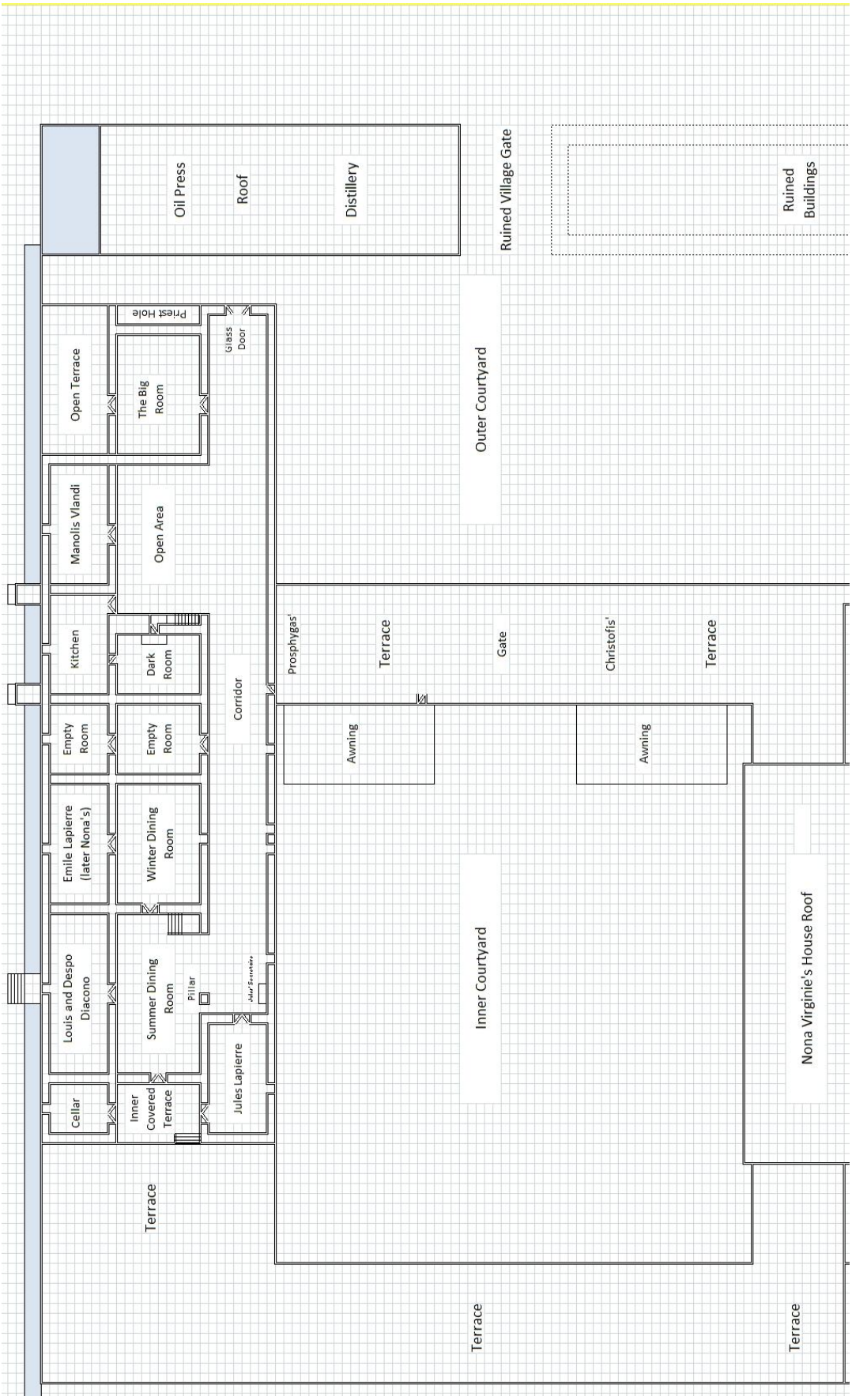

Figure 18 Tsifliki First Floor and Rooftop Level – Detail of Main House c1928 – drawn by Alex Pugh in conversation with Mary Pugh April-May 2009

The outer rooms and the long corridor were built over the colonnades. They had their own internal ceilings. The inner rooms were formed by the inner structural walls of the colonnades. They had high pitched timber ceilings, with cross-beams, and with the cross walls rising up to the apex of the ceilings. The servants used palm branches wrapped with cloths to dust the timbers.

The Inner Terrace

The Inner Terrace was covered by the roof, open at one end, with steps leading up to the terrace. There were chairs where the ladies would sit to embroider in the warmer months, and pot plants. It was very pleasant, and it seemed they lived a calm life together, without fighting. I do not know how the water drained. [23]

The Cellar

The Cellar faced the Inner Terrace. This was the cellar for the domestic requirements of the house, with shelves, a big table. Here they kept bottles of oil, halloumi, glicko, marmalades, dried products (beans, peas etc) and all the foodstuffs for the house. They used to keep wheat here, befire being taken to the mill to make flour.

Uncle Jules' Room

Uncle Jules' room also faced the Inner Terrace, but also had a door to the long corridor. He had his bed facing the corridor. A cupboard. He shared the room with Fred and Harry. When Ada was very young, she cried a lot, and father would not have her in their room. So Kakoulou slept in Uncle Jules' room with Ada, and for that time Uncle Jules slept in the Big Room at the other end of the house.

Poor Ada, when she was born, it was after the time of the Macedonian war[24], when many of the troops had contracted the psoriasis, and brought it back to Cyprus. Mother took her to Nicosia, and they stayed overnight at a hotel in Prastio[25]. Mother was always very particular about cleanliness, but Ada somehow contracted psoriasis from a previous occupant, and it was a year or two before she was cured.

Then shortly after she contracted typhoid. Kakoulou then slept with Ada in the Big Room, and Uncle Jules came back to the old room with Fred and Harry. [26]

Ada, to her credit, never forgot Kakoulou. In her very old age, Kakoulou lived with her daughter in a village of Ayios Giorgios near Kalochorio, and Ada would go there whenever she was in Cyprus to visit her there.

Mother and Father's Room

The lovely wardrobe that Henriette had in her house was in my mother's bedroom – it had belonged to Uncle Jules' mother. The room was very large. On one side mother and father had brass poster beds with frills and curtains. Mother always had very beautiful decorations and lace work. Ada, Kitty and I had our beds at the other end of the room – mine had a

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23 The photo of mother, Uncle Jules and Uncle Georges was taken here.

24 Cyprus provided a regiment of muleteers, who fought in the Salonika Campaign (1915ff), and were deployed supplying the army fighting in the high mountain passes to the north of Greece, in modern-day Bulgaria, Macedonia and Serbia. (This is where Alexander Lapierre was killed in 1915, fighting with the French Army.) There must have been some men from Kondea who fought in that campaign. Many of these men contracted the dreadful psoriasis, and in this way brought the disease back to Cyprus.

25 Prastio was a railway station between Famagiusta and Nicosia. Another was Angastina.

26 It took her 40 days to get better, and they had to go Larnaca every day on bicycles to bring ice to bring her temperature down – they would wrap the ice in newspapers to stop it from melting. Dr Hallili, a Turkish doctor, came from Vatilly to tend to her. He was the only doctor in a huge district. Later the government appointed another doctor at Lefka, but by that stage there were more private doctors.

curtain around it.

Most probably this had been Adele's room previously.

The Summer Dining Room

The photograph of Adele was on the wall of the summer dining room, between mother's bedroom and the winter dining room (this was the earlier 1880's-90's photograph). The family used to refer to the photograph as "Cocona Adele."

Figure 19 "Cocona Adele" - a larger version of this photograph hung in the Summer Dining Room

There was a huge cupboard or linen press on the wall of the summer dining room between the terrace door and mother and father's room. That disappeared when I was 4 or 5, I think cut up into smaller cupboards.

There was a large dining suite in the middle of the summer dining room, seating twelve or more.

There was a Louis XIV settee, in the same upholstery as the one in the winter dining room. My mother sold this some time after that one.

In the colder months the ladies would sit here of a morning, doing their needlework.

There was a double door to the terrace, which was barred at night.

The staircase from the ground floor came up into the Summer Dining Room. Here also was the pillar on which was the Kondea Inscription.

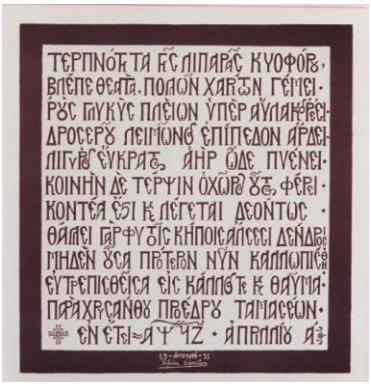

Figure 20 Kondea Inscription, Summer Dining Room

The Winter Dining Room

As you entered the winter dining room, there were double doors of the most beautiful wood, and inside, above them was a huge fan, about six foot wide. It was the most beautiful colours, with different pictures on it.

There was a photograph of Uncle Emile on the opposite wall of the winter dining room. Beneath this there was Louis XIV settee upholstered in burgundy-coloured material. I remember the day my mother sold this in exchange for a tea set.

On the right hand side of winter dining room, as you entered, were two window onto the corridor, and in between them was a large glass-fronted bookshelf, full of books, many in French, and a wooden box with the gold epaulettes of Uncle Emile.

It was said that some of books were later selected by Dr Charalambos Dimitriou, who was treating Nona Virginie – she never paid him, he looked after her to the end, and this may have been in lieu. [27]

There was a large dining suite in the middle of the winter dining room, again seating twelve or more, with beautiful, beautiful wood, greyish.

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27 His father was a grocer. Dr Dimitriou married a teacher and moved to Nicosia. Korou told me: "You know Dr Charalambos was making so much money, the banks told him they couldn't take any more, and that he would have to go to Athens and take it." She was an old woman, talking..

Uncle Emile's Bedroom
Uncle Emile's bedroom – this was the room where he died. In our time it was used as a Salon: mother used it as a sitting room to receive guests. Later, it became Nona Virginie's bedroom, after she returned from Italy.

I remember a family photograph album was kept in the salon. It had a creamy cover with silver clips. I cannot remember the photographs inside. I believe Uncle Georges (III) may have had this album, but I am unsure what became of it.

The Corridor
The Corridor, we called it the Long Corridor, ran the length of the house over the colonnades of the Inner and Outer Courtyards.

At one end, near the wall of his bedroom, was Uncle Jules' secretaire, which Henriette later had in her house. It had belonged to Uncle Emile. He had a big dispute with Aunty Edmee, who had wanted to sell it.

At the far end of the Long Corridor was a huge glass door, with a drop beyond it – (there must once have been a continuation of the corridor or a terrace leading to the roof of the olive press and distillery).The door was used to haul produce up from the Outer Courtyard. During the summer months we would eat at the end there, when it was very hot.

The Empty Rooms
The "Empty" rooms were completely empty. I have no knowledge of their original use.

The furnishings we had in Kondea were really what was left. It was said that Georges (II) sold a lot of them to pay his gambling debts.

The Kitchen
Then Kitchen was a disaster – there was a row of charcoal burners, like they use for the kebabs, a sink – Elenitsa used to have to carry the water in from the aqueduct. Elenitsa was with the family for 20 years or more. She was lame, and they used to call "Koutso-Eleni" or "Lame Eleni." She was a lovely person. She had two assistants.

The Dark Room
The "scotini" or "Dark Room" was empty – the Dark Room as I described earlier had a secret stairway leading to the underground passages (see more later).

Grandfather Manolis' Room
Then grandfather Manolis' bedroom – that's where he would spend most of his days. I only went in there once. A desk with pigeon holes, his bed, chairs. I don't remember much of it. He used to drink a lot, and didn't welcome visitors.

The Big Room
The "Big Room" was sometimes used as a bedroom, sometimes for growing silk worms. At the end was a small hidden room, what you would call a "priest hole".

There was a painting of St Peter on the wall of the Big Room at the end of the tsifliki. Father told my brother Harry, if he was not good, St Peter would head-butt him. Pater Pietro was there with us for lunch, "Mr Louis," he said, you must not say such things. He's a saint."

The Open Terrace
At the northwest end of the tsifliki was another Open Terrace, adjacent grandfather Manolis' and the Big Room. This may hace been another room originally.

Figure 21 Tsifliki c1926, showing the Open Terrace

A Typical Day at the Tsifliki

Work on the land would start early, depending on what they were harvesting. If it was lentils, they would start before sunrise, so that the lentils did not drop. In summer work would start very early, because once the sun was up it was too hot to work later in the day. My father would go out early to supervise the crews working in the fields, or clearing the wells – in summer they were often working underground, clearing the wells.

The female servants would go with my mother to look after her flower garden, before the heat of the day.

We would get up later, have our breakfast. The cook, Elenitsa, would prepare our breakfast – coffee, cheese, toast. We had a tutor, who lived in grandmother's house, and if his mother was not stayimg with him, he would come and have breakfast with us. Then we would have lessons with the tutor in the dining room, or in the hall in the summer, because it was much cooler. (That was after I stopped going to school.)

Kakoulou had several duties, and her daughter Eleni helped. They would sweep the house – this was done every day, because the wind was blowing in dust – and help mother to make the beds. They would sieve the lentils to remove the impurities – the lentils had small stones, bark and skin that needed to be removed. They would help with gathering the leaves of the mulberry trees, and rearing the silk worms. Sometimes we would go up on the moors with Kakoulou to pick capers, or into the orchards to collect almonds, apricots or figs, depending on the season.

Anglia or Eleni would fetch the water for drinking and use in the house – this was kept in big stone "kouzes", which were two-handled amphoras. These were kept on a large tressle on the upstairs verandah, the openings covered with cloth to keep fresh in the summer. They were porous, and would perspire outside, so that the warm air would cool them. Water was poured from these into caraffes for the table, and that's where we got our water from. The water always tasted sweet and cool in the summer.

After ten, mother would change from her house dress, and then would sit and knit or embroider, and receive visitors – these were mostly men, who had business with Uncle Jules or father – Kakoulou would make them coffee. In winter they would sit in the dining room or enclosed verandah, around a brazier. In summer it would be on the verandah where it was cool from the breeze. More rarely women came visiting, and they were received in the sitting room.

Often there would be other tasks – collecting eggs, making jams, ravioli. Twice a week they would bake 15-20 loaves of bread, these would be used in the household, or taken home by the servants, or given to any poor people coming to the gates.

One meal we often had together was lunch. My father would come in from the fields, and we would eat together.

After lunch, during the summer, everyone would have siesta. Father used to put quilts and cushions on the floor in front of the big doors that opened on the verandah, to catch the breeze from the moors. Nona would sleep in her room. I would sleep in the bedroom on my bed. I can't remember where mother used to sleep. The maids would sleep in corridors on rush mats covered with quilts and cushions. Everyone would have siesta. I was the one who found it hard to sleep, and would get whacked if I was naughty.

The people working in the fields would have siesta as well, during the heat of the day. They would rest under the trees. The women workers might have their babies with them, and make little cradles under the trees.

Siesta would last an hour or two, until it got a little cooler. Everybody resumed their jobs. Dad would go out, on his bicycle or horse, to oversee the workers, and ensure that the gardens were watered. Work would then go on for a few hours, until it was wound up for the day.

Evenings - Cards

Of an evening my father would sometimes play cards with Pericles and Xenis Klitis.

Nonina's Garden

My mother had a beautiful flower garden. This was at the back of the tsifliki, facing the orchard and fields. You went down the steps, crossed a little bridge, over the water channel. You then went down a level, and along the channel she had a rose garden. There were other flowers as well, among them lavenders, and the opium poppy. In the Spring they used to get very early in the morning to gather the rose petals to make rose water.

The Farm

Life in Kondea in those days was in many ways idyllic. There were a lot of foods you could collect wild, particularly on the moors. These included capari (capers)[28], agrelli (asparagus), moloha (hollyhock), agkinara (wild artichokes), radiki (chickory), tsiknida (nettles), throumbi (thyme)[29], faskomileia or hahomilia (sage)[30].

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28 you could eat the caper, its leaves and the little cucumbers

29 these were very big bushes – they were used as a herb; as a starter for lighting a fire; in Lyssi the women used to take it to weddings and use it as a seat.

30 used in cooking; in the winter months it was also used to make tea at night, to warm us before going to bed.

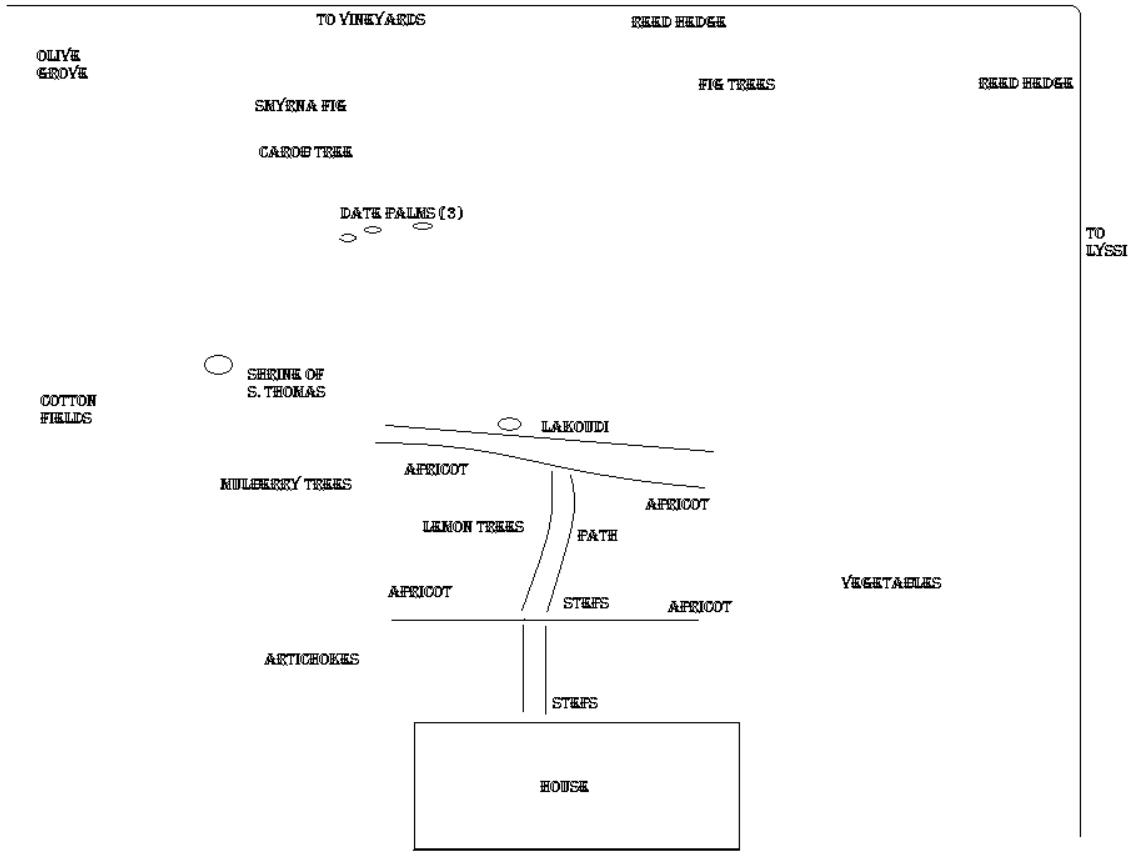

Figure 22 Map of Farm (not to scale),drawn by Alex Pugh, from a drawing by Mary Pugh, March 2003

The food we ate came from the farms on the tsifliki.

The whole garden from the olive groves to the tsifliki was called "περιβόλα", pronounced locally "pervola" (without the "ι") by which we meant "large garden" – that was the area of the orchards, the fields where they grew cotton, and the vegetable garden.

There was an orchard of fig trees. This was located at the bottom of the garden. The property was facing two roads – you went down the road to Lyssi, and from this another branched off to the vineyards. There was a hedge of reeds along the road to Lyssi, and then along the road to the vineyards, as far as the olive grove, where the reed fence stopped. But where the reed fence was, there was the grove of fig trees, about twelve to fifteen huge fig trees in two or three rows. These used to crop twice a year. The first crop was called *machila*, but this wasn't as plentiful as the second crop.

They were never watered. But when there were torrential rains once a year, there was a river that used to flood all that area up to the well, and that was the only water the fig, olives and vineyards used to get. This river was called koundouras (the short one or "shorty"), and it came down from the hills behind Lyssi. The well (*lakoudi* or small well) was the main source of drinking water for the tsifliki, and it was never known to run dry. When they knew the rain was coming, they used to collect a lot of water from that well, so that the flood would fill it again.

At the time we were living there, the fig and olive orchards were still owned by the family. Most of the vineyards had been sold or given away some time previously, except for the few acres of vines father planted in the big garden.

The tree we called the Smyrna fig was large, about the size of this room. The figs were a mixture of faun and green, with streaks of pink. I loved figs. I think I was the only one of the children who really appreciated them. My father would bring me a plate of them, and say to me, "Come on Mary, let's eat some figs." When I was 6 or 7 years old I tried to climb it, and fell. Kakoulou came to help me, thinking I had hurt myself, and then picked some figs for me to eat.

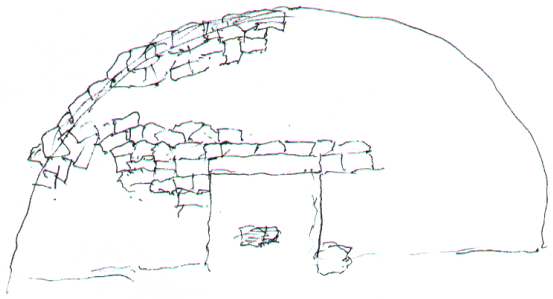

Figure 23 Shrine of St Thomas, Kondea, drawn by Mary Pugh, 14 March 2003

There was a shrine of St Thomas in the centre of the farm, (see map) which the villagers used to visit it. It was very ancient, shaped like a hermit's hut. It may have been built by the monks, or may even have been much much older. When Aunty Edmee took over the property, she demolished it. I never understood why.

Silk Making

There was a man in Kondea called Xenis 'tis Marious. He was the "cantilanaftis", whose duty was to keep the sanctuary lamps lit in Ayios Charalambos' church. He was also a farmer, and as a side-line he used to propagate the silk worm. This was a small industry, at times employing 6-8 of the village girls. They would open the cocoons and take the eggs of the chrysalis out, and sell these to the villagers, and all over the district, including to my mother.

The silk worm feeds on mulberry leaves. There were two different types of mulberry tree in the village. The first to come out in the Spring was the fine leafed variety. My mother would lay newspapers on a tressle, cover these with the leaves, and then sprinkle the silk worm eggs.

The eggs would hatch, and the silk worms feed on the leaves, growing quite large. After about 2-3 weeks they would have a "nystia" or fast for a week. Then they would feed for another 2-3 weeks, and then fast again.

Mother would then start to feed them on the second type of leaf, which was larger but tougher. This leaf was called "imeron". After a period of 2-3 weeks, the worms would want to climb, and form their cocoon. They would bring small tender branches for the worms to climb on.

It was at this stage that Xenis would select his best cocoons for his breeding stock for the next year, probably from his own stock.

When the cocoon was properly formed, another villager, whose name I never knew, would take the cocoons, boil them, and unravel them into silk thread. He would give the thread back to mother, who would have dresses, suits, sheets and other items made from it, mainly using a blend, I think with cotton, called "setta cruta", or "boiled silk".

Wheat

We had a petrol machine for harvesting the wheat – this used to be kept in the Inner Courtyard near the oven. The wheat was tied into sheeves and put on carts and brought to the threshing field on the moors.

The traditional way of threshing was on the threshing floor, with the horses, donkeys

or oxen walking around for hours pulling a large wooden board (like a surfboard) with flint stones embedded underneath.[31] They would be going from morning to night, and the evening we would go and take the animal to water in the channel that was coming from the laoumia. After the threshing, they would wait for an evening when there was a breeze, the wheat was winnowed with pitch forks to separate the grain from the chaff. It was then bailed, and the government official (the ταπου tapou) would come an stamp the bails.

During 1925-26, an English company (Newmans) brought a threshing machine to Kondea, and installed it on the moors. For a fee, the villagers would bring their wheat, put it through the machine, and take their grain away. The old method continued for those who did not want to pay, but mostly people who had a couple of pennies used it, because it saved them time.

Water Pumps

Afterwards, Newmans brought water pumps. Father made a potato field on the moors with a sharer (Harilaos, a cousin of Angelou). He was doing the work, and Uncle Jules and father were putting the expenses.

From about this time father started working for Newmans: he would ride his motorbike to the various villages installing water pumps. This was a new technology for Cypus at this time. But it was occasional, not a regular job: but he travelled from Famagusta right out to the west of Cyprus.

Cotton

When I was a child there were perhaps four acres under cotton in the field below the cemetery, part of the pervola, in the area bordered by the olive trees to the south, by the shrine of St Thomas to the west, by the waterchannel, cemetery and almond trees to the east, and the lemon trees to the north.

When the cotton was a fott or so high, it was full of weeds, and the women would work in a row down the field pulling them out. During the cotton picking season, seven or eight women would pick in a row, and put the cotton into their aprons, and then into large baskets made of reeds ("κοφίνες" pronounced "koffeeness").

Of an evening they would go home, have their meal, and then come back. The cotton was brought into the entrance hall on the upper floor of the main building of the tsifliki, piled in big heaps, and the women would take it out of the pods, and pack them into sacks, ready to go to the market. Father would play them records on his Edison gramophone, while they were doing this – opera. When they were not listening to music, the women would tell "παραμύθι" pronounced "paramithi" meaning stories, fables or consolations.

Tobacco

I have heard that father and Uncle Jules tried unsuccessfully to farm tobacco, but know little about this venture.

The Olive Trees and Olive Press

The olive grove was part of the pervola, located to the south-west of St Thomas' shrine. I think there is now the carob plantation in that area. Then there were perhaps a hundred olive

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31 AGP: This method of "threshing" goes back in time. In 1532 it is described by a pilgrim travelling through Cyprus, Maistre Denis Possot, a priet of Colommiers in Brie: "In the country they leave their wheat in heaps in the fields, and do not thresh it, but they make a fair place on which they arrane the sheaves, and then they have a fine harrow all set with sharp flints; on this they stand and drive about the horse, ass or mule; it cuts the straw small,.and that they give chiefly to their cattle." Calude Cobham: *Excerpta Cypria*, p 66.

trees. The olives were harvested in autumn. I don't know how they were harvested, as we never went down there during harvest time, but I imagine it was the traditional method of placing sheets on the ground and then shaking the olive trees. The olives were then brought up to the tsifliki in the "κοφίνες", most probably using the cart.

Figure 24 TraditionalCyprus olive press at Omodos with πιθαρια (photograph Alex Pugh)

The oil press was in the outer courtyard, the first building against the wall of the tsifliki as you entered the archway coming from the village. This was the traditional Cyprus oil press. There was a mill outside with a huge stone, which the donkey used to go around, and crush the olives. The crushed olives were then placed in baskets made of soft reeds called "ζεμπίλι" pronounced "zembili", and taken inside to the press – the olives were pressed in these baskets. A copper of water was kept boiling over coals, and the hot water would be poured over the zimbili while the olives were being pressed. The oil and water would flow down the small chanel of the press into large pots, called "πιθαρια" or "pitharia". The oil would float to the top, as it cooled, where it would be skimmed, and poured into glass containers called "λαμετξεανες" pronounced "lamingianes". People from the surrounding village came as well to use the olive press.

Kakoulou would put bread on a long fork, dip in olive oil, and toast it in the fire for us. It was delicious.

The Distillery

The next building, just before the gateway to the inner courtyard, was the distillery.

The Zivania was distilled from the grapes. Our tutor, Costas Chirchipis, was an expert in distillation, and in the grape harvest, when not teaching us, used to run the still for the Zivania.

Wine and Vinegar

My grandfather, Federico, had tried to make wine. We had 6 or 7 large Cyprus amphoras in the cellars under the house, where they made vinegar.

Animals

We had two pairs of oxen (for ploughing and pulling drays), horses, pigs, goats, chicken, geese, rabbits, turkeys.

Father had a horse for riding, Foradou, a beautiful mare. Canaris used to pull the caretta.

Vegetables

We had a gardener called "Prosfygas" ("refugee"). He looked after the vegetable garden. He came to the village as a refugee, and married Rothu, the daughter of Gianaxou, brother to Korou, Angelou's mother.

There was also Hirilaos, another cousin of Angelou – he was a share gardener with father and Uncle Jules. He used to grow acres of potatoes.

When extra help was needed for the garden, other workers would be hired from the village.

There were three ploughmen: Andonis Genakritis, Ilias father of Angelou, and (I think) Alexandris cousin of Angelou. At the end, when Ilias was no longer able to work as a ploughman, he was given a house at Orcos, to look after his family there. But I don't think he lasted long – a year or two and he died.

Laoumia and Aquaduct

The laoumia were a series of wells connected by underground chanels, large enough for men to enter and keep the passages clear. A few kilometres from Kondea, beyond the church of St George, were a series of hills. The water rose there, and came down in a series of laoumia towards the tsifliki, and finished about a half kilometre from Aunty Helena's house. From there the water went into an aqueduct, which ended at the big swimming pool near Aunty Hélène's house. From there it flowed along a further aqueduct to the little swimming pool at the end of the tsifliki near the the *illiomilos* (the oil mill). From the swimming pools, the overflow water was piped into the garden. Along the length of the aqueducts there were outlets (holetras), that could be opened to channel the water into the various gardens. The Lapierres owned the rights to this water.

Keeping the underground passages open was a constant task – if the water ceased flowing, or lessened, the workers would have to go along the passages to clear the blockage. My father would go down there all the time to inspect the channels and direct the workers. The water source was constant in those days, although in later years it had ceased. When father left, there was nobody to take care of them.

In the middle of the pervola, near to the shrine of St Thomas, is a deep well. This was dug by the men working for Georges Vasiliades, looking for water, after the laoumia has dried up.

Figure 25 Satellite photo of Kondea tsifliki, 2006, with labelling provided by the Kontea Foundation, showing aqueducts

I mentioned before that, when there were torrential rains came once a year, there was a river that used to flood all that area up to the well in the pervola (*lakoudi* or small well). This river was called *koundouras* (the short one or "shorty"), and it came down from the hills behind Lyssi.

The Underworld

Many of the stories about Kondea were linked to the underworld. Apart from the Laoumia, there are stories about concealed rooms, secret passages, caves, hidden treasures. Then there were the tombs out on the moors. My parents and Uncle Jules did not talk much about Kondea, only Nona Virginie. And yet there was never the sense that there was something hidden, an underworld lying beneath the surface, or anything like that. There was nothing to connect that with our present lives. Our childhood was full of the day-to-day things of our lives, and those were our pre-occupations.

The secret passages

At the grandparents' time, there were caves and secret passages underneath the house. These were connected in some way to the laoumia, so that water could be brought underneath the house to conceal the entrances.

My grandmother, Virginie, when we were children, told us that, when the Turks were persecuting the church, Georges Lapierre hid priests there. She told how Georges had paid for the life of the bishop with a carpet studded with diamonds and precious stones, and had hidden him in the secret passages under the tsifliki. There was a Turkish overseer on the estates, who, while Georges Lapierre was away, unwittingly flooded the passageways. Georges returned in time to save the bishop from drowning. The overseer was flogged, without knowing that the bishop was in fact hidden there, and that he had almost drowned

him. Virginie said that a lot of monks and high people of the church used to find refuge at Kondea, and from there were helped to leave Cyprus in secret.[32]

At the house of the Xenophou sisters at Dromolaxia, we met a man from Kondea, George Sorokos, who as a boy was a great friend of Antonello. This must have been after the war, when Aunty went back to Kondea. He said that they explored the secret passages under the tsifliki. It started in an L-shaped building near Nona's house.They crawled underground, and one of the passages led to the Greek Orthodox church of Ayios Charalambos, which was adjacent to the tsifliki, and came up in the sanctuary.

There was another secret passage. In the kitchen there was an entrance to what we used to call "scotini" or the dark room, because it had no windows and the only light came from the kitchen. In the "scotini" there were shelves, which must have originally been a cupboard with doors. Part of the the bottom shelf could be removed, and there were steps going down underneath the house. We were never allowed to go down there. A heavy generator box with those electrical porcelains caps the wires are attached to, this was placed on the shelf, and we were told never to touch it or we would be electrocuted – this was to scare us. But we were told there was a secret passage underneath.

At the end of the house there was another secret room at the end of the house. There was a small terrace there, that was originally a room that had been demolished. On the terrace there was a plastered-in doorway to the secret room, which was between the lounge room and the terrace, maybe a metre and a half wide. It was said that in the old times there was heavy furniture concealing the door. It was never said what it was used for, but it was wide enough for a bed. It could have been a priest-hole, or during the Lusignans maybe even a prison.

I mentioned "caves". On the ground floor of the house there were several large concrete cisterns, set into the floor, and in these were stored the grapes for crushing. It was said that when the army came they excavated, and found caves underneath. We never knew they were there – my father probably knew, but they were so secretive those old boys.

The treasure

There was a legend that a basket full of gold was hidden somewhere in the tsifliki. It was not clear whether this was hidden at the time of the Venetians, before the Turks came in, or at the time of the monks. When the Turks took over, and a generation had passed, it was forgotten where it had been hidden. The basket was said to be a "zembili", a type of basket, with two handles, made of raffia. Nobody knew where it was supposed to be hidden.

My brother, Fred, when he was fourteen or fifteen, used to tell Nona Virginie: "You know, nona, when I grow up, I am goung to bring a tractor, and demolish the house, and find the treasure." Nona would get angry with him and say, "You are not going to dig up the house to find treasures."

During the war years the British renovated the house and used the bottom floor as a barracks. They employed Kondea people to excavate under the house in the caves, and it was said that some of these told Aunty Edmee that the soldiers had found a treasure, and took it away.

The tombs on the moors

The tombs on the moors were supposed to be from early Greek times. We went there with the school – we had a picnic on Adamos' property – that was on the way to St George's church –

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32 AGP: There are a number of stories in the histories, in the family and the village about these secret passages, and about the bishop almost being drowned there. A number of these stories are told about the massacres of 1821. Where this is the case, the stories do not stand, because the Lapierres did not purchase Kondea until 1823.

I always wanted a property like Adamos' – he had a pool full of fish, and water gushing there – then we went to the little church Ayios Sinesis – and then we visited the tombs. There were a number of these, and some of them were opened, and the artefacts removed – they had stone walls with steps going down, a little like Tamassos, but smaller – you could go down the steps – several of them, maybe 8 or 9 foot, open to the sky.

There were a lot of tombs, although I could not tell how many, or why there were so many graves there – there was no talk of a city being there. But there must have been some reason for so many tombs being there.

There was a story that Uncle Georges (I think it was) opened one of the tombs with a friend. There they found a King and a Queen, seated upon their thrones, together with their jewellery and other artifacts. As in all good stories, the King and Queen crumbled to dust, when exposed to the air. There was certainly no great wealth to be had for the Lapierres from any such treasures.

The Church of St Sinesis

The Orthodox church of St Sinesis was located on the moors. At the time of my memory it was owned by Adamos, although it was originally part of the Lapierre property and at a time owned by Aunty Helena. The story is that there was a court case about whether the church was in a certain parcel of land that Adamos had claimed, and Aunty Helena was in court. The magistrate asked her whether St Sinesis was part of the land, but her Greek not being good, she though he meant whether the land was sold with her consent (*en synenesis*), and she said yes. Afterwards, when they explained to her, she said she didn't mean that. This was a joke amongst the villagers and the family.

It was a small church, and I do not think we had the key to go in – I do not remember going inside. I only remember it from the outside.

Churches like this were called *exokklesia*, or chuches or chapels outside the boundaries of the villages in the country. There are many churches like this in Cyprus, out in the fields, without a village or buldings around them, and without a congregation. However, you will rarely enter one without finding it well kept, and the lamps lit, or perhaps the votive candles. The priest and people would come there perhaps on the saint's feast day to celebrate the eucharist, and perhaps hold a small fair. They were run by the priest and a committee. People would drop money in a hole in the wall for its upkeep.

The Church of St George

Another *exokklesia* was the Orthodox church of St Georges was frequented by the Kondea and Lyssi people. A friend, Kalliopi, whose husband Kekkos was from Lyssi, told me afterwards that the church was known as "St George of Lyssi" – certainly people from both Kondea and Lyssi farmed land around it, and would frequent it.

The church was located at the foot of the hills I mentioned to the south of the tsifliki, and south of the moors, where the road curved around. There were no buildings around it – probably Adamos' house on the moors was the closest. It had a nice garden of trees around it, and it looked as if it was well kept by the owners of the land. The school used to take us there for an excursion every so often – we would walk there, and sit under the trees and picnic.

The church itself had a single nave, relatively large. It was quite old, perhapse two hundred years or more, perhaps dating from the time the church owned Kondea. There was an iconostasis, which contained a beautiful and very old icon of the Holy Trinity. I remember it very clearly.

Usually people would walk to the church on a Saturday and light a candle. I remember going there with the Xenophou sisters, who would sweep the church as soon as we arrived.

Figure 26 Ruins of Church of St George, 2004 (photograph Alex Pugh)

Grandfather Manolis' Last Years

By the time he came to Kondea (1923-4), grandfather Manolis was in decline. He was able to read the newspaper, though, without glasses. He used to wipe his eyes with kerosene.

He was not a nice man – unlike nona Virginie, who would always treated us with love – he would hardly ever talk to us. He was quite bad-tempered, and was rude to Angelou – but that was perhaps when he was suffering from Alzheimer's.

There was a meat safe, which used to be kept suspended in a tree, so that the meat would remain cool. One day the rope broke. Grandfather brought a rickety table and wanted the maid Eleni (daughter of Kakoulou) to hold it, while he climbed on it, to re-hang the meat safe. She refused, "Kyrie Manolis, you will fall an kill yourself." He lost his temper with her, and Eleni and I fled. We hid in the scotini, where he would never think of looking for us there.

My grandfather would often walk to the church of St George of Lyssi on a Saturday morning. One morning he collapsed on the way, and had to be carried back in a cart. He always said he wanted to be buried at St George of Lyssi.

Aunt Eleni would send him money from Egypt, and he would spend it in the coffee shops, mainly on drink. Mother wrote to Eleni, and asked her not to send the money to him directly, because he was drinking it – but she persisted. Eventually, coming back from the coffee shop, he slipped and broke his leg. After that he was mostly confined to his room. That would have been 1925-6.

In later years he had Alzheimer's disease. My mother told me that in 1929 the Commission of Inquiry came to visit him, to arrange compensation for those dispossessed in the massacres. They came to make a report about his estate in Anatolia (how much land he had, how many people he employed and so forth), but he was so far gone with Alzheimer's

he could not answer their questions. The brother of the Bishop of Morphou, who had worked with him in Anatolia, came with them, but grandfather did not recognize him. Mother said they lost out on several hundred thousand pounds in compensation.

He died in 1930, aged 97 – by that time we were living in Larnaca – he was buried in St George cemetery in Larnaca. It was not possible for mother to bring him the distance back to Kondea for burial. So instead was buried at St George's in Larnaca.

Aunty Helena's House and the Family Chapel

The Family Chapel was the Catholic church for the area, and it was part of Aunty Hélène's house. The chapel was on the right hand side of the house, as you faced it from the cemetery, coming from the west. There was a door to enter the chapel from the outside. I don't remember going into the chapel more than a once or twice.

I have read somewhere that the chapel was built with money from the church at Jerusalem, some time late in the nineteenth century. However, the building looks a lot older than that, and it could be that the chapel was furbished into an earlier building, that was renovated at the time. It seems strange that the Lapierres, with their wealth, would not have contributed to the chapel. So there is probably more to that story.

Figure 27 The Family Chapel, interior c1963 (photograph Henriette Lapierre)

To the left of the chapel was another door leading to the central hall, which ran the length of the house. Aunty Helena used this as a sitting room, as it would catch the breeze. As you walked down the hall, there were two rooms on the left. The first was the dining room. A pantry was inset into the dining room. The second was the spare room, perhaps the maid Anglia's room. Another door to the outside was at the eastern end of the corridor. To the right, behind the chapel, behind the altar, was Aunty Helena's bedroom. The kitchen and toilet were in another building, separate from the house.

I only remember visiting her there once. Ada and I sat in Aunty Helena's hall, on a Louis XIV settee, covered with a soft material, patterned like a Persian carpet, perhaps a wall hanging. There were chairs, and Aunty Helena was sitting on one of them. Mother on another was having coffee, and Ada, who must have been about three year old, said she

wanted “psomi, titi, illya and glyco” (bread, cheese, olives and preserved fruit).

On the way home mother said we had to run because a “bora” was going to catch us. The word is feminine. I turned back and saw a small tree on the moor, which looked like an old woman in a cape. I got so frightened I ran and ran and ran until we reached the tsifliki. Only after did I realize that the “bora” was the storm.

After Aunty Helena died the house was locked. Uncle George inherited the house. After he finished his national service, he sold the furniture to an antique dealer. After that, Aunty Edmee took it over, and she gave it to Ricca as a dowry. Then she was renting it to a teacher for a while. After that she made it into an eye clinic – the doctor would come and see to the villagers there. I don’t know how long that lasted.

Figure 28 The Family Chapel,St Charles' day, 10th February 1962 (photograph Mary Pugh)

Figure 29 The Family Chapel 1963 (photograph Henriette Lapierre)

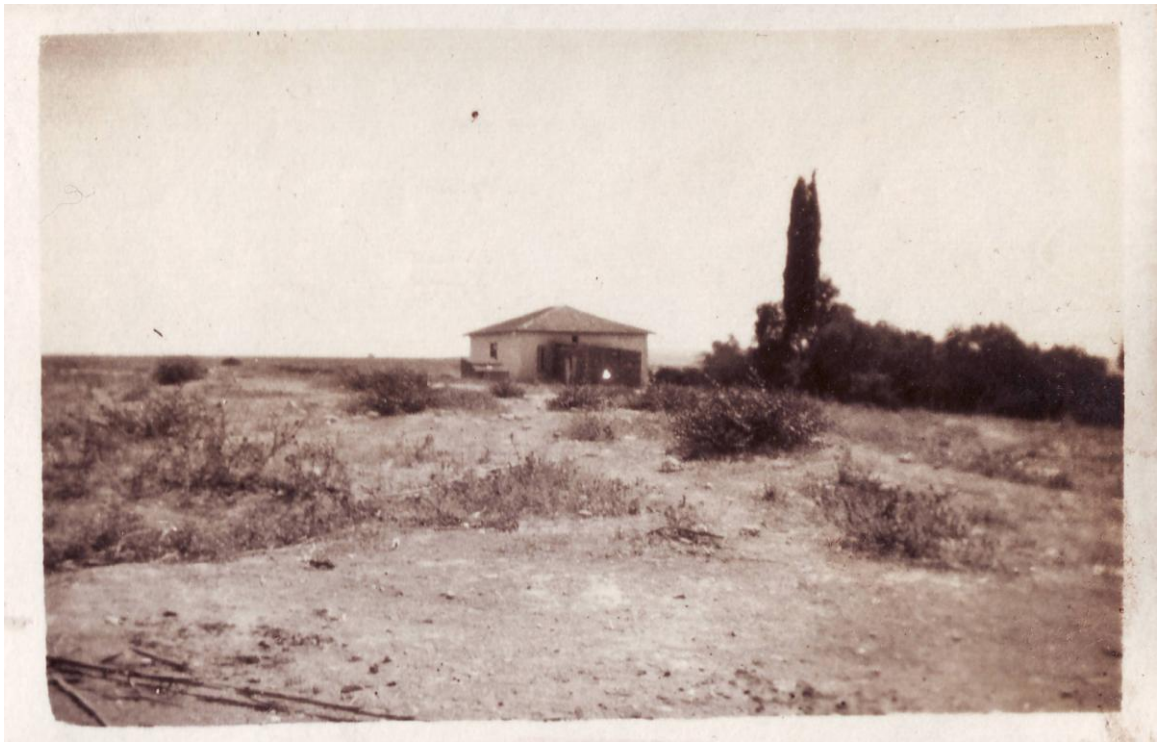


Figure 30 The Family Chapel from the Tsifliki, 1928, showing the kitchen and toilet adjacent to the north side of the house. (photograph from album of Andree Feneck).

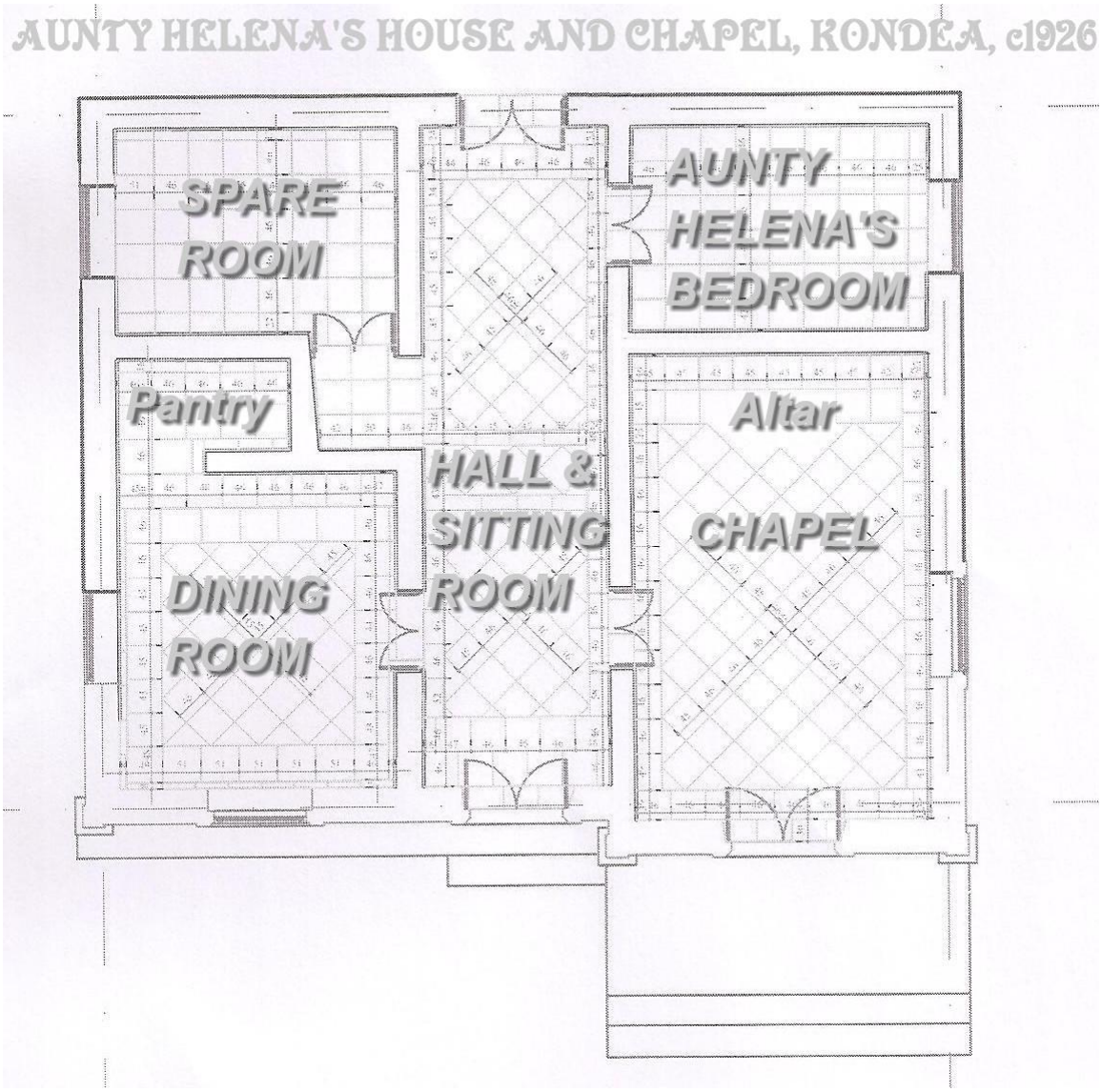


Figure 31 Aunty Helena's House and Family Chapel, Kondea, use of rooms c1926 (using the floor plan prepared by the Kontea Foundation)

Figure 32 The Altar Cross from the Family Chapel at Kondea, recovered by the Kontea Foundation in 2009: the stand and central figure of Jesus from the cross are missing (photograph Kontea Foundation)

The Family Cemetery

The family cemetery is located below the chapel, as you step down into the fields. As I remember it during my childhood, there was a wooden pailing fence around it. There was a cypress tree outside the fence. All round it there were four or five huge almond trees shading the tombs, cactus and mimosa. The graves were marked with wooden crosses – I think the current tomstones were made at the time of my father's death by Jules and my sister Gigetta – Jules mapped the cemetery in 1937. There must have been more graves than Jules has mapped – there were lots of deaths, lots of children who died young. I remember trying to read the names on the crosses, but most of them were illegible.

Figure 33 The Family Cemetery, 10th February 1962 (photograph Mary Pugh)

It is strange that the Lapierres, so wealthy, should have left their graves so poorly marked – and yet you go to Larnaca and see such elaborate tombs.

The Church of Ayios Charalambos

The Church of the Ayios Charalambos was the principle church of the village, and was located to the east, adjacent to the tsifliki, and sharing a common boundary wall.

Saint Charalambos was the patron saint of Kondea, and many of the young boys were named for him: Charalambos, or the dimunitives Hambis, Bambos etc. He was the protector saint for cholera.

The present church was built in 1876, but there were stories of an earlier church having been located on the site. The land must have been given to the church by the Lapierres, as it would have fallen within the original purchase.

It was a beautiful church, not in the way of the early Byzantine basilicas. It had a beautiful iconostasis with lovely old icons. There was a "women's gallery" at the back.

There was a niche in the church for an icon, given by Mr and Mrs Pavlou in memory of their daughter Loula, who died of TB.

The Feast of the St Charalambos was 10th February. During the church service four people would carry the icon of St Charalambos in the church yard, and people would go

through the yard, kiss the icon, and pass underneath it, to receive a blessing.

There were great festivities, particularly in the square in front of the church towards the Boy's School, and extending right down into the precincts of the village, with stalls of all sorts of produce and livestock, people from Kondea and from distant villages, athletics in the afternoon. The people from Lyssi would come up to the tsifliki in the afternoon to visit mother and father, and have a cup of coffee.

I believe in later times there were fireworks and bonfires, but not in my time: people packed up in the afternoon to go home.

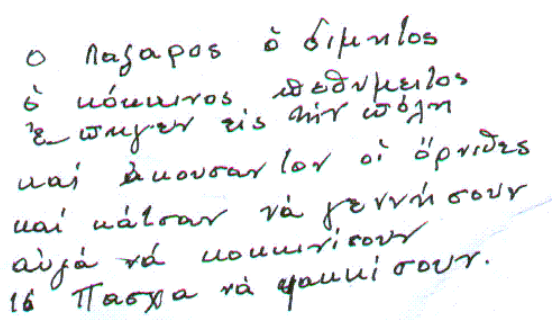
Figure 34 Ayios Charalambos Fair, 10th February 1962 (photograph Mary Pugh)

Figure 35 Hambis Tsangaris: Fireworks in Kondea (photograph Alex Pugh, house of the Xenophou)

Village Life

Of an evening, particularly a fine moonlit night, the villagers would gather in the street (*stenno*) outside one of the houses, after dinner, and listen to the news of the village, and tell stories. There were three or four houses in the village where this used to happen – Rothu's house, the Xenophines, Pericles. The women were mostly involved, but some men. The men usually went to the coffee shop and played *tavli* (backgammon) or *spastra* (a card game). They were often not there for long, because many of them had to get up at the crack of dawn to go to work.

In the old times, Kondea was divided into two sections, the upper Kondea, and the lower Kondea. Maroulou was an elderly woman from the lower Kondea, and was very poor. Once a year on St Lazarus' day would dress up, and decorate a tall staff with wild yellow daisies (known as *Lazarus*). She would come to our house, and come upstairs, and sing a children's nursery rhyme. Mother would give her a cup of coffee, and a couple of pennies. She would go around many of the houses in this way, and collect such money as would keep her going for the year. The ditty she was singing was a nonsense really.



O Larzarus, O Pale One,
The welcomed red.
He went to the city,
And the chicken
Heard the news.
So they sat
To lay eggs
To crack at Easter.

Villagers I

You will see the names of many villagers interwoven through this story. At these times, all had some part of their history involved in the tsifliki.

It should be remembered that the village of Kondea started and developed around the tsifliki – there was no village as such before then, and during the years of the Turkish rule, the village grew, often through people seeking asylum on the Lapierres' demesnes, and finding employment on the estates.

The time of my memories was about a hundred years after the Lapierres' purchase of the property in 1823, and about fifty years after the end of Turkish rule in 1878.

So most Kondea's inhabitants, or their forbears, would have settled there either finding some employment on the estate, or otherwise trading with the estate or its employees.

Kakoulou

Kakoulou and her husband, Grigoris, had two children. Their job was to tending my father's garden at Orcos. There was a big reservoir, and the little boy aged 8 fell in and drowned. They were so broken-hearted they left Orcos, and came to work at the tsifliki.

Kakoulou's father, Hadjiapostolis (we called him "Hadji") was the cook at the tsifliki in the earlier times under the Lapierres. Afterwards Elenitsa was cook at the tsifliki. When we went to Larnaca in 1922-23, Hadji came with us as cook, and Elenitsa stayed at the tsifliki with nona. He was a jolly round fellow, and we used to play hide-and-seek with him around the very large kitchen.

Both Kakoulou and Elenitsa would not sleep at the tsifliki. They had homes in the village, and would return there of an evening.

Kakoulou was Ada's particular servant. When Ada was very young, she contracted psoriasis when mother took her to Nicosia. Kakoulou was given charge of Ada during the

day, and Uncle Jules at night.

Kakoulou would say to me, "Come on Mary, let's pick capers." There was a path from the back of the house to Aunty Hélène's, along which were a lot of caper bushes. We would pick the capers and the little cucumbers, and Kakoulou would gather them in her mantilla. She always wore black, and she must have been very hot in the sun. We would take these back to the house. We would cut the nettles from the new buds with scissors, and then pickle them.

Kakoulou's daughter, Eleni, stayed with us in Larnaca 1928 onwards, while she learnt embridery using a Naumans sowing machine. In later years she was employed by Naumans to go around the villages teaching the girls to learn how to embroider using this machine.

Kakoulou looked after nona for many years. When Aunty Edmee Carletti came from Italy she worked for her.

When Gigetta Carletti came back from Italy she spoke little Greek. One day she got very angry and called Kakoulou to bring her petino (comb). Kakoulou didn't know what to do. "What do you want, miss?" Gigetta screamed at her, "the petino I'm telling you." Kakoulou went running around the yard, searching and searching. She didn't know what to do. She came to Aunty Edmee. "I don't know what to do madame. Miss Gigetta is so angry, but I can't find her cockerel (petinos) anywhere!"

Kakoulou remained working at Kondea until she became very old. During the war, Ada would visit her at Flasou.

Naime

My particular servant was a Turkish girl called Naime. She belonged to a Turkish family that fled to Kondea to seek asylum during the Turkish rule (I think she may have been related to the Turkish connection of the Xenophou).

Whe we were in Larnaca in 1922, there was one of the first fatal road accidents in Cyprus, near the "periptero" (pavilion) in the botanic gardens. Four people were killed by glass from the car windows. My mother asked Naime, who would have been about 15-16 at the time, to take us out for a walk, but to go down the seasisde, not to the accident. Naime couldn't resist, and took us straight to the accident. I remember the car, and the blood flowing into the gutters. The coachman Epthimis was loading the bodies into his coach to take them to the hospital. I still remember the bodies laid out there for loading into the coach. I was four years old.

Naime was a very beautiful girl. She used to wear her hair tied back like Clara Bow. She didn't get on well with Hadji – they were always fighting. She had a wicked streak, and put salt in the sugar when we had visitors. I was very upset when she left, and Kakoulou told me that she would come back and bring me a parasol. She had gone to Laranaca, where she became a courtesan.

Angelou and her Family

Angelou was the great companion of our family. She came to us as a servant at Kondea in 1925, and remained with us until she died in 1993, with my mother, and later Aunty Gigetta. While she always had her role in the household, she was a member of the family, and it would be wrong to think of her otherwise.

Angelou's mother was Κορoϊ - Korou , and her father was Ilias. They had about 6-7 children, but 2 died very small. The ones I knew were Theodorou, Kostaris, Angelou, Eleni, Maria (Maria was the God child of my mother), and Iliou who died as a baby.

Ilias was a ploughman on our property. This was a strennuous job. At the end father gave them a house at Orcos, and he was running the property there as a gardener. In 1925 he

got a cold and died, leaving a family of 6 children – the last one Iliou died shortly after him. They had no means of earning money – Theodorou would have been about 15 when her father died. She and Korou worked in the fields. Kostaris was working as a shephered. I think they had a house which the son inherited. They lived in part of the house.

Angelou was about 11. She used to come to the tsifliki and gather weeds for the animals. She would eat at the tsifliki, and return home at night. She was quite a capable girl. During the holidays I used to go with her and collect weeds, and bring them on the donkey. One day we had the bags on the donkey –both of us climbed on herself, and we rode back. Halfway back, Angelou said "Where are the bags?" Two had fallen off, and we had to go back to get them. In 1928 mother was expecting Gigetta. That's when we went to Larnaca, and Angelou went with us.

Eleni was 8 when her father died. One day the Mayor of Larnaca came. He was looking for a child to work in house. Korou had no choice, as she was struggling to feed the children. Eleni had a hell of a time there. Eleni was making the beds. The children were all bed-wetters, and Eleni had to carry the heavy mattresses every day out to dry. Eleni stayed with these people until we went to Larnaca. I think my mother must have seen the plight she was in and took her away. Anyway, she went to work for Mrs Salisvoury, whose husband was a pharmacist. She stayed with her until Mrs Salisvoury died. That's where she met her husband, Aristoteles, who was running the shop for Mrs Salisvoury after her husband died. They migrated to England after the Second World War, where Eleni lives, Aristoteles having died. They have two children still-born, a daughter, Rena, and a grand-daughter Elenitsa.

Maria was 5 when her father died. She was mother's God-child. When we went to Larnaca, mother brought her with us came to stay with Angelou. She only stayed a few months with us, and Angelou was very jealous. Mother had a friend who decided to take Maria to stay with her. She only stayed there a few months – there was a maid there who was beating her. My mother fiund out and broght her back. She was in and out of our house, probably staying with her mother the orther times. When she was 11-12 years old she went to woirk with a photograher, Mr Glasner, a German. She went as a maid, but they liked her so much that she lived as part of the family, as Angelou did with us. They taught her to take photographs and help in the studio – he was the only portrait photograher in Larnaca. He was the oine that took some of the photographs we have. She stayed with them. Mr Glasner's daughter, Irma, was at school with me. The old boy died. Maria went to England to join Eleni, where she met her husband, Ianis Ktoridou, and married. They had 2 children, Kalistheni and ?

Papa Simeon

There was a priest in Kondea called Father Simeon. He was a lovely man, but the villagers got it into their heads that it was unlucky to see Father Simeon first thing in the morning. If you did, something bad happened to you that day. It wasn't out of any malice. They just got this idea into their heads. Your Uncle Jules went out one day to catch the cabriolet into Larnaca. He was walking down the street, when along came Father Simeon. "Good morning, Kyrie Jules." "Good morning, Father Simeon." Uncle Jules continued on his way, waiting politely until Father Simeon was out of sight, and then turned back, and went home. He wasn't going to Larnaca that day.

Procopis the Coachman

Procopis used to have a horse-drawn cabriolet, with which he used to take us to Larnaca, Lyssi and Famagusta. Procopis' horse was strange – it would stop when it wanted to pee, but it wouldn't pee unless Procopis went and hid behind a bush and pretended to pee himself.

One day we went to Famagusta to see Uncle Fritz (the uncle of Jimmy Murat). We

were in the middle of Famgusta, when the horse slipped. Procopis went over the horse. Uncle Jules landed in a ditch full of muddy water, which ruined his white suit. I was still in the cabriolet, and someone called out "The child, the child, pick up the child before you get the horse up."

Motor cars came to Cyprus in the 1920's, and Procopis bought a car in about 1927.

Alexandris

Alexandris was another coachman – his was a small caretta, a more basic conveyance than the cabriolet. He was the master of our horse Canaris. He used to work in the fields with a cart.

The Camel Caravans

Camel caravans were used in the early days to transport goods.[33] They came quite often to Kondea, usually en route from Famagusta to Nicosia. This was an exciting time for us children, with all the movement, dust, noise and smells associated with the arrival of these exotic animals, and the gentler calls of the ca,els through the night. They were peaceful men, mostly Turks. The Lapierres would allow them to camp in the Outer Courtyard for the night, and they would leave in the morning. There did not trade with the tsifliki, at least in our time.

They liked to smoke, these camels. Angelou told the story that a camel chased her father Ilias or grandfather (I cannot remember which) around his house after his cigarette, and he climbed on the roof to get away from him.

Gypsies

Gypsies also travelled through the area, and would try to come underneath the house. The men used to chase them because they were stealing the chicken and anything else they could lay their hands on. They would bring tents and try to camp on the moors, near where the Jemi is now, quite near the animal yards. So the shepherds (who were employed by Hadjipaniais) used to chase them away.

Xenophou

The Xenophou, Xenophon and his wife Kyriakou, had one of the coffee shops in Kondea. (Xenophon's brother, Apostolis, had another.) The coffee shop was a centre of the village, where people would go to sit, relax, converse and play cards or trik-trak (badminton). In those days there was not much alcohol consumed at the coffee shop – they were not drinkers, maybe a little brandy in the winter months to warm them up – they did not have the money.

The Xenophou had four daughters and two boys. Artemis, the eldest boy, dealt with

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33 AGP: The camels in Cyprus go back in time, and one could speculate as to their origin.. Writing some time after 1336, Luclolf von Suchen records: "I knew several nobles and knights in Cyprus who could keep and feed two hundred armed men at a less cost than their huntsmen and falconers. For when they go to the chase they live sometimes for a whole month in their tents among the forests and mountains, straying from place to place, hunting with their dogs and hawks, and sleeping in their tents in the fields and woods, carrying all their food and necessaries on camels and beasts of burden." Claude Cobham: *Excerpta Cypria*, p 20 .In 1532 they are described by a pilgrim travelling through Cyprus, Maistre Denis Possot, a priet of Colommiers in Brie: "We saw two camels, which had big tails, tall bodies, long necks, little ears like a hare, and small nails." And: "There are camels of huge size, which like the mules and asses amble along without any art or training of men." Claude Cobham: *Excerpta Cypria*, p 63. The Rev Edward Daniel Clark, writing in 1822, records: "We met caravans of camels in our way to Attien, marching according to the order always observed in the East ; that is to say, in a line, one after the other ; the whole caravan being preceded by an ass, with a. bell about its neck. Camels never seem to seek the shade ; when left to repose, they kneel down, exposed to the hottest beams of the sun." *Excerpta Cypria*, p 389

engineering. He was working on something the day before he was to emigrate to Australia, when it blew up, and he was killed. Andreas, the second boy, helped his parents in the coffee shop. Then there were Eleni, Hambou, Chrissoula and Elpitha. They were great friends of mine. Eleni trained as a dressmaker. Hambou was a godchild of someone wealthy, who left her her vineyards. Chrissoula used to help her mother around the house. In later years Elpitha was a revolutionary, making speeches and exciting people, over union with Greece and Communistic ideals. We were nevertheless all very close, and never fought.

In our childhood the girls and I would walk out to St George to light a candle on a Saturday afternoon. One day we went down to the lacouthi to fetch water. Hambou killed a black snake, and tied it around her waist, so that she would have willowy and handsome body.

One day when Kyriakou was 101, Hambou took me to meet her. "Mama," Hambou said, "This is Mary, the daughter of Louis from the tsifliki." "Tell me," Kyriakou said to me, "Did you pick your olives? It's time you made your olive oil."

Kyriakou was a poetess, as I shall relate later.

The Xenophou were related to us through marriage. It was Xenophon's uncle, Apostolis Xenis, who eloped with Marie Lapierre. Their children were Aunts Carmella and Daphnee. There was also a Turkish connection:

The story was that Xenophon's grandmother, Lenou (I), was very beautiful. She came from Morphou, and the Turks were after her. Her husband Xenis took her to Kondea. So, like most of the other inhabitants, they came to Kondea fleeing from the Turks. They had three children. In Kondea, she eloped with the Turkish overseer, and had other children with him, who were Turks.

Simeonides

Simeonides was a merchant. The Simeonides were a wealthy family in Kondea in the period 1925-1933. I am not sure of Mr Simeonides' Christian name.

The Simeonides owned the property next to family property at Kondea along the road to Lyssi. These would originally been Lapierre lands. These were gardens (with lemon, grapes, olives, figs etc.) surrounded by cypress trees. Someone set the cypress trees on fire (c.1924) – probably someone with a grudge. Father took us children out of bed onto the terrace at night to show us the fire, which looked like candles, because of the shape of the cypress. In Kondea there were no fire brigades – if there was a fire, they would ring the church bells, and the villagers would rally to put the fire out.

I believe that the Simeonides may have had the post office at Kondea at one stage. However at this time the post office was run by Mr Evripedes, who afterwards became the muchtar. The Simeonides had the grocery shop in Kondea, known as Simeonides', which was run at this time by Kyriakos Tzenios, who also ran a coffee shop in the same premises. The store was located on a square, in the newer part of the village, further up from the tsifliki.

Mr Simeonides lived in Larnaca, where he had a house near Platanya. He also had two houses in Kondea, one "in the village", and another over the store. The one in the village was the third property on the right down the road from the tsifliki, an old house which was probably his paternal home. He died in about 1926, and his body was laid out in this house. One of the maids took me to see him there. He was laid out on the bed, with his head to the east, with candles at his head and feet.

The Simeonides would stay in the other house over the shop, when visiting Kondea. This was a more modern house. Mother took Ada, Kitty and I to visit Kyria Anastasia there, sitting out in the courtyard, because of the cool breeze, on little chairs. Mrs Simeonides asked: "How do you keep your daughters so well behaved, Mrs Louis?"

The Simeonides had two adopted daughters, Anna (or Annou) and Cleo. Cleo was a daughter of Kyriakes Tzenios and his wife Antjoulou. Cleo had a sister Anthoula who went to school with me at Kondea Girls School. Annou married a shoemaker, who became very wealthy, and they had a beautiful house at Famagusta.

Evripedis

Evripedes was the muchtar of Kondea. He may have been the son of the priest, I am not sure. He had an adopted son, who was boasting that he was going to marry me, because I was the most beautiful girl in the village. He was half correct.

The School at Kondea

There were two schools at Kondea.

The boys' school with two teachers was located in the square opposite the church, in a house that is still standing there. I didn't go there much, being a girl.

The girls' school at Kondea was in the church yard between the church and the tsifliki – to the north of the church ran colonnades east-west, which are still standing. At the western end of these colonnades was the door to the girls' school, which stood in the church yard north-south along that wall of the tsifliki which formed the courtyard of grandmother's house.

The school was a single room, the desk of the teacher was on a rostrum, with two rows of benches down each side of the hall. The fifth and sixth class were at the side of her desk. Perhaps a hundred and twenty children, with one teacher.

I went to school in Kondea when I was four year old. I learnt to read and write in the first class – there were seven classes in the Greek school, first class (πρώτι- proti), a class between first and second called δεύτερου (defteron), and so forth. But I didn't do the second class (δεύτερα - deftera) and went straight to the third class (τρίτη – triti).

When I was in third class, when we were playing in the yard, our teacher was staying with the family of a girl called Loula, and she threw a stone that cracked my head the back of my head, and made me bleed. Mother went and complained, because the teacher told me off after I'd had my head cracked. The teacher, Chrisothemis - we called her Miss Themis - didn't speak nicely to my mother, so she took us out of the school.

At the time my father had a teacher called Costas Chirchipis, who was experimenting with the grapes to make spirits – he was distilling the grapes and making brandy. He was a brilliant mathematician. He went to Greece to study mathematics, and then came to Cyprus to do these things. He came to live in Kondea with his mother in my grandmother's house. So mother said you can live in the house if you tutor Mary – I must have been six and a half at the time, Ada was too young. Chirchipis was persevering with my mathematics and history, and by the time I was seven years old I was doing compound interest and all sorts of things – I advanced greatly.

After he had been there a year, things didn't progress well with making an income from the distillery, and he had to turn to teaching. The government eventually gave him the task of writing the mathematics text books for Cyprus.

I think mother must have complained about Themis, because she had good relations with the school inspector, who sometimes came for lunch at the tsifliki. Anyway at the end of the year she was transferred, and Miss Julia came. Miss Julia stayed for three years there, and I've done the fourth, fifth and sixth class with her.

(When I was getting married to your dad, my dressmaker was Miss Julia's sister, and she was there. She said to me, "I remember you as a child. You had the most beautiful face. Your eyes were so bright, and your cheeks were like peaches. I could bite them.")

When I was in fourth class, there was a girl called Maria, who was quite pretty but

very arrogant, who got into an argument with Miss Julia, and then she left the class, and said "I am going to tell my father, and he will come with his matsouka (shepherd's staff) and he will fix you." The following day the father, Iorgis, came with his matsouka. We must have been in the school break, because we were outside. When Miss Julia saw him, he went to the door of the school, "You want to discuss something with me, Mr Iorgis", and he said, "Yes." Then she said, "Put your matsouka in the corner, and then you can come in." So he put his matsouka in the corner – it was a large wooden staff with a knotted knob on it – and went into the classroom. After a little while he came out, took his matsouka, and went away.

Maybe 1924-1925 was a very rainy year, and the roof of the school was leaking, and we couldn't have class in the school. So the villagers came, and took all the benches, and took them down to the house of a widow lady in the village, to have classes in her house. That was very worrying for the teacher, because the children were running all over the place, and among them Ada – and the teacher couldn't account for Ada for a few hours – she was probably five years old, and there was a hue and cry to find Ada and another little girl – they searched the village searched the wells, mother came and was very distressed, and eventually, after a few hours, they found her somewhere hiding with her friend.

This woman whose house was the school, Theodora, had a daughter Stasha, who had both her legs atrophic – they didn't have any money for a wheelchair, and she had to crawl around the village on her knees. Korou once told me that the brother, Evangelis, fell in love with a married woman in Kondea, and when the husband came home, Evangelis had a fight with the husband, killed him and hid his body in a well. He absconded and came to Australia, and went to Darwin, and became very wealthy. The first money he earned he sent back to Cyprus for a wheelchair for his sister. He paid for an operation, and after that she was able to live her life in some dignity. She did the most beautiful embroidery. My friend Vianka told me that a Cypriot Evangelis became one of the richest men in Darwin, with property and stores. He was to be presented to the Queen, but died the night before of a heart attack.

Helen of Troy

The one time I remember going to the boys' school was one night, when a travelling presenter came to Kondea, and asked to use the school to do a presentation on Helen of Troy. Many people from the village gathered there. I remember he came to the point where he said, "And here is Helen of Troy." The slide he put up was of a woman in a sports car with a long scarf blowing behind her. The villagers got so angry that they were going to beat him up. "Do you think we're stupid to believe that Helen of Troy was in a car?" There was a turmoil. I don't know who saved him, because Mother gathered us up and took us home. That was the first occasion I remember going out at night.

A Village of Poets and Artists

In my early memory, the mother of the Xenophou sisters, Kyriakou, was a poetess. She would often recite her poetry as part of her conversation. Her husband, Xenophos ran the coffee shop. Her poems have never been published – her daughter Elpitha has some of them written down, and others committed to memory.

In the following years, Kondea gave birth to a prodigious number of poets, artists, musicians and intellectuals.

Teykfros Antheas, a cousin of Angelou, was a very famous Cypriot poet. He came, when a child, to our place and recited poetry. Mother thought him a good poet, and wrote to the Archbishop. He went to Apostolos Andreas to recite his poems to the Archbishop. The Archbishop gave him a scholarship. He finished his school, and then they sent him to Athens. There he went to university, and studied, and became a Communist. In 1929-30 he came

back to Cyprus, and hired the Makrides Hall in Larnaca – Angelou, being his cousin, took us to listen to him. We had little understanding of what he was saying, except in one of his fervent speeches he took the cross, threw it on the ground and stamped on it. The police came to arrest him. He escaped, and ran to the end of Larnaca pier, with the police in pursuit. We followed closely. Reaching the end of the pier, he jumped into the sea. The police later recounted that he was thrashing around in the water, crying out "O Panayia-mou." The police fished him out, and said "Now you know there is a Panayia." After that he returned to Athens, and married a musician. He became a very famous poet. I believe a monument was erected to him in Kondea, but was destroyed by the Turks.

Charalambos Demosthenis, is one of the great poets of Cyprus, and writes in the Cyprus dialect. There is a film about his life, and he has appeared on Cyprus television – I remember some years ago a televised discussion with Hambis Tsangaris, and Pavlos Liasides (a friend from Lyssi, with whom he exchanged poety).

Andreani Sergi Kitchioy, also wrote beautiful poetry – *Nostalgias* is the book I have read. She became blind.

Kyriakos Sorokos is another Kondea poet.

Hambis Tsangaris the great Cyprus lithographer and author was born in Kondea. Many of his lithographs are about Kondea – the plaque [34], the family chapel, Ayios Charalambos' fair.

There were two or three painters from Kondea.

Andonis and his brother, Aspris, were musicians. Andonis was called violaris because he played the violin, and Aspris was called laoutaris because he played the lute. They gave Andonis a violin when he was young, and his brother Aspris joined him. They were so good that they were invited to play at weddings and parties all over the area

The tradition of music in Kondea is an ancient one. In the evening in the summer months, the shepherds would take their sheep out onto the moors. They would take their pithkavli, and they would play these into the night. We would sit on the terrace and listen to them in the distance. It was magical.

Homotenos owned one of the richest libraries in Cyprus, with books written in many languages. He was a quiet lovely man, but much troubled by cysts.

Athletics

Fred and Harry were keen athletes. My father prepared an athletics arena for them out on the moors, where they could practice running, long jump and high jump.

On Easter Monday, there were athletics carnivals in many of the villages. I don't know if they still do that.

Entertainments

I do not remember many other entertainments in Kondea at that time. There was no cinema – maybe the first I saw was in Larnaca 1929-30. I do not remember any travelling cinema, or for that matter ant travelling actors or musicians.

On 30th January there was a school feast for the three *irarchis* (prelates), Sts Basil, Gregory and John Chrysostom. The children would dance, recite poetry and sing. The parents would gather in the yard to listen. I remnember having to recite a poem, and being so nervous. It was called "I have a doll." I would have been five or six years old.

On 10th February there was Ayios Charalambos' fair.

On Easter Sunday Aspris set up swings at his house. The girls from the village would dress in their best dresses to ride the swings, and singing.

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34 **Error! Reference source not found.**

On the Monday after Easter there were the athletics I have mentioned.

These were the times before radio and television, and family entertainments were something we provided for ourselves. I have mentioned elsewhere my father's gramophone, on which he would play recordings of opera. Often of a summer evening, we would take rush mattresses out onto the terrace. Mother would play the mandolin, and we would sing – these would be the modern Greek songs of the time – the teachers would often bring the latest music from the city. Mother had a lovely voice. Father would play cards at night in the winter months, but in the summer months we would often sit out on the terrace. The children would usually be put to bed by 8 o'clock, except for me, because I would not sleep – I would sit up drawing a little longer.

Father and mother would usually be off to bed by 9 o'clock, and Uncle Jules. This is the thing you have to remember: this was a farming community – work started early, and it was hard and long, in the days before motorized machinery – people were tired when they got to the end of the day, and needed to rise early the next. . .

Lyssi

Although Lyssi was the twin village to Kondea, in many ways customs there were very different.

On the 15th August was a feast of the Holy Mary. All the girls from Kondea would make new dresses, of white, or blue, or pink, and they would go on horse-drawn charabancs to Lyssi. They would go to the fair. Then they would exhange visits with the Lyssi people.

We would go on a cabriolet to Lyssi to visit an number of people we knew there: Hadjipanais, his son Tofis (Christophis), and the teacher Papyros ("drake").

The Lyssi people would come to Kondea on the feast day of Ayios Charalambos (10th February). They would first go to the church, and then our friends would come and visit us, and have a cup of coffee, or lunch.

Money Lenders

The H were the wealthiest people in the area. H started as an overseer on the Lapierre estates, and gradually built up a fortune fleecing the Lapierre. He would buy a flock of sheep for Uncle Emile, and sell them, but he would tell him they had died. In the end Uncle Emile would borrow money from H, who would often add a zero to the end of the IOU. We didn't know this at the time.

There were a lot of complaints at this time that rich people in the villages were involved in similar practices – not just with the Lapierre, but with other villages and villagers. Many people were driven into poverty or bankruptcy on the basis of such false debts. Uncle Jules became involved with the Agricultural Debts Commission, which was set up to investigate these complaints. It was found that people would borrow say £10, and a 0 would be added, sometimes in a different ink. Other times people who could not read or write would make their mark with a "X", and the money lender would make out false IOU's and say "That's your signature".

Uncle Jules took me with him on one of these trips. He would hire a car, Procopis would drive him. We went up to the village of Tripimane in the Pentadactylos range. The road was more a track – it went past high escarpments, and you could see the sage bushes in bloom all around

Sometimes people would come to Uncle Emile and ask him to guarantee loans, and he would sign his signature. Then the people would not pay, and Uncle Emile would become liable for the debts.

Uncle Jules managed to get a lot of the Lapierre's false debts cancelled because of such investigations.

This fellow H used to keep his money in a safe. Five or six years after we left Kondea they broke into his house at night, stole all his money, and murdered him.

Zaharias

Zaharias was the father of Maria, who used to look after me as a child, and help out my mother with some of the basic medical work of the village. Andreas, the son of Hadjipanais, bought a car – this must have been 1925 or 1926 – and he wanted to establish a line between Lyssi and Nicosia. One day he was having coffee with my mother and Zaharias, and Andreas said to him, Uncle Zaharias, I'll take you to Nicosia in the car. Zaharias said to him, You won't take me in your car, unless I have Holy Communion – meaning Because I'll be killed. Some time later Zaharias went with Andreas in the car for the first time. There was an accident, and Zaharias was killed.

Katsouna

When Hadjipanais ceased to be overseer, he was replaced by Katsouna ("Hook"). He would ride by donkey from Lyssi, and he would be there at dawn to oversee the workers going to the different jobs. He must have been overseer until 1926-7. I remember Katsounas standing on the terrace at Kondea, looking at the women gathering the cotton in the field opposite the tsifliki.

Earthquake

I am not sure whether it was 1925 or 1927 – probably 1927, because I do not think Aunty Helena was alive. Ada, Kitty and I shared the same bedroom, Ada and Kitty in one bed, and I in another, but like now I couldn't sleep, and used to talk to them all the time and keep them awake. So mother and father used to let me stay up, in the room with the adults. There was a large wooden chest, in which they used to keep the gramophone records, and they would set me up there with a kerosene lamp, and a ledger book, in which I would draw, while the adults played cards or such. (These ledger books were account books of the old Lapierres, workers' wages etc., with blank pages in them, and they gave me these to draw in.)

One night I was drawing, when there was a large earthquake. I held onto the kerosene lamp to prevent it from falling, but my father jumped up and blew it out. Then we all ran out onto the terrace. Then mother remembered Ada and Kitty, and they ran to their room to get them.

Limassol was badly hit by that earthquake, and the townsfolk spent a number of nights in tents, because of the aftershocks.

Before an earthquake, all the village dogs would start to howl. They somehow sensed it coming. Then during the earthquake the villagers would beat empty kerosene tins, to drive away the evil spirits.

The house was not damaged, which shows how well-built it was.

Villagers II

There is infinitely more to the story of Kondea than the story of the Lapierres. And my memories of my childhood are exactly that, small vignettes, inhabited by people with lives and dimensions far greater than can be contained in my little tales.

I write my memories only that these people and things should be recorded, and not forgotten, because they were of great value, the foundations of modern Kondea, and important to the understanding of where Cyorus has come from.

From this beginning, the village took on a life of its own, with the villagers increasingly taking ownership of property, the building of church and schools, businesses, community life – the development of a village in its own right, that was to survive the decline

of the estates in the early part of the twentieth century.

So by the second half of the twentieth century, the real story of Kondea becomes the story of the villagers, and less of the Lapierre family, which had been their reason for coming there.

Having said that, I think the bond between the family and the villagers has remained strong to the present day, especially where it is based on mutual respect.

In a real sense Kondea is a village in exile. While some stayed on, many of the Lapierres left the property with the decline of the family fortnes, and now live in virtually every continent of the globe.

The Turkish Invasion of 1974 exiled the whole Greek population of Kondea from the land of their hearts. What is remarkable, is that thirty-five years later the identity of the Kondeatis with their village is undiminished, and witnessed to by the many who long to return there, despite having made lives in exile, by their continued association together as a village people throughout their exile, through the Kondea Co-Operative, and in later years through the Kontea Heritage Foundation.

The Lapierre Family

I have left writing about the Lapierre family until now, because I wanted to relate my memories of Kondea, from my earliest childhood, the people and places I knew there, and what I was told, as clearly and purely as possible, without influence of histories from other sources.

My parents did not speak much of the history of the Lapierres. I do not know how much they knew of it. When my parents left Kondea to settle in Xeros, it was with regret, that they had not succeeded in making the property viable, and that nona Virginie had given away my father's patrimony. My mother looked on Kondea as cursed, and would not have a stick of furniture from there in their new house at Xeros. And yet, I find that I have remembered a surprising amount, and as it is written down, the picture becomes richer and clearer.

There has been something written about Georges Lapierre in the histories of Cyprus, and then there are the researches of Louis Lapierre into the family history, and there is the account of the family history by Louis' father Georges. I do not want to repeat these accounts, but rather to relate what I understood, clarified a little by these accounts, and by what I have been told by others.

Georges Lapierre (1789-1846)

The founder of the Lapierre family in Cyprus was Georges Theophile Lapierre, my great great grandfather. We knew of Georges Lapierre, that the family was French, and that it came to Cyprus from Constantinople. We knew little of its origins before that. Uncles Jules, and Georges, knew something more, as was seen in Uncle Georges' account of 1970, but it was not until the researches of Louis Lapierre, Uncle Georges' son, that more of this early history of the family became known to us.

Georges Lapierre came to Cyprus from Constantinople in 1815, at the end of the Napoleonic Wars, attached to the French Consulate in Larnaca, and became Dragoman of the Consulate in 1816. His document of commission from Richelieu was known in the family, and this document was in the possession of Uncle Jules. [35] Georges' brother, Jean, remained in Constantinople, where he was Dragoman at the French Embassy: we knew that part of the Lapierre family remained in Constantinople.

There has been much written about Georges Lapierre in the histories of Cyprus. He was a controversial figure, who lived in turbulent times. He became fabulously wealthy, in times when it was common for people to travel into the Middle East or Europe to make their fortune.

For a short period he and his associates Mattei and Hurshid Agha held a monopoly on the trade of the island. This monopoly is thought to be one foundation of the Lapierre wealth, but it was also the cause of much envy and hatred, which led to Georges' exile, during which there was considerable damage to his interests in Cyprus, and a legal battle for him to return to Cyprus. The monopoly was certainly known about in the family, as was the court case. At one stage Ernest Lapierre was considering suing Hill and Kiriazes, and sought out the records of the court case in order to do so.

Georges' involvement in the monopoly is the first major allegation brought against him in the histories of Cyprus. On this you should read Louis Lapierre's article for a balanced view of his involvement.[36]

Georges Lapierre appears to have been able to maintain good relations with the Turkish authorities. This was part of his role as Dragoman, but it enabled him to prosper at a

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35 See above *Commission of Georges Lapierre 11/09/1816.*

36 **Error! Reference source not found.**

time of political turmoil. He was able to purchase properties: the main, Kondea, was purchased from the Greek Orthodox Church, at a time when the Church was pressed for funds, following the tumultuous events of 1821. Whatever the long-term benefit they derived from the monopoly, the great properties of the Lapierres were the foundation of their wealth.

The second major allegation made against Georges was that the purchase of Kondea was forced. Some say it was purchased from the Turks, after they had seized it from the Greek Orthodox Church; others that the Church was forced to sell it. The cochain of Kondea makes it clear that Louise Lapierre purchased Kondea from the Greek Orthodox Church. In the cochain, the Archbishop of Cyprus states that the Church sold the property of its own free will.[37] The available secondary sources show that the property had been seized by the Turks from the Church in the months following the 1821 uprising, and sold back to the Church the same year for 12,500 piastres: *that* was the forced sale. The Church subsequently sold Kondea to Georges' wife, Louise, in 1823 for 15.000 piastres, a profit, at a time when the Church must have been in need of funds.[38]

The third major allegation against Georges was that he was involved in, or an instigator of the massacres of 1821. There were various stories spread about him, that are dealt with in a balanced way in Louis Lapierre's account.[39] There it is made plain from contemporary correspondence that Georges acted at great personal risk to save the European population of Larnaca from the fate being suffered by the Greek notables.

There were also accounts of Georges saving people from execution: that he ransomed at least one of the Greek bishops with a carpet studded with precious stones; that he hid a bishop in the underground passages.[40] Others say he tried to drown the bishop in the underground passages. None of the stories about the underground passages are in any way true with regard to 1821, because the Lapierres simply did not own Kondea at that time. They did not buy it until 1823. It may well be true that they hid Greek bishops and other notables there in subsequent periods of trouble. There are many anecdotes from the villagers of the area of people finding refuge on the Lapierre estates.

The allegations were published to a wide audience in 1952 by the historian George

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37 **Error! Reference source not found.**

38 **Error! Reference source not found.**

39 *Op. cit*

40 *The secret passages* AGP: Since my mother's death, the following account of George Kypiades has come to light: "The Bishop of Maherais Monastery, Iermanos, who by chance at that time was in the Prastio village of Messaoria, was saved from death by Georges Lapierre, by taking money ransom for his life, and twelve camels belonging to the monastery." *Memoirs of the Tragic Scenes of 1821 on the Island of Cyprus*, Alexandria, 1888, p.27. Kypiades goes on to paint Georges Lapierre as a good guy, compared to others who sought to gain personally from the misfortune of others. Kypiades' account is, again, well after the events, and is unclear whether the money came from Georges or the monastery. But the payment of a ransom to the Turkish authorities directly contradicts Hill's account that Georges took the money and camels for himself: in this Hill citres Kyriazes as his source (did he mistranslate Kyriazes?).
Hill footnotes another contradictory account, that of Menardos, recording "a tradition that Germanos was saved by one Κκιόρογλον (Kior-oghlu), who took as his price the chiftik of Tymbou." While it is tempting to think of Tymbou, SE of Nicosia, and the surrounding country to the old Lusignan palace at Ayios Sozomenos, as one of the Lapierre estates, there is no evidence this was ever the case. The tsifliki at Tymbou was seized from Machairras monastery by the Turks in 1821, and thereafter became a Turkish village, the landholder's name being Evkaf (Jack C. Goodwin, *A Historical Toponomy of Cyprus*, vol. 2, p.1627). The association with Georges Lapierre may arise simply from the fact that Xylotimbou, which was part of the greater Kondea estate, was sometimes shortened to "Timbou". Xylotimbou, however, was never owned by Machairras. On such distortions the case against Georges Lapierre may have been embellished.

Hill.[41] He based this part of his account on a work by Philemon, who aired these allegations in 1860, some forty years after the massacres.[42] Hill's treatment of Philemon was scarcely critical, largely just relaying the allegations.

However, the stories about Georges' complicity in the executions were spread years after the events of 1821 by enemies of the Lapierres, who were close to the circles in which Philemon was involved, and as far as I know there are no contemporary accounts supporting them.

I can only say that, in my youth, Georges was not remembered in the family as a monster, or someone who needed to be excused or covered up. In fact, the Lapierre name was worth a great deal in society, and was looked up to and respected. But he was a distant figure who, at that stage, when I was young, we had heard about only through the few stories of our parents. It was only in the 1930's with Kyriazes digging into the monopoly period, puiblished obscurely in Greek in the *Cyprus Chronicles*, and then in the 1950's with Hill's publication, in English to a much wider audience, of the monopoly allegations of Kyriazes, and the massacre allegations from Philemon, that anything more detailed became known, and the real damage was done.

Now, whenever you pick up a new book about the period, which mentions Georges, you read regurgitated, and sometimes with patriotic venom, the same accounts of him from Hill, or from Kyriazes through Hill. Rarely does anyone question the bases of those accounts, and seek for the truth.

The Lapierre Properties

I understand that before Georges Lapierre purchased Kondea, he had a large property at Pylla. I understood this may have been sold before Kondea was purchased, but then again he was living at Pylla when he died. [43] There were a number of great Lapierre properties known in the family.

1) Pylla - was a large property to the north of Larnaca. The country here was dry and rocky, and not conducive to agriculture.
2) Alethriko – was a large monastic property to the west of Larnaca beyond the Salt Lake. This appears to have been sold in early times.
3) The Archbishopic at Larnaca (now called the Metropolis)
4) Kondea.
5) There appears to have been a property near Paphos, near the site of the antiquities. Henriette Lapierre told us that, while she was working in this area some years ago, she went to a village to study with her pupils, and, when they heard her name, the villagers were fearful she had come to claim their land.

I remember nona and otherssaying that the Lapierres had seven great properties. The above are the ones I knew of. Another I was not aware of, has been written of by Marc Aymes:-

6) Limnia north of Famagusta. [44]

[AGP: Since my mother's death I have come across record of a property of Lapierre, Mattei & Co, possibly the seventh, at:

7) *Nisou, south of Nicoia]*

There was also the house of Florimond in Larnaca. Florimond and Aunty Teresina lived there. We lived there during one of our stays in Larnaca. Aunty Emma also lived there

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41 **Error! Reference source not found.** Cobham had published Philemon's account in 1908 (**Error! Reference source not found.**) but the allegations did not reach a wider audience until Hill.

42 **Error! Reference source not found.**

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44 **Error! Reference source not found.**

for a time.

Fungi, the extensive tsifliki held by the Roretti near Kyrenia, would not have been one of these. The Roretti were the family of Adele Rey's mother, Marie, and there were no male children. Marie was the elder daughter, but Fungi was given as a dowry to her sister, Helena, when she married Stefano Saletovich in 1817.

The Lapierres and the Archbishopric

The Lapierres' house in Larnaca was on the site of the present Metropolis, and my mother always called it "the Archbishopric". This would have been one of the great properties owned by the Lapierres.

Georges Lapierre (ie Georges II) was living there, when he courted Antoinette Fenech. (They married in 1877.) The story in the family was that Antoinette came to Cyprus as a postulant at S. Joseph's Convent Larnaca, and that is where Georges met her, visiting his sisters who were at school there.

I am not sure how the Lapierres came by the property, and when they gave it up. Certainly, we never stayed there when we lived in Larnaca from 1922-23. I understand it was purchased by the Greek Orthodox church, and subsequently demolished, the present Metroplis being a more modern structure.

There was a chapel near the house, known as S. George of the Lapierres, but this too had been long demolished by the time we went searching for it in 2002. An old lady we found remembered the chapel, but said it had been gone for many years.

The chapel contained an ancient mural of S. George. There is a story that Uncle Jules was asked if he would remove this mural before the chapel was demolished, but was unable to do so.

I remember that on Maundy Thursday, probably in 1931, I visited the Terra Santa Catholic church in old Larnaca. It was the custom for the church to give a luncheon for 12 citizens, after the morning service, and before the beginning of the Maundy Thursday ritual at about 3 pm, when the priest would wash the feet of the children. It was the custom for the women to sit on chairs under the archways at the church, while the men were at lunch, rather than go home and return. I went there with Uncle Jules.

While sitting under the arches one of the women told me that our family had a chapel near the Archbishopric. I remember we walked there to visit it. The chapel was in an old house. It was kept in good order by the lady who lived there. I remember an iconostasis, lamps and candles, which indicates that it was frequently visited and used for prayer. I do not remember the mural. I would have been twelve years old.

On returning to Terra Santa the lunch had ended, and Father Pietro came out. He was a fat rolly-polly man (like Friar Tuck in *Robin Hood*), with a lovely fresh face, who would always tease me because I was Greek Orthodox. He came out, wagged his finger at me, and said, "You, Mary Diacono, are going to Hell, because you are not a Christian!"

I replied, "I don't worry, Father, I am going to hide in your soutane, and wherever you go, I'll go with you."

All the women overheard this, and were laughing. Mrs Hoare said, "Father Pietro, you deserved that!"

The Fenechs were of Maltese origin - their records would not have been kept in the French Consulate, and I assume the precise dates would be in the parish registers at Terra Santa. - the dates I have are from the Fenech family grave at Terra Santa cemetery in Larnaca.

Antoinette was the cousin of Vincenzo Fenech. They are buried in the same grave at Terra Santa cemetery, Larnaca. This meant that Vincenzo's sons, Ugo and Edgar, had to get special dispensation to marry Antoinette's daughters, Ines and Jeanne, their second cousins.

(At an earlier stage, my father Louis Diacono and Jeanne Lapierre wanted to marry, but could not because they were first cousins. Second cousins were allowed to marry, but only with dispensation.)

Ugo and Edgar married the two sisters Ines and Jeanne. Ugo and Ines had a daughter, Ines, who was the mother of Ugo, Josita and Andreas Bayada. When mother Ines died in 1911, Ugo re-married aunty Daphnee, and they had Andree, Vincente, Marie and Odette. Jeanne and Edgar had the one daughter, Edith.

Uncle Ugo told the story, that, when he was courting Ines, he stayed a night in the old Archbishopric. It was a very hot night, and they laid mattresses in the corridor. During the night, Uncle Ugo was awakened by footsteps, to see a young beautiful girl with golden hair approaching his bed. She came near him, and hit him with the heel of her shoe. [45] This would have been in the early 1900' (they married in 1909)s, which would indicate the house was still in the family then.

I assume this house was where the second wife of Georges I, Jeanette née S. Armand, lived until her death in 1883 – she, too, is buried in Terra Santa.

Georges (II) died in 1905, and we do not know when the house returned to the Greek Orthodox church. When I knew Aunty Antoinette, before her death in 1831, she lived in a grand old house in Nicosia, on the road to Larnaca.

[*AGP: Recently discovered writings of Emma Sforza née Lapierre show that the Archbisopric was still held by the family after Georges' family returned to Cyprus, following his death, and so well into the first decade of the new century*]

There was a story, probably exaggerated, that, when the British came to Cyprus in 1878, they wanted the Archbishopric for the government house of the new High Commissioner, Sir Garnet Wolsley, but the Lapierres would not give it up. For that reason, it was said, the British chose to centre the government in Nicosia and not in Larnaca.

Where did the family members live?

Of the early people, this is what we can piece together:-

- Turner visited Georges I and Louise in Larnaca, Oct-Nov 1815, although it is unclear exactly where their house was.
- Alexandre Lapierre was born in Larnaca, 1821
- Louise Lapierre, wife of Georges I, died at Larnaca in Feb 1825.
- [*AGP: The entry describing Louise's death in the* Liber Defunctorum *of Larnaca church appears to record that she was buried within the then Terra Santa Church. I have yet to locate her grave either in the Church or the Cemetery*.]
- When Georges I married Jeanette St Armand, the following year, he was described as living in Larnaca.
- At his death, in 1846, Georges I was described as living in Pylla.
- [*AGP: The entry describing Georges' death in the* Liber Defunctorum *of Larnaca church makes it fairly clear that Georges was buried in Terra Santa cemetery, although I have yet to locate his grave*. *In 1846, Terra Santa Church was being rebuilt, and it could be that it was not available for his burial.*]
- At his marriage to Adele Rey in 1846, Alexandre Lapierre is described as living in Larnaca
- Emil Lapierre appears to have been born at Larnaca in 1863.
- In 1878, Alexandre Lapierre was at Kondea when he died. His grave is in Kondea.
- 23rd June 1883, Jeanette St Armand, second wife of George I, died, and was buried in

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45 The story of this girl was that, in early times, she belonged to a Greek Orthodox family, and that the Turks had abducted her, and kept her a prisoner in the Archbishopric, and that she died there.

Terra Santa Cemetery Larnaca

- The following were buried in Kondea . Given that burials in those days were quick (sometimes the same day), they were likely staying at Kondea at the time of their death, and maybe living there:
  - 20/08/1878 Alexandre Lapierre
  - 04/04/1898 Marie Apostolithes nee Lapierre
  - 22/10/1898 Federico Diacono
  - 07/03/1904 Adele Lapierre nee Rey
  - 31/10/1905 Joseph Diacono
  - 30/12/1908 Louise Lapierre nee Bouniol, wife of Emile
  - 09/02/1910 Ines Feneck nee Lapierre
  - 1912 Benignio Carletti [*AGP: According to Uncle Jules, but he is contradicted by the Larnaca registers.*]
  - 29/05/1917 Florimond Lapierre
  - 21/12/1918 Louise Lapierre
  - 01/01/1921 Emile Lapierre
  - 28/07/1926 Helene Lapierre
  - 05/11/1937 Virginie Diacono nee Lapierre
  - 24/02/1965 Louis Diacono (taken there for burial from Xeros).

The members of the family, who I know, from family conversations, lived in the tsifliki, were:

- My great grandmother Adele Lapierre nee Rey.
- Uncle Emile, his wife Aunty Louisa, and the children, Jules, Albert and Georges.
- Aunty Louise Lapierre, at least in the latter part of her life.
- Aunty Helena had her house in the chapel.
- Nona Virginie had her house in the tsifliki with her children. She lived for periods in Egypt with grandfather Frederick,was in Italy with Aunty Edmee maybe 1917-18, returned in 1927-8, and remained there for the rest of her life – she died and was buried there in 1937.
- My father returned there in 1920 – we lived there up to 1928. He died in Xeros, but was buried in Kondea.
- Aunty Edmee must originally have lived in Larnaca with her husband, who was working for the government (protocolitis or registrar with the courts), and her six children. After her husband died she went to Italy. She returned 1929-30. She lived in the main house of the tsifliki a year or so, then fixed the house of nona Virginie and lived with her there.
- She continued to live there after nona's death, and after that nona's house was used by her daughter, Gigetta, and her husband, Georges Vassiliades, up until the Turkish invasion in 1974. Aunty Edmee died in Italy, I think in Rome.

The Apostolithes house was in Kondea village, on the road to Lyssi, between the boys'school and Sandamas. Aunt Marie may have lived there before she died – it was the house of her husband. She is buried in the family cemetery. When I was young, Macromaria lived in that house with her daughter – I think she was a sister of Apostolithes.

Uncle Florimond lived in Larnaca with his wife, Aunty Teresina. Their house was on the road between Terra Santa and the Acropolis. It was a very large two-storied house, with a big staircase going up – I visited there with mother when I was maybe three years old. When Aunty Teresa died we lived in that house, in 1922, and then returned to Kondea. After that, Aunty Emma was living in that house, perhaps 1934-35-36 (Nino I think died in Larnaca in 1936).

Georges II and Aunty Antoinette they lived in the Archbishopric. Georges fled to France

to escape his creditors some time before his death in 1905. Antoinette must have lived there some time longer, because when Ugo was engaged to Ines, Antoinette and family were living in the Archbishopric (1907-1909). When I visited Aunty Antoinette 1926-7 in Nicosia, she was living in a very large two-storey house in Nicosia – it was located outside the moat in the area opposite the standard-bearer mosque – I remember steps going up to the verandah, and a huge room. I have an idea that it might have been Edgar's house – when Alexander died, and Ernest left, Aunty Antoinette was looking after the children – 2 of Alexander (Georgette and Guy), 2 of Edgar (Edith and Odette) and then Ugo's Ines.

Aunty Daphnee's first house was at Ayios Omologites – I visited them there in about 1927 – a nice house surrounded by eucalyptus trees – it belonged to the public works. Then I went in 1931 at the wedding of Ines, and they were in the new house – I think they must have bought it when Uncle Ugo was retiring – it was a lovely big house on the site of the present post office, opposite the grounds of Government House.

Aunty Carmella had two houses within the walls of Nicosia – the first one was near the Maronite school, and then she moved to another house near the convent. When she died she was living in another house, in the area near the annexe of Kykkos monastery in Nicosia.

Larnaca 1928-1934

Move to Larnaca 1928

Uncle Jules' had remained agent of the Messagerie Maritime during the years at Kondea, and used to travel to Larnaca and Famagusta from Kondea to conduct this business, which brought us a small income.

In 1928 he moved to Larnaca to conduct this business more fully, and in 1931 Uncle Georges finished his national service, came to Cyprus, and joined him.

We also moved to Larnaca in 1928 so as to undertake our schooling.

In 1927 a Mr Newman had come to Kondea, and set up a threshing machine on the moors. He offered a job to my father installing Crossley water pumps, and father would travel around the various villages on a motor bike to do this work. Mr Newman was based in Larnaca, and when he returned to England in 1928, father took over management of this agency in Larnaca. Mr Newman was renting a house there (called the "house of Stefano"), and we moved into it and were renting it.

In 1930 we moved from the Stefano house to another house in Larnaca not very far from St Joseph's Convent, where we were at school. We stayed there a year. In 1931 Georges came and was staying in that house with us. Then Georges decided to go to France, and my mother decided to join my father in Famagusta, and we became boarders at St Joseph's Larnaca 1932-1933.

When the first harbour at Famagusta was being built, c.1902, my father and Uncle Joseph had been working on the construction. In 1931 a company called Parkinsons commenced extensions of the harbour. My father applied for a job as a supervisor, and was employed in charge of the recruitment of workers.

Mother and Father at Famagusta 1932-33

In Famagusta, we were renting a house between the Andruzzi and Santa Napa Bastions, and I stayed there during the school holidays. That's how I first came to know Famagusta.

Figure 36 Fred Diacono at Famagusta, c1933

Uncle Jules was French Consul, and had offices in Nicosia, Larnaca and Famagusta. In Famagusta his offices were opposite a small garden known as "Desdamona's Garden", which was near the Sea Gate.

The offices of Fritz Murat (Jimmy's uncle) were nearby. Fritz Murat was a merchant and shipping agent, in company "Orphanides and Murat". They had the Khedivieh Line which was plying between Cyprus and Egypt every week. It was the postal line too.

Fred must have finished his schooling in 1930, and went to work with Parkinsons as well. He trained as a diver, positioning the concrete blocks on the breakwater. Father invented a derrick, which was called the "Louis Derrick", which Parkinsons patented. They gave father £35, but sold it for hundreds of pounds – they were not fair.

Figure 37 Map of Famagusta showing location of Diacono house

When the English managers of Parkinsons left Cyprus, father had to wind up the construction. It was after that he took a job with the Cyprus Mining Corporation in Xeros in 1933. Mother came back to Larnaca during the summer holidays in 1933, and we rented another house called Christou's, opposite the playing fields of the Lyceum. We kept that house for a year 1933-34, during which we were day students, and father was working at Xeros.

S. Joseph's Convent, Larnaca 1928-1933

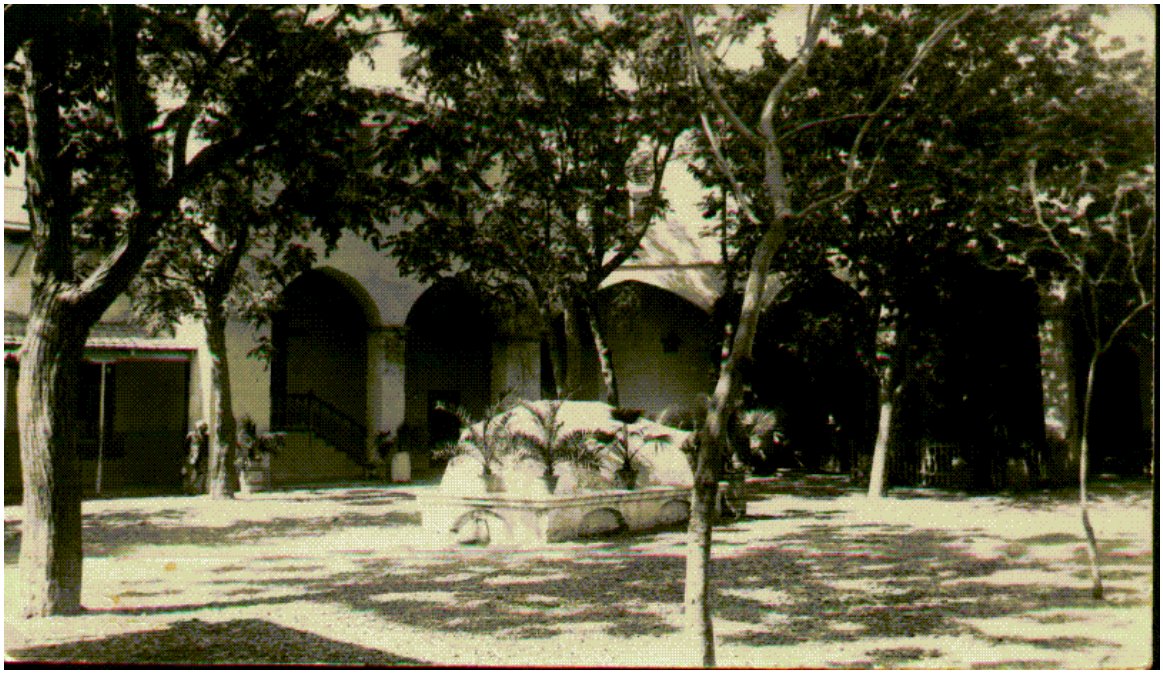

Figure 38 The Cloister, S. Joseph's Convent Larnaca, c1934-5
Verso "A Ketti, La cour ou elle a tant joué, Loulou (Jules)"
The gardner Polichronis is standing in the archway to the left. Soeur Celine is standing in the shadows to the right of the fountain – she was always working with Polichronis.

I used to like Thursdays particularly. It was our day off from classes. We had to wash our socks, and then Soeur Jeanne would open the library and we would choose books to read. I thought it was the loveliest time of the week, to be able to sit down and read a book. They were in French, romances for young ladies, descriptions of the islands of France . . .

Mère Marie de la Colombière

We are writing this on the 15th February 2003. The 15th February was a special feast day in the convent, the Feast of Blessed Claude la Colombière (1641-1682), the patron saint of our Mother Superior, Mère Marie de la Colombière. On this day we had a holiday. We would go to church, and then we had a grand dinner, and they gave us wine to drink. [46]

Mère Marie was Mother Superior when I went there in 1928. I don't know how long she had been there, or much about her background. Uncle Jules told me she was from the Lyons area.[47]

In 1932 and 1933 I was a boarder, while my father was working in Famagusta – that was when I passed my Certificat d'Etude (June 1933).

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46 This was little more than a finger in the bottom of the glass. The other day they would give us wine was the 16th March, St Joseph's Day. On one of these days we decided we wouold give the wine to one of the girls. So we emptied our glasses and gave it to Christalene, who got drunk. Your Aunty Ada was one of the perpetrators of this. So we all had to hide Christalene so that the sisters wouldn't see that she was drunk.

47 This was where Blessed Claude la Colombière was educated at the Jesuit college, and he probably had a particular following in the area. After she retired Jules kept in touch with her, and she returned to the Lyons area.

Figure 39 S. Joseph's Larnaca, June 1933.
Loula Pieri, Bihter Hamid, Daisy Borg, Mary Diacono, Marie Gabriel
Maroula Mavronicola, Elli Dimitriou, Maria Stylianou, Fani Eiouanides (Brevet), Maroula Iasonidou
Soeur Celine, Mère Marie de la Colombière, Soeur Jeanne de la Croix, Sister Mary of the Child of Jesus.

She was a very kind woman, a very strict woman.

Mère Marie stayed in Larnaca until 1933, when she was transferred to Nicosia, where the school was not doing too good. Soeur Jean de la Croix became Mother Superior at Larnaca.

Soeur Pierre (1928-1930)

When I was 9 year old, and I went to the convent for the first time, Soeur Pierre was my teacher (1928-1929). She must have had 40 or 50 children. Some of them were much younger than me. Kitty and Ada we were all in the same class. They had a big poster of activities in a village – the farms, the ploughman going to the fields, the christening of a baby, a marriage – that's one of the ways in which they taught us the language – la vache, la cloche, l'eglise, le pere etc. She was a lovely old girl. I was her pupil for one year. She must have been in her sixties. She had a very motherly attitude towards me.

She was suffering from asthma. The third year I was at school I was a boarder. She was the one supervising our dormitory. There were about 20 boarders in this dormitory. She was ill in bed. He nuns put us to bed, and told us to be very quiet, not to disturb Soeur Pierre. And we were quiet. We were obedient. No playing around with us.

I went to bed, but I had some sort of premonition. I put me dressing gown and my shoes beside my bed, so that I could put them on in case she was ill. Anyway I went to bed. After some time Soeur Pierre called me, "Marie, Marie, Go and fetch Mother Superior, I am very ill." I forgot all about my shoes and my dressing gown. I ran down to where the nuns were gathered, and burst in. "Mere Marie," I cried, "Soeur Pierre is very ill. She can't breathe." There must have been a telephone somewhere in the convent, because the doctor

and the ambulance arrived very quickly, and took her away. She recovered, and came back to us a few days afterwards.

She was a very kindly woman. They had two little girls, Paulie and Anika. Their mother and father were in the African colonies, and Soeur Pierre was like a mother to them.

She was always very nice to me, always talking to me. I remember one day she was mending her apron – they used to wear a black apron over her habit – and she was mending the holes in it. "Marie, notre monastère est tres pauvre."

Sister Colomba was my first teacher of English. She used to tell me, "No, Mary, it's 'know', not 'k-now'." She was very old, in her late 80's. She was an English nun, maybe Irish.

Then we had a Greek teacher too, Mrs Maritsa, who taught us Ancient Greek. She was old, too, in her late 70's, 80's.

Soeur Celina

In my second year I was sick with tonsilitis, and was in bed with a ver high fever. Soeur Pierre would come and sit with me. Soeur Celina – she was the housekeeper. She would tell me about her family. "You know, Marie," she said to me, "When you get out of bed, you may find you have grown tall like me."

Soeur Celina was in charge of the church. You never went into the church without finding it covered with flowers. It was a great devotion.

She used to have a gardner, an old man called Polichronis ("many years"), and they used to grow much flowers and and vegetables – he must have been with the monastery since he was a young man. He used to have a room under the archway, and we used to go there and speak to him.

Soeur Lucy (1930-1932)

In my third year at the school (1930-1931) I progressed to the fifth class with Soeur Lucy. She was a good teacher, very hard working. She had 50-60 girls in her 2 classes together in one room. The only thing in their favour was that they were obedient children – you didn't have anyone disturbing the classes. I was sitting at the same bench with Emma Santi, Virginie (an Armenian girl, I can't remember her surname) and Marie Gabriel (also an Armenian – she had a beautiful soprano voice) – we were together because we were the youngest in the class. In her class she had girls 18-20 year old. I was 11-12. Soeur Lucy was very lively. If she saw us in the recreation, she would wack us on the backside with a book, and smile at us as we passed. I had Soeur Lucy for two years:- 1930-1931 and 1931-1932.

Certificat d'Etude – Mere Marie de la Colombiere

The year of my certficat d'etude (1932-1933) I was in Mother Superior's class – that was the year I was a boarder. That year I won the first prize in Cyprus for the Certificat d'Etude.

At St Joseph's there were three sisters, the eldest was Christale, Fani and Elenitsa Eiouanides. Fanni was the clever one. She had won the first prize for the Certificat d'Etude two years previous – she was older than me – and the year I won the first prize for the Certificat d'Etude, she won the first prize in Cyprus for the Brevet. She was always ver friendly towards me. She gave me a prayer for the Novena of the Sacred Heart, which I have prayed all my life when I have something special to pray, and I am always thankful to her for giving it to me. I don't know what became of her. I heard she suffered a lot, and died a few years back.

Figure 40 S. Joseph's Larnaca, 1933, Art Class

Daisy Borg, Soeur Scholastique, Morpho Counnas, Mary Diacono, Loula Pieri, Andriani Bouyourou, Maria Pier, Mère Marie de la Colombière, Ellie Dimitriou, Eleni Yianaki, Ada Diacono, Maroula Mavronicola

Soeur Scholastique

Soeur Scholastique was my art teacher at Larnaca. Loula Pieri was her favourite, and after I received the prize for the Certificat d'Etude, she took a set against me, and would have little to do with me.

At one lesson I was talking, and Soeur Scholastique took my painting away, and told me to leave the class. As I was leaving, Mere Marie de la Colombiere saw me, and asked me where I was going. She asked me why, and I told her Soeur Scholastique had told me to leave. Mere Marie said to me something like "the (nun's) habit doesn't make her a good person". She took me back into the class, and told Soeur Scholastique "let Marie continue her work." And of course, as her Mother Superior, she obeyed, but she was furious with me, and never had much to do with me.

Later on Loula Pieri married Dr Francis, a doctor at Larnaca. He was the one who brought Ada's Fred into this world.

I think Soeur Scholastique was from Damascus. She wasn't French. She had no accent. But the nuns from Damascus had a pock mark on their face, because there was some boil they got there, and it left a pock mark after it burst.

She was an excellent painter.

Soeur Tassil

Soeur Tassil was the piano teacher, an Armenian. She was a nice woman, except she used to rap us on the nuckles with a ruler if we played a wrong note.

Soeur Dominique

Soeur Dominique was the cook. She was a lovely girl, in her twenties. She was Italian. A lot

of girls used to take cooking lessons on a Thursday, so as to be with Soeur Dominique.

Soeur Marie de l'Enfant de Jesus

Soeur Marie de l'Enfant de Jesus took me for English. She was an Irish nun. She was a very gentle person.l She had the most beautiful hands, I remember. It was said of her family, that there were seven sisters who became nuns.

Soeur Jean de la Croix (1933-1934)

The year after my certficat d'etude (1933-1934) I was doing English with Soeur Marie, and the rest of the subjects with Soeur Jean de la Croix. But I did not do all the subjects, because my mother did not want me to go on for the brevet. She wanted me to leave school and become a home body. A year wasted.

Soeur Jean de la Croix was a very nice girl. The story was that she was one of the aristocracy of France. He father was an admiral. She fell in love with a young naval officer, who went to see her father to ask for her hand. Her father rejected him. They lived in an an apartment block. The door was of the lift was open, he fell and was killed. Her brother was in command of a French warship, and when it came to Larnaca, we learnt how to sing naval songs "Il étaut un petit navire" and so forth. When I saw Uncle Jules in 1954, I asked him if Soeur Jean was still Mother Superior, and he said that she had left the Order, and was living with a cousin in Paris.

S. Joseph's Convent, Nicosia, 1934-1935

In early 1934 I was a day student at Larnaca, because my parents were back in Larnaca. However, in September 1934 my parents moved to Xeros, as father was working for CMC.

My mother decided that I was not to go to school, and that I had to be at home. My mother was the ruler of the house, and of her daughters, and was to be obeyed.

When she learnt about this, Mother Superior took a taxi with Soeur Celina, and came to Xeros to visit my parents. She met with my mother. Mother was saying that I had to stay at home and become a housewife. Mother Superior said, Mary is not going to become a housewife. She is going to finish her schooling – she has brains. Mother said, But I can't afford to pay for three daughters to stay at school. So Mère Marie said, You will not have to pay for her. For what you pay for the two daughters, we shall have the three. Mother said, But she hasn't been studying. Mère Marie said, I will coach her, and she'll pass her exams. Mother said she'd have to consult with my father, which was not a problem, because father always wanted me to continue my schooling.

Figure 41 S. Joseph's Larnaca, 1933, Art Class:Mary Diacono, Soeur Scholastique, Morpho Counnai, Loula Pieri, Elenitsa Hadkianaki, Elli Dimitriou

And so it was that I went as a pensioneur to the convent in Nicosia for a year (1934-35) to study for my Brevet. I had to cover the two years' course in one year.

Soeur Clement was my teacher that year. She was a young teacher. If she had a problem with algebra she would call me to the blackboard to explain.

Soeur Brigitte taught me English. She was an elderly woman, in her 80's. When I first went to the convent there, she took me in her arms and said it is wonderful to have you here. It is so many years since we had someone of your family here. We used to walk down to the church together of a morning for mass, and she would take my arm, because she was very old.

In my final year reports I was scoring 100% in all my subjects.

The Brevet exams were in Larnaca, and I remember we had to drive to Laranaca on the three days of the exam.

I remember the morning of my chemistry exam, I was not sure I had studied everything. So I prayed if there was anything I should study, that the Holy Spirit would point it out to me. I opened my chemistry book at the section about vinegars, which I had not studied. When I started the exam, there were questions about vinegars in the exam.

When I had finished my Brevet, there was a Commission from Beiruit, and they gathered all the girls together in the courtyard. I didn't think I had done all that well, so I went into the chapel. The Commissioner was calling me, but I wasn't there. Mère Marie said, "I know where she'll be." So they came to the Chapel and found me. M. Cointreau, the Commissioner was a very tall man. When I came, he was holding a medal. He said, "Don't you want this, mademoiselle? Would you like me to put this around my neck instead?" I was so surprised that I could not answer him. He then told me that I had the first prize for Cyprus, and a perfect maths-geometry result. He said if I had not won the first prize fir Cyprus, he would have given me a special prize for methematics. He asked me, "And what nationality are you, mademoiselle?" Mère Marie replied for me, "Internationale".

When we returned to Nicosia, Soeur Armelle had spread the word that I had won the first prize. When we arrived, the boys from the Maronite school were all there, pulled me out of the car, and congratulated me, "Bravo! Bravo! Bravo!"

That day, my cousin Ines Bayada came to take me out. She always had shown love and affection towards me. Ines was one of the most beautiful women in Cyprus. She was dressed entirely in white, with her hair gathered behind in a bun: she looked so elegant, quite unaffected, and I was so proud to walk out with her, and that she was my cousin.

Georgette Lapierre and I were the only two from the family, who had first prizes. They were all surprised, because I was the only one who did not speak French at home.

My mother never cared about my studies. All she cared was that I should get married. It was my father who cared about my studies. When I passed my exams Mother Superior put me in a car to Xeros with Soeur Armelle, the housekeeper at Nicosia. When my father saw us pull up, he asked how I went. I said, "I don't know, dad." He said, "Well, don't worry, you'll do better next year." Then I told him I came first in Cyprus, and he took me in his arms, and was so pleased. The next day he went to work crying, he told my mother, because he did not have the money to send me on for higher education.

Figure 42 Marie Diacono, Premiere Prix d'Ile de Chypre, Brevet 1935

With Soeur Clement, I sometimes felt she avoided answering my questions, because she didn't know the answers. A number of years later we were sitting in a café at Pedhoulas, when a young man came up, and asked "Are you Mary Diacono?" I said, "Yes." He said, "I've heard so much about you. Soeur Clement never stopped telling us about you. She said that you were the best pupil that she ever taught."

Uncle Jules and the Convents

The nuns running the schools had no help from the government at all. The parents had to pay for the education (12 shillings per month for the three of us), whereas the government schools the children went free. Mere Marie had tried for many years without success to have a government subsidy. When Uncle Jules became Agent Consulaire, he lobbied the government, and they provided a subsidy of £800 in the early 1930's, which provided relief to the nuns and the Catholic families. Mere Marie was always grateful to Uncle Jules for that.

Figure 43 S. Joseph's Convent, Larnaca, 2002 (photograph Alex Pugh)

The Muleteers – 1929

In 1929 we went to spend a holiday with grandmother at Kondea. There was Phivos, Andrea, Maroula, Ada , myself and Kitty. During the day we used to go and play (I was 11), and I remember going with Maroula. Grandmother used to give us enough freedom to do that. We visited some girls in the fields, where they were collecting with their baskets. When it was time to go home, we climbed on a mule. But Maroula wanted to be the driver, and excited the animal. The mule took off, and ran very fast, so that we were afraid we would be thrown. The girls who owned the mule were running after us to stop it. The mule ran to their house, and stopped at the stone outside it, which they used to mount and dismount the animal.

Father Samuel Gius

The church of Terra Santa in Larnaca is run by the Franciscan Order. One of the priests there, in the 1920's, was Father Samuel.

During the Great War, he was captured by the Germans in Montenegro, in the Balkans, where he was serving as a padre with the Italian army. He was put three times in front of a firing squad. The object was to make his fellow prisoners talk. He did not know this. He faced the rifles, each time, convinced he was to die. Each time he was spared. Three times in all. This experience was at a huge personal cost – the poor man was a nervous wreck, who would jump at any loud sound. Later in Limassol, I remember once sitting with him, when a fire cracker was let off outside the window. He jumped and overturned a table.

Nobody could be more honest, or true. My father said that if he was to confess to any priest, it would be to Father Samuel. There was no-one he knew in whom he could have more faith.

My sister, Kitty, and I would often meet him on the way to school, while he was on his way to the capella to say Mass. He would often chase Kitty around the fountain, waving his stick, a great jest and excitement.

But he also had a fierceness and a temper about him. Jeanette Francis came to capella in Larnaca, in about 1930, dressed in a short-sleeved lace blouse. She was only about 18. She used to paint herself. When she went up to take communion, Father Samuel told her to go and get dressed, before she took communion.

Later, he moved to Limassol, where I knew him, when I was at the convent there for a year, studying for my final brevet, and teaching. He was very fond of our family, and occasionally would ask permission of the nuns for me to sit with him, so that he could get news of the family.

On Good Friday, the year I was in Limassol, we were at the Good Friday service. It was packed, and a lot of Greek Orthodox people were there, as well as Catholics. Father Samuel was preaching the sermon, and getting rather excited, and gesticulating. He was a very fiery preacher. I don't think I was laughing at him, but I was talking to the girl next to me. Suddenly Fr Samuel cried out. "Laugh well, who laughs last." He looked pointed at me, and said, "Mary Diacono, it's you I'm talking to." I was so embarassed, I could have crawled under the pew.

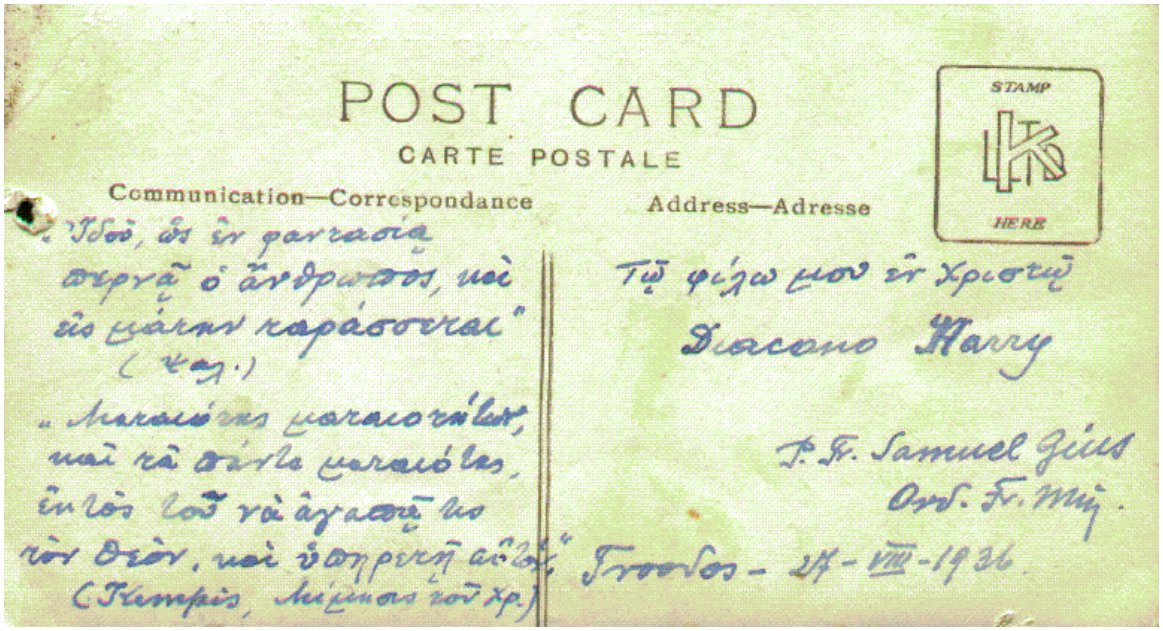
Perhaps some time after, I was walking with a group of girls past the presbytery, when Fr Samuel appeared at the window, and threw us down some lollies. The girls caught them with excitement, but Father Samuel said, "They're not for you, but for Mary."

My brother Harry and he were great friends. Harry was thinking of becoming a priest. Father Samuel later visited us in Xeros.

Father Samuel is certainly remembered. He is to be remembered for facing the rifles three times. He is fondly remembered for his ministry, in Larnaca and Limassol, for he was a much-loved priest, and brought many to Our Lord through word and example.

The following postcard of Father Samuel was sent to Harry in 1936. A translation from the Greek is below.

Fr Samuel: "Thinking that all is in vain."



"Here in imagination the man spends his life, and in vain he is troubled. Vanity of vanities, everything is vanity. Only to love Our God and serve Him. Kempis. *The Imitation of Christ*. To my friend in Christ, Diacono, Harry, from P. Fr Samuel Gius. Ord. Fr. Min. Troodos, 27.VIII.1936".

Naming Days

The 25th March was the Feast of the Annunciation, a great feast day of Holy Mary, and it was my patronal festival. My mother used to have a feast for my name, because when I was to be born, she had difficulties, and she was given that gold icon of Holy Mary, and she promised that I would be called Mary if I was born sane and sound. [48]

When we went to Larnaca, she used to celebrate the 25th March as my feast day. We used to go to the church in the morning, and hear the Eucharist. After about 11 o'clock, I would dress in my best, white one year, yellow the next. Her friends would come and wish me many happy returns of the day. They used to say, ""Χρονια πολλα" (Chronia pola) or "Many years". Of course, in Larnaca there were many girls called Mary, and there was quite a circuit to be done that day.

This visiting was more a custom with the Greek Orthodox community, than the Catholic. The Catholics would nevertheless celebrate the patronal festival, as I have said previously about Mère Marie de la Colombière.

When we went to Xeros in later years, the custom was not as prevalent, as everyone was working.

My mother's feast day was on the 24th September, which is the celebration of the Black Lady of Kythera ("panayia mavri to Kythera") – Despina means "Lady". The legend is that a black icon of Holy Mary was discovered by a shepherd in the myrtle bushes in a field near Kythera,[49] which was where *her* mother's family came from. A number of miracles were attributed to this icon. Aunty Gigetta sent me a copy of this icon some years ago.

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48 She gave it to the jewller to have it silver plated. The jeweller's wife was mentally unstable. I'm not sure of the exact story, but he did it in gold.

49 Hence the icon is also called "panayia i mertithiotissa" or "Our Lady of the Myrtle Bushes". When Greece was occupied by the Turks, icons were often hidden in the fields, and there are a number of instances of miraculous icons being so discovered, eg., St Raphael.

All Souls Day 1932

On 2nd November 1932, Soeur Pierre took us, about 18 boarding girls, to visit the cemeteries – Terra Santa, and the nearby Greek cemetery. The following day, 3rd November, is the feast day of St George of the Crops, and a fair was held every year at St George's Larnaca. The stall holders would commence setting up the previous evening, and we returned to the school from the cemetery via St George's to see the preparations – I remember trying to buy peanuts.

Kyriazes, Hill and Ernest Lapierre

Kyriazes was a doctor of medecine, but when I knew him he must have been in his 60's or 70's, and was probably retired. This would have been in the early 1930's, when I was about 12 or 13 years old. He had two daughters (Marytsa and ?) and two sons (Yiangos and Costas, who were friends with Fred and Harry c1933). I faintly remember Kyriazes going in and out of the French Consulate. Uncle Jules had moved the consulate (c1932-3) to near the court houses and customs houses on the road to Nicosia.[50]

Kyriazes was a stocky old man, who used to wear white suits in summer. He was interested in the history of Cyprus, and used to write articles for the *Kypriaka Chronica*. My mother told me that he had published things against the Lapierres.

The story as I understand it is that Kyriazes asked Uncle Jules for access to the consular records, and Uncle Jules gave him access. I understand that among these records he found the letters of complaint against Georges Lapierre, written by prominent citizens, and that these he related in the *Kypriaka Chronika*. George Hill subsequently used this material in his history of Cyprus. These letters, as Hill says, were written by the enemies of Georges Lapierre.

According to Uncle Jules, Ernest Lapierre was incensed by Hill's account, and considered taking legal action. During this time it is believed that he researched the documents of the court case at Aix en Provence where Georges Lapierre was exhonerated,[51] but we do not know whether he took this legal action or not.

Meteorite 1930

There was a meteorite in 1930. It filled the sky with a green light, and then there was a huge explosion. Everyone rushed outside. Later the newspaper that it had crashed into the sea west of Xeros.

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50 The Italian Consulate was nearby, and the Murats lived opposite.. The old consulate had been in a big house on the waterfront ("Finikoudes" or avenue of palm tress) near where the statue of Kimonos is

51 c1839 George Hill: Op cit.

Xeros 1934-1942

The Move to Xeros

Father, as I have said, started working for the Cyprus Mining Corporation (CMC) late in 1933. His first house in Xeros was somewhere near where the round-about is now. We came to Xeros during 1934, and lived in that house, and later in another rented house near the bridge near the mouth of the river. During 1934-35 I was boarding at St Joseph's Convent in Nicosia. [52]

Figure 44 Here I am standing outside the house near the bridge, Xeros, c1936

After that, Uncle Jules sold the share in the potato field at Kondea, and with dad's money from that, and with £200 from an insurance he had in Egypt, he bought the land and built our house in Xeros in 1937-38, which was our family home until the Turkish Invasion of Cyprus in 1974. That house is still owned by Aunty Gigetta, although for a time under Turkish occupation it was a bank branch, and there is a Turkish family now living in it (the woman's name is Shengul).

Father worked for CMC until shortly before his death in 1965.[53] What it was, my father knew every bolt and screw in the works, and even after he had "retired", they would be coming by car to father in his garden to ask him questions. So the manager, Mr Moore, said to him, Mr Louis, we'll give you an office, and all you'll have to do is sit in it and answer questions, and we'll pay your salary for it. So that's what he did for his latter years. He would go to work by bicycle, rain, hail or heat, come home for lunch, and then go back to work. Only much later was Aunty Gigetta able to persuade him to go to work with her in the car. (She also worked for CMC.) "I like it," he said. "What a ruiculous thing it is for the villagers to see you riding to work on your bicycle, and me driving in a car." But that is the sort of man my father was, and the people of Xeros loved him for it.

You might think this was a poor fate for one of the two last sons of the Lapierres to work Kondea. But we were happy there. When we were living in the house near the bridge, Mr Englesos had the neighbouring cantina. He became very wealthy, but not, I think, a happy man with all his worries and disputes over money. When he was dying many years later in London, Aunty Ada went to visit him. He told her he used to envy Mr Louis for his family, always singing and laughing and so full of enjoyment.

More on Russian Emigrees

Mother had a number of particular friend, who had fled from Russia about this time, Mrs Rapp who was the wife of a general, her daughter Mrs Michaeolvski, Mr Knutov, I think an officer in the Russian army and a beautiful painter – he was married to a Greek. Then there were, the Matovs: the father, Nicola, worked for CMC, his daughter, Vera, went to school with me, and there was a son, Serge.

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52 *S. Joseph's Convent, Nicosia, 1934-1935*

53 With some breaks of service during the Second World War, when he worked in Haifa and elsewhere.

Mrs Shepilev belonged to the family of the Czar, and her title was Princess Alexandrova. She was often invited to Government House when they had big receptions. She married Shepilev, who was accountant at the CMC, another Russian. She took a job in Cyprus as headmistress of the American Academy for girls in Nicosia. During the summer she was giving English lessons, and Aunt Ada used to go there for English lessons. This would have been much later, 1934-1935.

Figure 45 The Baronessa, 1937

Mrs Shepilev had an aunt of hers, we called "the Baronessa", an old lady of 88, who was always saying she was 58. When Mrs Shepilev was away on holidays, Mrs Rapp would go and stay with the Baronessa, and I would go and stay with them as well, because they did not know Greek, and I would translate from French for them to tell the maid what they wanted. Mrs Rapp was was of the family of the Russian General Rapp.

Early one morning I was awakened by the maid. "Miss Mary," she said, "come and tell me what they want. They say they want cauliflower (kounoupidi), and I don't know why they want me to cook at this hour of the night." When I asked the baroness what she wanted, it proved to be a spray for the mosquitos (kounoupi).

Another time I went to see the Baronessa. She said, "See that officer over there, he's flirting with me." She still thought of herself as a young woman. She had an affair she once told me with the Italian poet, I think his name was Andruzzi.

This was in the years 1935 through to the war. In the end I went toEngland, and I don't know what happened to them.

Among the refugees that came to Cyprus, our doctors were Russian. There was Dr Brovlevski, a physician, and Dr Smeeton who was a surgeon.

Dr Smeeton had been a doctor to the last Czar, and was a wanted man after the 1911 Revolution. He had a nurse, who hid him in a box with air holes, and passed him through the Chinese frontier to escape. He was a very famous surgeon. He had done his study in France, and he was chief doctor at the CMC. Often they would send an airplane to take him to Greece or Israel to perform operations. Dr Smeeton operated on me when I had a fistula, in 1940. He was in his late 70's at the time. When I was going in to the operating theatre in a blue satin gown, he said to me, "Mademoiselle, shall we dance the Blue Danube?" – to put me at my ease. He was a lovely man. They eventually allowed his wife to leave Russia. The nurse stayed with them. When Dr Smeeton was very very old, he lived in Aunty Edmee's house at Kondea for some months. When eventually both he and his wife had died, the nurse became a housekeeper to Gigetta Vassiliades.

Dr Brovlevski saw me once at the hospital. I had gone there to take Gigetta to see a famous Hungarian dermatologist, when she had a rash on her face. "Mary," he said, "Take the little one home. I tell you this secretly. You are my children. Take the little one home. Don't let him spoil her face." So I did what he said. I always remember that, "You are my children." He had no children of his own. He was the one who eventually saved Charles from prison.

During 1935-36 I was nanny for the Rowe's children for a couple of months, Ronald and Freda.

Carmellite Convent at Limassol 1936-37

During 1936-37 I worked a year at the Carmellite Convent in Limassol. They were nice, but not like Mere Marie de la Columbiere. I taught French and I studied English for the GEC. I let down Mere Marie, because she write to me to come and work in the Convent in Nicosia, but I had to write to her and say I had already committed to work for the other nuns. I taught French in the morning – the girls I taught were much older than me. Then I would go for my English lessons. Then I would teach French to the younger girls in the afternoon.

Father Samuel used to come to us to say Mass. It was on one of these visits that he asked permission to have breakfast with me – that was the incident with the crackers I recorded earlier.

Cable and Wireless 1937-41

I finished working in Limassol mid-1937. After that Kitty and I worked for Cable and Wireless. I worked there until 1941 as a telephone operator. Our boss was Mr Butross.

Josette Lapierre

When Aunty Madeleine was having a baby, Uncle Jules brought Josette to stay with us – this would have been late in 1937, when Remy was being born. Josette would have been just over four years old. She was a lovey girl. Uncle Jules was very keen not to upset her by leaving. He concealed himself to see if she was going to get upset, and got us to tell her he had left. When he saw that she was upset, he revealed himself, and said he had not left. I remember Josette packed her bag, put on her coat and went to stand at the gate. "Won't you stay with us?" We asked her. "No," she said, "I won't stay in a house, where the mistress and servants are liars."

Josette was born on Larnaca, in a house opposite the playing fields of the Amercican Academy. They lived upstairs, and there was an Armenian family downstairs. I visited there with Kitty in July 1937, on a trip to Larnaca from Xeros. Madeleine and Josette were in France, and Uncle Georges wanted company, and to give us a holiday. Kitty was a god-child of Uncle Georges. At that time, Uncle Georges was agent of the Messagerie Maritime – I think he shared in the business with Uncle Jules, who was Agent Consulaire.

Guy would come, and Jeannot Sforza. Uncle Georges had a gramophone and nice records – we would go swimming in the morning, Christina, their old cook, would cook us lunch, and we would listen to records. There was a nightclub singer called Danai, whom both Uncle Jules and Uncle George enjoyed listening to, and we would go and hear her. We stayed maybe a fortnight, until Kitty came down with malaria, and we had to return to Xeros. It was a time of freedom for us.

Shortly after that Georges and Madeleine rented another house in Larnaca, which had been the house of a priest. People told them not to rent that house, because it was unlucky. (It was built for celibacy, and they did not believe a married man should live in that house.) But Georges and Madeleine were not superstitious in that way.

They visited us in Xeros in August 1938. Uncle Georges came with Madeleine, Remy and the maid Maritsou – Josette must have been with them – I did not see them when they passed through, because I was working. After they left, they went up the mountains for their holidy, and stayed in a monastery or hotel, somewhere near Platres. Georges and Madeleine went to have breakfast, and they told Maritsou to have her breakfast as well, because the baby was asleep on the bed. When they returned to the room the baby was dead – he had kicked and kicked, and lodged his head between the bars of the bed, and was strangled there.

I visited Uncle Georges and Aunty Madeleine at Larnaca in 1939, this time in the priest's house. I was in the garden with Josette, when some roudy girls went past on bicycles.

Josette said to me, "I'll never be like them, I'd rather die."

A few days later she became very ill. It was her first year at school. She came home very sick, and they called the doctor. They found she had eaten a banana at school, and the doctor thought it was indigestion. But she developed a high fever, other doctors came to consult, but in two or three days she was dead. She had contracted meningitis. I remember Madeleine sitting beside her when she was ill. I remember sitting in their dining room, and Dr Gokshian being so upset, holding his head in his hands. I do not remember being in the house the night she died, or being at the funeral, and I think they must have sent me back to Xeros before she died.

Learning to bicycle

When we were staying with Uncle Georges in July 1937, Jeannot and his friends decided to go to Livadia for an excursion on bicycles. While they were planning this, Guy aid to me, "I'll bring a bicycle, and you can come along." "But, Guy," I said, "I cannot ride a bicycle." "Then, you'll learn," he said. So, the next day he turned up with this bicycle.

Kitty went ahead, with Renos Wideson. Guy put me on the bicycle, and said, "Come on Mary, ride." So, slowly we started down the road from Larnaca to Famagusta. Every time a car passed, I would fall off. But slowly we went along the road, and eventually arrived at Livadia towards mid-day. By this time the others were starting to come back.

That's how I learnt to ride the bicycle.

Christina and the Owls

I mentioned Christina, the old cook, who used to work for Uncle Georges. She would sleep at her own house, but would come to Uncle Georges' to work during the day. She was superstitious. One evening, when she was leaving, I went out with her, and we were crossing the playing fields of the American Academy. She told me the story about the owl. The field was bordered with trees. She said she was afraid to cross the field because one evening an owl had come out of the trees, and landed on her head, and took her mantilla. She had taken this as a bad omen, and when she had arrived home, she received a letter that her son, who was studying on Greece, had died

The following week, Kitty became sick with malaria, and I was nursing her. In the evening I went on the balcony, and an owl came and hit me on the head. Knowing the story of Christina, I was terrified that something would happen to Kitty. Which, of course it didn't. But ever since I haven't liked the owl.

The Greeks, not only Christina, have the owl as a bad omen.

My father used to call me the owl, not because of the bad omen or anything, but because I never liked to go to bed early, and always liked to sit up and read.

Uncle Georges and Uncle Jules

When we were living in Larnaca (1928 onwards), Uncle Jules lived with us, and Uncle Georges was in the army, doing his national service in Beiruit (French national service). When he finished his national service he came to Cyprus – that was about 1929. At the time Uncle Jules was Agent Consulaire, and living at the consulate. In 1931 we rented a house of Fasis – it was a big house – we lived downstairs and they lived upstairs – there were three bedrooms upstairs, Jules had one, Georges, and Harry had the third. Then in 1931 Georges went to France. There he met Madeleine, and married. When mum and dad moved to Famagusta 1932, Jules went to live in the consulate house. When Uncle Georges and Madeleine came to Cyprus (c1932-3) they took the Armenian house, and Uncke Jules went to live with them – he still had the consulate house.

So, Uncle Jules, Uncle Georges and us, we were always very close.

Uncle Jules married Aunty Christina in 1938. They moved the consulate to another house – the first consulate I remember was down on the Finikoudes – the new house was on the Larnaca - Nicosia road, not far from the court houses. I visited them there in 1942, when Bertrand was being born, and I stayed there a few days to look after Henriette – Henriette had been born in 1940. (Bertrand was the family name of Christine – he[*r father?*] was in charge of the Indo-China army. The brother of Christine was in charge of the army in Syria).

Uncle Jules and Aunty Christine moved afterwards to another house on the road from Acropolis to Terra Santa, where we visited them 1961-2. When he retired they went to live in France, at Aix-en-Provence, where he died in 1976, and Aunty Christine in 1989. I visited her there with Ada in 1980. Christine's family had come from Chamberry, where they had a large house in the main square.

After Josette's death, Uncle Georges and Aunty Madeleine left for France straight away – they could not remain in the priest's house. They stayed in France for some months, but as the war approached they returned to Cyprus in 1939. They lived at Boghazi. Uncle Georges started a soap factory there. I visited them there, maybe in 1943, just before I left for England. They had a house on the right hand side if the road to Cape Andreas, just past the harbour and above the beach. Boghazi in those days was the loveliest place.

In about 1946 there was a rumour that they had to get the British nationality, and it was the time for the children to be educated, so they went to France. They went to Paris, and they had a house at the Rue Lafayette, where he opened a bookshop. I visited him there in May 1948 en route to Cyprus, and stayed in a hotel next door for 3 or 4 days.

When we visited them in 1955, his bookshop had not done well, and he sold it, and he was working as a solicitor – they had a nice housed at Gagny. Afterwards they lived in Reims, where they were when they died in 1979.

Of course, at first travel was by sea, and communication by letter and postcard. Australia was far away. Plane travel came later, was expensive and dangerous, and international telephone was expensive. So, I did not have a lot of detail of their lives, and their family would know a lot better about their lives in France.

I found out about Uncle Jules' death much later. The mails to Australia took several weeks. Ada wrote to me, but the letter was burnt in the post office, and was delivered to me partly destroyed. Then we received the "faire part".

I remember too the day we received the "faire part" about Uncle Georges and Aunty Madeleine's death in 1979. I was so upset. I could not believe they had both died together.

Swimming at Xeros

When Uncle Jules came to spend his summer holidays with us, we would get up at 5:30 am and walk down to the "English Baths" at Karavoustasi, to have a swim. We would swim in the sea.There was a pontoon so many metres away, and we would swim out to that float amd

back. Then we would walk back. Uncle Jules would stop off at one of the cafes and order melon. We would have our melon, go back home, shower and have our breakfast, and then we would sit on the verandah embroidering or talking. That is

People used to lose things swimming. Mr Peacock lost his false teeth. We left him diving to find his teeth. A few years earlier, 1935 maybe, my brother Fred lost my grandfather Frederick's watch (the one in the photograph) off the piers at Karavoustasi: he dived off the piers and lost the watch out of his pockets. He dived and dived but could not find it. It is probably still down there somewhere.

Then the Turkish people found we used to go down there, and were making coffees to sell us, ½d per coffee. That was a lovely life. That would have been 1938-39.

After that Fred went to England. I was going to go there and join him, but then the war came.

The Bombings in Cyprus

The first bombing on Cyprus was on a Sunday in September or October 1940. I was working for Cable and Wireless, and was controlling the switchboard. Our switchboard was connected to the coast guard up beyond Pyrgos. It was a very quiet morning. I stood at the window with a file, filing my nails. Nondas the technician was cleaning the plugs. Then all of a sudden we heard airplanes and explosions. I started saying to Nondas, "These Turks, as soon as they hear the planes they choose to fire their guns." I said this because it was the Bayram festival. No sooner had I finished than all the discs on the switchboard started dropping. I had maybe sixty to seventy calls in half an hour from the coast guards of the northern coastal area, wanting to be connected to the control centre.

Before the bombing started, Louis, the clerk from the Kalogiros bus company office in Xeros, was connected to their office in Nicosia. When the bombing started he said to the chap in Nicosia "Panayiamou, they are bombing us." The chap in Nocosia spread it all over, and Nicosia was in panic in no time.

Evey call I connected had to be recorded on a log. Afterwards there was an enquiry as to how the news of the bombings was spread to Nicosia so quickly. The company accused the staff in Nicosia that they broke the Secrecy Act. The director of Cable and Wireless at Lefka, Mr Boutros, wanted me not to put the Kalogiros call on my log, and he made up another list, but I insisted that the Kalogiros call was connected at the time of the bombing, and that's what saved the girls at Nicosia from further trouble. Both Mr Boutros and I were named in dispatches for our excellent work.

There were barges in the port of Xeros, and the Italian bombers tried to sink them, without much success. The people of Xeros started running to the mountains, and among them was Despo, the mother of Angelou, Harry and the dog, Ra Ra. Harry was organizing the people to keep onto the road to go up the mountain. Angelou's mother was holding Ra Ra. As the planes went over they were strafing them, but fortunately nobody was wounded. Angelou's mother sheltered under the bridge, putting her head and the dog under the bridge, but her body was exposed. Harry said to her, "Why don't put your body under the bridge." And she said, "I'm protecting the dog." A taxi was passing. Nonina and Angelou stopped him, and they came up to the office in Lefka.

My father refused to leave the house. I asked him afterwards, "What did you do, dad?" He said, "Oh, when they were straffing I was hiding behind the wall."

The same day Gigetta was staying with Kitty and her husband at Ayios Iorgios village. They came down all one bicycle, Mike peddling, Kitty sitting on the back holding the dog (Sasha?) and Gigetta on the cross-bar. In this way they came to the office at Lefka, and they were all in the room where the telephone exchange was.

In 1941 father was commandeered from CMC by the Public Works to build military

hospitals. He built one in Nicosia, and one in Dhekelia. While he was building the latter, we moved to Kondea for a time, and rented a house, because the 8th Army was headquartered in the tsifliki. (They were using Cyprus for recuperation.)

A lot of people from Nicosia, Larnaca and Famagusta were coming to rent houses in Kondea, because they knew that Aunty Edmee had two sons-in-law generals in the Italian army and air force, and they thought that Kondea would not be bombed as a result. It was almost impossible to find accommodation in Kondea at this time, there were so many people. This too perhaps was why the 8th Army chose Kondea as their headquarters. At this time, George Vassiliades was posted as district court judge in Paphos, and Aunty Edmee went to live there with him and her daughter Gigetta. When the army came, people then thought it more likely that Kondea would be bombed, and they all left.

When the 8th Army arrived, the people greeted them with big baskets of grapes and other fruit. They did not lose, by losing their rental, because they all opened restaurants, and were selling eggs and chips and wine, and they were doing the laundry for the soldiers as well.

Durung the summer of 1942, I wanted to go and see Aunt Daphne in Nicosia, but we were worried about the bombings there. The night before I had a dreamt that it was alright to go to Nicosia, because tonight they're bombing Limassol. The next day I went to Nicosia, and while in the bus the girl sitting next to me told me that Limassol had been bombed the previous night and a number of people (10? 15?) were killed. They had bombed the Keo wine factories, thinking they were munitions or something.

Auntry Daphne's house was located near the gates to the Government House (the present Presidential Palace). Opposite the gates they dug trenches for the people of the area to use during air raids. One day there was an air raid alarm, and Aunty Daohne collected her saucepans, and took them to the shelter so thatwe could wear them as helmets. The guard who was at the gate of the Government House came across, and during the air raid there was a dog fight between a Greek and an Italian plane. The guard was giving us a commentary of the dog fight. I lefted my head to see the dog fight, and he gave me one on the head with his baton, saying "You and your shining helmet keep down."

When the army came we left Kondea – father had to cycle some twenty miles between Kondea and Dhekelia – and we moved to another place at Xylotimbou, which we rented for a couple of months until the hospital was finished.

Memories of Mrs Santi at Vouni

Some time in 1940 I went with Mrs Santi and her family to Mt Vouni. In those days the road ended at the foot of the mountain, and we had to walk up to the top. The Santi family were with us – I remember Egidio being there. I remember Mrs Santi leaning on her stick on the way up, reciting a poem in Italian. I do not remember which poem it was. She said, "In years to come, you'll remember me reciting a poem as we climbed Mt Vouni." She spoke of how much she had loved visiting the opera at La Scala. It must have been some time in 1940. She said that if the bombs started falling, she would wrap herself in a red blanket and roll down the hill.

Reflections on Life in Cyprus

I often look back on my early years in Cyprus, and think that we lived in a paradise. The island was so beautiful. Our family was happy. There was never much money. Around us, there was often real poverty. People on the whole got on together, without the cares and ambitions and envy that blight our modern world. In many ways that was, I think, true.

People often say that the British did nothing for Cyprus. I always believed they were slow in developing the island, and could have done more than they did to improve the

poverty of the people, and basic social services. And the British administrators and military were often arrogant and narrow-minded. Not all of them: many came to know and love Cyprus, and to appreciate its uniqueness, but there were enough with their superiority, and prejudices and ignorance to blight the reputation of the British, and the real improvements they brought.

It was not until 1919 that Cyprus became a colony of Britain. Prior to that it was a protectorate, a pawn if you like in the politics that led to the Great War. People were no longer subjected to the harshness and arbitrariness of Ottoman rule, where you could be murdered or beaten for little cause. The British brought peace and stability. But they did not bring prosperity, and they did not bring respect. This only came slowly, and by the time it came, it was already too late.

The period after the Great War was so mixed. Things were taking off in the cities, and there was money around and fast sets of people. But on the land, there was intense rural depression, negligible land prices, crop failures and real poverty. The Great Depression made this worse: but for many on the land it would hardly have made a difference.

The movements for independence, and union with Greece (they were not always conjoined) were born out of this, and kindled by false promises from the Colonial Office, and injustices real and perceived.

My father, and I think all of us children, were pro-British. Father always said that Cyprus was nothing until the British came, and ruined itself after they left. His great hero was Winston Churchill.

With the coming of the Second World War, Cyprus filled up with British troops. Many of these were good lads, lonely, in danger, and far from home. Many were ignorant, arrogant rednecks, practically illiterate, and only interested in sex.

My mother never really wanted the transition that I was making from a girl to a young woman. For me, as her eldest daughter, she was particularly restrictive. My role was to become a wife and mother. Education was not a consideration, further education out of the question. Nor was Career - Job was an economic convenience. Dress was what she wanted me to wear, not what I wanted to wear. I was to socialize with people she wanted me to see, not my friends. What I was to learn was housekeeping, making beds, mending socks (things she would not do herself). And this was enforced, I am afraid to say, often and brutally with my father's old army belt. I loved my mother, but deeply resented her restrictions and violence. As her eldest daughter I bore the brunt of this – often the others were spared the belt, but I think not the narrow-mindedness.

Marriage Disasters, 1940-41

Kitty was the first to marry. While I was in hospital, having an operation, she did not return from work, and eloped with Michael Timotheou, a Greek Cypriot from Limassol. They were married the next evening, 10th August 1940, 8 pm, in the Greek Orthodox Church at Lefka, the one on the hill on the way to Kalohorio. After the ceremony, they had dinner at the old restaurant at the bend at Orcontas. (We often stop there for a coffee, on the way up the mountains – many memories of that place.)

Freda was born 9 months later. We heard news that Kitty was living in poverty, with the child malnourished. Mother and father had to go and collect them, and bring them to Xeros, where Freda was largely brought up.

I was next. In 1941, I married Sergeant-Major John Pascal of the British Army. It was a huge mistake. He turned out to be a faithless man from the first night of our honeymoon. I left and returned home. Then he was posted to England. When I went to England, I went to see him, to tell him I wanted a divorce

Shortly after my marriage, Ada married Sergeant Frank Scriven. He was into black

market. When we were in London, he was being sent to Germany. He had a wad of banknotes in his hand, but would not leave a pound for Ada or his son Fred.

Famagusta, 1942

When the hospital at Dhekelia was finished, the Italians had sunk a ship in Famagusta harbour, and father was sent there to re-float the boat. We moved from Xylotimbou and rented a house just outside Famagusta. It was a very nice place among the orange groves. On a Sunday I used to go to church. There were two churches at soime distance from us. One was St Luke's, and the other was St George of Xorinos'. The church of St George of Xorinos' was built within the walls near the harbour, and while I was there one Sunday there was a bombing. The church was full, and the women were crying. I went outside, and the guard sent me back in. There were shelters in the ramparts, but he said it would be more damgerous to try and reach them. I stayed there in the church until the bombing finished.

While in Famagusta I used to go to St. George of Xorinos often. This had been a Nestorian church in former times, but was now Greek Orthodox. The church had a big icon of St George next to the window. The space below the window was spattered with blood. The story is that during the first Turkish occupation, the Turks were using the church for a stable. One morning they found their animals chopped up and thrown out the window. This was seen as a miracle. The walls were never painted over nor the bloodstains cleaned.

It was said that during the Lusignan period there were 365 churches or chapels within the walls of Famagusta, so that the kings could attend mass each day in a different church. The cathedral of St Nicholas in Famagusta, the façade was built as a replica of Reims cathedral – St Nicholas was turned into a mosque by the Turks, along with St Sophia in Nicosia.

During 1942 I painted a silk curtain with flowers for the left side door of the sanctuary. In the Turkish guide book to Famagusta, it says that the Nestorian church is locked up, because there are still treasures inside. Perhaps some of the icons are still there. I do not suppose my painting has survived, but in the Greek church, as a new such curtain is given, it is lain over the top of the old, so mine may still be there beneath the layers.

When their husbands died, the women used to take their gold wedding rings and hang them on the icons. The church could then use these when in need of funds.This was quite a common practice, not only with wedding rings – if a woman had a particular votive need, a sick child, a barren daughter, and so forth, she would take some precious thing and tie it on the icon.

My mother said that Aunty Eleni, my mother's eldest sister, gave a lot of her jewellery in this way. Aunty Eleni was about twenty years older than my mother, and had married when the family was still wealthy. They lived in Port Said, where her husband Andronicus Andronicou, had an immigration agency – he was in this agency with his two brothers, one of whom was called Theodorus [54] – they were very wealthy, and related to the coffee merchants Andronicus [55]. Her daughter was Evangelia, a very beautiful girl. She was

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54 This was a very big agency. Most of the Greeks who came to Australia before the war went through this agency. They all knew them.

55 They emigrated to Australia before the war, c.1910. Apart from Evangelia, Aunty Eleni had two sons, Manolis and Spyros. Manolis fell in love with a girl whose father has a hat shop. Aunty Eleni would not let him marry her. One day he revolted, and boarded a boat which took him to the Far East (Singapore or Shanghai). Mother later found out that he went down to Australia – he had cousins in Toowoomba, but I do not know whether he contacted them. He went to Brisbane. He was married at some stage. He contracted tuberculosis, and he died there. Spyros was perhaps slightly retarded, he was 6'5'', had a persecution complex, and was not fitting in to society. He married and was in Alexandria – that was the last I knew of him. Aunty Eleni died perhaps 1939-1940.

engaged to be married, but her fiancé was killed – he was hunting, went to jump a ditch, his gun was loaded, and was killed. Evangelia became a hostess for her uncle Sty, who was Governor of Macedonia, and then became Prime Minister of Greece. [56] She became engaged again, but then fell ill with leukemia. It was at this time that Aunty Eleni gave a lot of her valuable jewellery as votives, praying for her recovery. But Evangelia died in 1933. [57]

During the war, the women gave their gold wedding rings to help in the war in Greece. In return they were given a silver ring with the crown of Greece engraved on it. My mother did the same, and she wore that silver wedding ring to the end.

In 1942 I also painted a taberbacle veil for the Maronite church, and the priest gave me a Latin prayer book, whch I have used for 63 years now (2005).

We stayed there three or four months. After father raised the ship, they took it to Xeros for repairs, and we returned there.

Then they sent him to Haifa. He took the equipment from the CMC machine shop there, for the repairs of ships. I don't know how long he stayed there, because in the meantime we left for England.

There was a museum in the Martinengo tower, which I believe had a number of old furniture of the Lapierres from Kondea. An antique collector Moughab visited Kondea on a number of occasions. I remember my mother bartered a Louis XIV settee for a Chinese tea set – my mother did not like the Lapierre's furniture.

Holy Mary

I have had two dreams of Holy Mary, and I tell you this because they were true, and they have sustained my faith throughout my life.

The first I remember it was in about 1942, during the war, before I left Cyprus. This was at the time the Italians were bombing Cyprus.

I remember it as if it was last night. I was sitting on the bed, and a lady came and sat down next to me. She was of Middle Eastern appearance. She started talking to me, but I can't remember what she told me. I said to her "You're Holy Mary." During our conversation I asked her, "Can you tell me when the war will end?" She said to me, "I can only tell you that it will be finished on a big feast of mine." Then she got up, and said "I am very busy now. I am trying to put out the fires in Russia." She walked around the bed, and now she was all dressed in blue. There was a huge cauldron in the corner of the room. There were great balls of fire in the cauldron. She walked to the cauldron and put her hands in, trying to put the fire out.

Andronicus had died much earlier, perhaps during the first war. The business was taken over by Theodorus. In 1943 I tried to visit him in Port Said, but was told he was out. Later he went to Kythera. When I came to Australia he wrote to me to tell us to visit the cousins at Katoomba – however, on visiting Katoomba we spoke to the people at the Paragon restaurant, who told us the cousins were in Toowoomba.

56 Sty was Prime Minister c.1929. He was trying to negotiate with the Turks compensation for those Greeks who had been dispossessed in Anatolia during the massacres. There was some sort of a commission set up, and they found a man who had been an overseer on my grandfather Manolis Valndi's property. However, when they went to see may grandfather, he was already suffering from Alzheimer's. He said he had never been in Turkey, and did not know this man. So the people left. This was a great pity, because each of the daughters was supposed to get about £90,000.

57 Aunty Eleni wanted to adopt me. My mother went there in 1938, and came back saying not a child of mine would go into their hands. They were very strict people, very suspicious. When we were living in Chatswood, there was a Mary Vlandi who had a delicatessen. I went and asked them if they were related to the Vlandi in Port Said. When we spoke of Evangelia, they said, "Oh, but she was beautiful." Somebody painted her portrait, put it an exhibition in Italy, and won first prize. Aunty Eleni bought it.

When the war ended in the Pacific, I was living in London. Mrs Davies who lived in the flat down stairs at 71 Hermitage Road came running into my bedroom and said, "Mary, Mary, wake up, the war is over." I asked her, "What date is it, Mrs Davies?" and she said the 15th August. This is called the Feast of the Assumption in the Western Church, or the Dormition in the Eastern Church, which commemorates when Our Lady fell asleep.

The second was at the time of the invasion of Cyprus in 1975. I dreamt I was coming down the street to our house in Waverton, and a lady came and was walking with me. I didn't look at her this time, as we were talking. I said to her, "You're Holy Mary. Please tell me when is this war is going to be over." Then there was in front of us the pelt of a cow in the shape of the map of Cyprus, and it was all covered in blood. "She said, I do not know. I cannot tell you. It will be a long, long time." Then she disappeared.

I walked further down the street, and I saw a jeep with four or five Turkish soldiers, with their helmets. The next day, Charles brought the newspaper, and there was a photograph of the same Turkish soldiers in the same jeep. Exactly the same as I saw it my dream.

St Nicholas, 6th December 1942

I remember St Nicholas' Day in 1942 walking through Karavostasi to the little church of St Nicholas on the mountain overlooking the sea. I was wearing a blue dress, and it was cold. There is a place between Karavostasi and Potamos tou Kampou where the breeze comes in from the sea. I remember it so well. I was so happy. There was a spring in my step. I was full of life.

The Eucharist was said by Papa Simeon the Orthodox priest at Xeros. He was an elderly man, and very saintly. A number of years earlier he had built that little chapel of St Nicholas. He has also built the church of Saint Kournoutos somewhere up the hill between Karavostasi and Potamos tou Kampou, around 1941 or 1942, in the area of Soli. Papa Simeon was a native of that area.

A number of years later in London a priest came up to me and said, "Don't you remember me, Kyria Mary." This was Papa Andreas from Xeros. When we were young there was no church at Xeros and they used to hold Eucharist in the school house. Later they built a church to Saint Nicholas in Xeros, and this Papa Andreas was the priest there. He was from Pendaya. I had never been to see him celebrate the Eucharist there, because the Catholic priest used to visit us at home to celebrate Mass.

There was a lovely old custom – once a month the Greek priest would go around the village with holy water and bless each house. Because my mother was Greek Orthodox, he always used to come to our house and bless it.

While living at Xeros, we would make a pilgrimage two or three times a year to that little church of Saint Nicholas beyond Karavostasi. Sometimes we would drive, but usually walk. That church is now in ruins, demolished by the Turks during the 1974 invasion.

Siege of Lenigrad, January 1944

A footnote from 1944 from Cyprus: By this time I was in London, and leant of this from my family. The churches in Cyprus were not allowed to ring their bells during the war, because of the troubles over union with Greece. But when the siege of Leningrad was lifted, the bells rang all night.

The True Cross

In 1942 the family was in Nicosia. We were renting a home while my father was building a miltary hospital up on the Nicosia moors. The daughter of the lady next door called me across the fence, and said that "My mother asked me to give you this, Mary. It is a piece of the True Cross from Jerusalem." Her brother was a bishop in Jerusalem. I thanked her, and

said it was a great honour. Two or three days later I met the same girl in the shopping area. She said, "You know there has been a mistake. The piece of the Cross was not meant for you, but for my cousin Mary." I said I was very sorry. I had it at home and I would give it to her. So, when I went home I called her, to give it to her, but she said, "No. My mother spoke to her brother, and he told her not to take it away from you, because he did tell her for whom it was intended. The piece of Holy Cross wanted to come to you, and there was no way we might take it back. It is part of the Holy Cross, and it is now in your keeping to look after it."

So, Aunty Gigetta had a reliquary cross that had a cavity, and that was screwing on from the chain to hold it together. I put a little piece of the Holy Cross in this cross cavity, wrapped in cottin wool to hold it firm, and gave it to her to wear . Aunty Gigetta went to play in the orchard, and part of the cross unscrewed and fell away, the part with the Holy Cross in it. So, everybody was so upset about it, but we couldn't find the Cross. Six, seven months afterwards women were digging the orchard, and they found the missing half of the Cross, which was intact, with the piece of the Holy Cross wrapped in cotton wool, exactly as I had placed it. The people who owned the orchard rushed it to us, and we had such great happiness at its return. There is a legend that the True Cross will never return to the earth.

Both of us, Gigetta and I, have been wearing it since 1942. I wore it right hrough the bombings in London, and right through the years, and nothing happened to me. The bombs fell so near, as little as fifty yards, but I was safe.

London 1943-1947

Journey to England – Egypt

In 1943, Ada wanted to go to England because Frank was in England. We left Cyprus on the *Ghedivia*. Fritz Murat was the agent for the Ghedivia line, and whe he found we were travelling on board he arranged a first ckass cabin for us.

Reaching Egypt, we spent eight to ten days in the desert. We were to go to South Africa, but then the Germans were retreating, and we stayed in Egypt two months waiting to see if the Germans would make another assault on Tobrok.

We had a marvellous time in Egypt. We stayed in a hotel in Cairo, paid by the government, and mixed with society, although I was often left to nanny Ada's son, Fred, while she had the good time. We often went to walk after breakfast in the beautiful botanical gardens in Cairo.

Once I was taken by friends to a club to have a drink, but I did not like to drink alcohol – it never agreed with me. I went to this place and they were dancing. I saw a girl there I knew from the school in Limassol, dancing and flirting, and I was disgusted. She was a very beautiful girl – she had eyes like a wolf, if I remember her well. Later she married a very wealthy Englishman, and they had yachts and things. Her sister was much quieter, and married an English professor, and was quite a happy girl.

While in Cairo, I travelled to Port Said to look for our cousins Andronicos, cousins through the husband of Aunty Eleni. My aunt was already dead by then. I found the address – there was a son of Aunty Eleni there, Spiros, but he pretended not to recognize us – he did not want to have anything to do with us. So...

We stayed in Cairo for two months, before the convoy was ready to go through the Mediterranean.

Journey to England - Convoy

We then went from Suez to Liverpool on the *Maloja*, in first convoy across the Mediterranean.[58] We were cramped in a cabin with three English girls, Ada and Fred – Fred was crying, and the women were angry.

So they moved us to a cabin with four Anglo-Indian women. After a time, the steward said to me, "You seem a decent girl. How can you put up with all that swearing." I said to him I thought they were speaking in Indian – I did not know English swear words.

We went to Augusta in Sicily, and we picked up 400 American soldiers, who had been brought there from the North African front, and took them to Naples. After that we heard about the bombing of Barri and Monte Cassino, and there were hundreds and hundreds of Americans killed in those actions. I did not know my husband, Charles, then, but he was in Barri in the merchant navy when it was bombed.

Arrival in England

When we arrived in Liverpool in November 1943. The bands were playing, the music was welcoming us. We were examined by the health services, and then we could go anywhere we liked. In Leicester, the police took me to Pascal's in-laws. In the afternoon they put me on the train to go and stay with Ada, who was staying with her sisters-in-law in Yorkshire. Then I was taken ill, and I was very sick. They were very nice to me, the two sisters.

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58 AGP: Probably convoy MKF.25 in which the Maloja sailed. This departed Port Said on 17th October 1943, and arrived in Clyde (not Liverpool) on 4th November 1943. *http://www.convoyweb.org.uk/mkf/index.html?mkf.php?convoy=25!~mkfmain*

MI8

The following day I had a letter to go to the Labour Exchange for work. They told me to fill some papers to go to work in munitions factories. I said to them, "I speak four languages, what am I going to use them in munitions." "Do you," she said, "I'll fill out some forms and send them in.". Three or four days later I had a letter telling me to go and sit for exams, and I got a job in the Censorship in Chancery Lane in London. I trained for three weeks, and I was sent to MI8, where I worked for three years.

The work involved reading the letters of troops and civilians of different nationalities sent from overseas. Any material that was suspicious, or betrayed troop deployments or such were referred to other people. Sad latters, many of them, from people in fear and stress, or touched by tragedy, or just homesick. On one occasion I read a letter from Field Marshall Montgomery to his mother. It had come through the ordinary mail, and there was quite a flap when it was realized who it was from. We also gathered information about the conditions and morale of the troops in various sectors.

Most of the interpreters were university trained, and I was one of the few that actually spoke the languages converstaionally. So if there was a difficult letter to translate, Major Wilson, who was intelligence officer, would say, "Give it to the little one."

The head of our department was Mrs Hatton. She was an older woman, who was very good to me, and took me under her wing.

I made many friends working for MI8. One of them was my age, P.V. Wilson. Whenever she saw a queue she would get me to stand in it, while she went to the top to see what they were selling.

During the bombings we would go down into the basement, and come back to work with the all-clear. After the air raids came the V1's – you could hear them passing overhead, and only when they stopped you took cover. Later with the V2's you could not hear them coming, so we just worked through. One day we were delayed at our work when a V2 fell next to our building. The windows shattered, and I dived under the table with a glass of water in my hand, without spilling a drop. The bomb was a direct hit on the restaurant next door, Pierce's I think,, where people were having their lunch, and 235 were killed. Five minutes later we would have been there having our lunch.

Accommodations - London

When I first came down to London, I found a room in the YWCA. I later found out that my future husband, Charles, who I did not meet until years later, spent that night in the neighbouring YMCA, while on shore leave.

By the evening Ada arrived with Fred. She wasn't allowed to have a room in the YWCA because of the baby, and she sent everyone frantic to find a room.

The following day was Christmas Day, and you had to book to have a meal, but I couldn't book with Fred. So on Christmas Day we had nothing to eat, because everything was closed. We were not able to stay in the YWCA during the day, so we walked the streets of London hungry. The same on Boxing Day. Then the Womens Institute found me a room where we could take Fred, and gave him milk and scrambled egss to eat. Then the following day they prepared our breakfast. We stayed there for a week.

We found accommodation with some Greeks. We had two rooms there, and shared with a Jewish girl, Trudy. There were heavy bombing, and one night we had incendiaries on our roof, which were cleared by the fire watch. Ours was the last house in the street that wasn't damaged by the bombings. One night the warning sounded about 12 o'clock, and 6 o'clock in the morning there was no all-clear, and the bombs were falling over the place. We were huddled underneath the stairs, Ada, Trudy, Fred and myself. So when the bombs were falling, and the house was shaking, Trudy said, "Ada, pray to your God, because mine can't

hear." "Don't be stupid," I told her, "Your God and my God is one God."

We stayed in that Greeks' house for three months. Then one day I came and found the house empty. No Ada, no Fred, no Trudy. They had evacuated them to Bedford because of the bombing.

I met a husband and wife who were Greeks. I was staying alone in the big house, they offered me to come and stay with them. So the next night I went on the bus, but the police stopped us at their street, and said we could not go further because it was bombed. I never saw them again.

Trudy had always said that while my icons were in the London house, it was safe. And so it was. We had purchased some furniture for two hundred pounds. So, after we had moved to Bedford, I arranged to send it back. I met the fellow at the house, but it ws locked. He said he would not return the next day. So I said to try the bathroom window, if it was unlocked. It was, and we extracted the furniture, and took it away. A day or two after, the house was destroyed by bombs.

Accommodations - Bedford

Figure 46 Ada and Mrs Ruby Dawson

In Bedford, Ada found me some rooms with some Irish people where I could go and stay at night.

She found a job cleaning house for a lady. Then she found a job as a seamstress

Then she found Mrs Dawson, and became friendly. Mrs Dawson found a flat for us, at 58 Hurstgrove Road – opposite Allan's Bedford plant (which was a potential bombing target). We stayed in that flat for some months. That's where she had Marlene. The friendship with the Dawsons became a life-long friendship for Ada. Mrs Dawson's name was Ruby, her husband was Tom, and they had two daughters, one of whom was Marjorie. They lived at 26 Howard Avenue. These were on the other side of the railway line from the main part of Bedford.

I would walk over the railway bridge often in the pitch darkness of the black-out, without any fear for my safety, or being molested. That was what Britain was like in those times. Of course we knew of such things happening, but they were not the inevitable consequence of a young woman walking alone at night, which seems to be the case nowadays. I remember one night in mid-winter walking across that railway bridge. It was freezing cold, and covered with ice. I slipped on the steps and skidded down. A man crossing behind me came to help, "Y'alright, lass?"

Bedford was a beautiful place to live, with the river running through the centre of town, with its swans, geese and ducks, the well-paved walking areas beside the river on the town-side of the line, with its boatsheds and footbridge, but on our side the river meadows, where we could walk on a Sunday afternoon amongst the wonders of nature.

A girl I knew, Vera, was working in a Greek restaurant in Bedford, and she told me the meat was good there. So I went there and ordered steak. "Ena aparo," [59] the waiter called

59 "One horse!"

through the window. So I said to him, "If it's aparo, you eat it. I don't want aparo." He was surprised I could speak Greek, and was profusely apologetic. He probably served me aparos anyway.

Fred on Sark

My brother Fred had been working on Sark, where he was sent to construct a new harbour, when it was occupied by the Germans (1940-1945), and could not leave during the occupation. He busied himself by constructing a makeshift electricity supply for the residents, using some old generators, and became quite a legendary figure. He made crystal sets, and set up a cinema. He remained in Sark until 1952, when we have news cuttings reporting his departure. [60] On Sark he had formed a relationship with an older woman, named Dulcie. But then he met ther Sunny (Blanche Hollis), and they were married.

D-Day, 1944

On 6th June 1944 we were sent home early from work. The sky was black with smoke, we could hear the distant thunder of guns, and it was black, black, black, and the horrible stench of the gunfire. This was in the centre of London. No-one knew what was going on. It was like the end of the world. The chief of the department came in, and said we had better head home, or we would not be able to see our way later. So, I started, and it was so black I had to hold the walls as I went along. Then eventually I reached Euston Station, and it started to clear out. There was no television or anything in those days, and there was a blackout on information: the only way you found what was going on was in newsreels the following days. But the invasion of France had begun.

The Bombers

Not that day, but on many others, we had watched the wave upon wave of bombers passing overhead on the way to Germany, young men from Britain, and America, many of whom would not return, going to visit death and destruction upon "the Germans". I did think of the many people, whose lives would be destroyed or ruined in those air raids, and, yes, having live through the Blitz in London, we could not but realize what those waves of bombers meant. We had no knowledge of where they were going, or what their targets were, or whether the bombs would discriminate between military and civilian, between innocent and guilty. This was war, against an evil and destructive enemy. We were taught to see it in terms of black and white, . So our thoughts were for the fate of our own men risking their lives in flying those planes.

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60 AGP: Fred seems to have missed an opportunity. In 1947-49 the Sark Electricity Company was formed by Malcom Robson, following negotiations with the Dame of Sark, and, though roll-out was slow, eventually this must have supplanted Fred's makeshift network. *http://sarkelectricity.com/History.htm*. Perhaps Fred's employment in harbour construction precluded him form involvement. However, in later life he was to make a profession as an electrical engineer.

VE Day, 1945

Figure 47 Buckingham Palace, VE Day 1945

On 8th May 1945 news came through that Britain had accepted the surrender of Germany, and the Armistice was declared. We all left work. I walked down towards the Palace. Everyone was singing and shouting and dancing in the streets. People had cut up papers and were throwing them out of the windows of buildings. Others took their shoes off, and were dancing in the pond of Leicester Square, singing.

Figure 48 The Royal Family and Sir Winstin Churchill, VE Day 1945

I walked down to the Palace, and I was one of the first in the crowd, right at the Palace gates. We were singing and shouting, "We want the King! We want the King!" Then they came out onto the balcony, Sir Winston Churchill was with them, and they were waving to the crowds, who were laughing and singing amd rejoicing, and crying out "God save the King! God save the King!" The war in Europe was over.

That was one of the great scenes of the century, and I was there, at the Palace gates,

crying out to our beloved old King.

After the War

In 1945 my brother Fred came to England from Sark, and bought a house for us in Hermitage Road for £300. It was jointly owned by Ada and me. Ada eventually paid Fred back for the house, and sold it after moving to Wilstone.

After the war ended, I worked for three more months for MI8 doing prisoner of war letters. Then I went to work for another four months with United Naitions Reliefand Rehabiltation Adminstration (UNRRA), to do with the refugees.

I was offered a job working for the BBC. That was another turning point, at which my life could have changed in another direction, but then Ada persuaded me to iron clothes, and look after Fred and Marlene for another three years, in return for my keep.

Mother, Gigetta and Angelou came over in 1946, and Gigetta went to the Pitman College. But neither mother nor Angelou were happy there, mostly because they had no English. Angelou had many adventures, even over simple things like buying bread and milk.

England

I was in England during some of the hardest years in its history. It was also a time of particularly difficulty with my sister, Ada, and when I was still dealing with aftermath of a disastrous marriage.

Yet, my early years in Britain, and particularly the war years, were among the happiest in my life. For the first time I was free from the restrictions of childhood, earning a good wage, doing work I believed valuable. So, amidst all the bombs, and the death and destruction, I was happy.

My father, as I have said, was an Anglophile, and intilled in us a deep respect for Britain, its values, the spirit of its people, and its monarchy. Of course there were many contradictions in this. But I could walk through London at night, and only on one occasion did I have any fear of molestation.

As much as I loved London then, the countryside of Britain became the landscape of my dreams. It was, and is, so beautiful, and it was a longing for this landscape that was, in later years, to be set against the harsher beauty of the land, where I am destined to end my days.

Xeros 1948-1950

Return to Cyprus 1948

I decided to return to Cyprus. Ada gave me £42, and I bought a ticket to go to Cyprus. There was a mix-up, and I stayed a week in France, with Uncle Georges. He rented a place for me, because he did not have enough room for me in his home. He was running a bookshop then. Ada gave me some stamps to take to him, and then I had to return her £42. I was to arrive in Cyprus penniless, after three years working for her.

I spent some time with Uncle Georges. We had dinner with Georgette. She lived in a five storey appartement not far from the Pont Carre. Uncle Georges got a bit tipsy, and he said we'll go and wake up the concierge and get tickets to the opera. So he took us to the Opera Garnier, and knocked on the window, but the concierge would not open it. So we returned through the streets of Paris singing Greek songs. The following day, Uncle George took Georgette and I to dinner. Then Georgette took me around to see the various sights of Paris. Those were lovely days.

I went down to Marseilles to catch the ship. We were to go on the *Lloyd Triestino*, lovely Italian boat. There were thousands of refugees in Marseilles, so they separated us, and we went on the *SS Teti* , the refugees mostly on deck, and after some days we arrived in Israel, on the day that Israel became independent. We were anchored off Israel for 2-3 days, waiting to be given permission to land. Many of the refugees only had a handkerchief with all their belongings tied in it. Some of them swam to the shore, and you could see them kneeling and kissing the land as they reached the beach. Later Leon Uris wrote the book *Exodus* about this time – I was there.

Then the boat went to Cyprus, and I returned to Xeros.

Mother, Angelou and Gigetta returned later in the year.

Charles Pugh

On returning to Xeros, I met Charles. He was working with my father in the CMC, installing boiler engines on behalf of Crossleys. He was living in one of the American houses on the ridge above our house, and would often visit my father. He started taking me out. One night he came to the window of my room, which I was sharing with Angelou. "Angelou," he called out, "Can you give me a coffee?" "Go away!" I told him, "And don't disturb my parents." "Kyria Mary," Angelou said, "Can't we give him a coffee?" After that he came most nights for his coffee.

From South Wales, Charles had been apprenticed in a foundry, and served his articles. After that he went to sea in the merchant navy, and obtained his engineering certificates as an external student at Swansea University, when on leave. He served in the merchant navy as an engineer throughout the war, in the North Atlantic, the Baltic, Murmansk, the Mediterranean, the Indian Ocean, the Far East and the Pacific. For much of the war he was an engineer in oil tankers, including many convoys on which there were high casualties. After the war he returned to Britain, and his brother, Ivor, who was a high-up manager in Crossleys, found him a job with that company. He was sent to Cyprus, when Crossleys was contracted to install plant at CMC.

Charles was a keen motorcyclist, and rode his Triumph around Cyprus. In England he had ridden a Norton, a huge machine as long as an automobile.

He was a strange man in many ways. Son of an authoritarian father, the main cause of his going to sea, a bachelor for 34 years when I met him, selfcentred and arrogant in many ways, he had a temper, but then gentle and careful in others. In all a good man, and clean living.

One day he gave a party, and invited everyone who was anyone in Xeros to attend.

Gigetta and I were there. After a while we lost him. Gigetta and I found him in the garage. He had escaped the party, did not like the people, and did not want to have anything to do with it. "Why did you invite them?" we asked. "Oh, he replied, "I had to."

Christmas Eve 1948

Christmas Eve 1948, Charles took Gigetta and I to Nicosia to attend Midnight Mass at Holy Cross Church. We went to Andonakis' restaurant. This was inside the walls near St Joseph's convent. The restaurant was downstairs with balconies all around. Charles used to like to go there because he used to make a nice curry, and good crème caramel. There was a huge fireplace which you could sit within. We then went to Edith and Kyros' club, the Cosmopolitan, which was on the road to Government House, half to three quarter of a mile on the city side of the post office. We then returned to Andonakis', where we stayed until it was time for High Mass.

Father's Garden

By this stage my father's garden at Xeros had become a paradise. He had drilled down for bore water, pumped up by an animomolos (windmill) into two large tanks. He planted fruit trees, vegetables, built dovecotes, kept rabbits, geese and turkeys. Much of the food for our table came from father's garden.

I remember him waking me early in the morning. "Mary, Mary," he whispered, "Come into the garden and eat the figs, before the sparrows get them." He had oranges, lemons, mandarins, mespilla, figs, grapes, olives, dates...

The Greek municipal authorities were envious of his garden. A few years before he died, they resumed part of the garden, for a road that they never built, pulled out his trees, and turned it into a wasteland. It broke my father's heart.

Now, going back there, there is nothing left, one of the two tanks, a date palm, a row of olive trees, an effete climateria planted by the Turkish family now living in the house, and along the fence an offspring of the great bouganvillia that once grew against the house. Not much to show for years of labour. What the Greeks did not destroy, the Turks finished off.

Marriage 1949

Charles sort of proposed to me. It was something like "I suppose we should get married." I say "sort of", because he would say afterwards I proposed to him. Perhaps both of us proposed, and both of us accepted.

He was being sent by Crossleys to Lebanon, and so the wedding became a hurried event. He spent the night before his wedding being feted by his friends and some exotic Balkan dancers called the Bambi Girls.

Then on 7th July 1949, at Famagusta, we were married in a civil ceremony. The reception was a Kyros' club, the Cosmopolitan. Charles' friend, Dutalleur, had a case of fine French champagne delivered to the club, but somehow this never reached our guests.

After we married, we spent our honeymoon in the mountains, at the Pine Valley Hotel, and walked for miles together over the Troodos ranges. It was the most gorgeous place for a honeymoon, spent outdoors, in the cool mountain air, away from the heat of the plains, which could be stifling in July.

When we came down he had to catch a boat for Beiruit.

Lebanon, Iran and Iraq 1949-50

While Charles was in Lebanon, I went over, and we spent some time together in Beiruit. In

those days it was a beautiful city, known as the "Paris of the East"[61]. But the people there were often erratic and unpredictable. I remember waking there with Charles through the streets, when some larking boys threw fire crackers between our legs. The Beiruit taxi drivers were completely mad, and the bus drivers. One day we decided to take the bus across the mountains to Baalbeck, but we had to get out because the driver was a maniac, taking hair-pin bends at break-neck speed, and laughing and chattering over his shoulders with his passengers. We had him deposit us in pouring rain in front of a cafe, where we had to wait soaked and cold for a return bus.

After that, Charles went to Iran. He travelled by plane from Lebanon, and accounted the flight over the mountains asthe most frightening in his life. He worked with Anglo-Iranian Oil Company (later British Petroleum) on the construction of the oil pipelines and pumping in Abadan. He then worked in Iraq. There he described playing on golf courses entirely of sand, with "greens" hardened by crude oil. It was a time of political unrest in both countries, when insurgents were blowing up pipelines and murdering foreign nationals.

To the Ends of the Earth 1950

It was at this stage that Charles decided on a career change. It was a decision in which he gave me little say. He was offered a choice of two postings by Anglo-Iranian Oil: South Africa, or Australia. He had visited Australia during the war, and had liked Sydney in particular. So, he chose Australia for that, and for its political stability.

"Two years" he tried to persuade me. "If you don't like it after two years, we'll come back." I did not want to go. But my father told me, "You have to go. You have to follow your husband."

So began my exile at the Ends of the Earth, that has lasted, with occasional respite, for the rest of my life.

Antipodes
literally "the opposite foot" – the other side of the earth

Australia
from "Terra Australis Incognita" – the Unknown South Land
first posited by Aristotle

To be continued...

61 AGP: a number of other cities also were given this title.