

Corrigenda and Notes

It's a pity that Christian set out to write this book without any consultation with the rest of the family and without access to my father's writings. It was inevitable that errors would creep in and I offer these corrigenda to avoid any misunderstandings for readers. I have also made some of my own explanatory comments.

Foreword Dad was not 'blown up' in the Western Desert, though he must have experienced many bombing raids. He was wounded in the back and hip by 2 stuka bullets. After convalescence he was entirely fit until his left hip gave way in 1951. (He was a very good squash player. I recall him playing in Uganda in 1948.)

Page 2 My father was Commissioned from Sandhurst in 1927. He had two spells at the Staff College, Camberley. The first as a student from 1939 to 1940, during the phoney war. We lived in a rented house in Camberley, where Catherine was born. The second was from 1943 to 1944, as GSO1 and Instructor. We lived in an army bungalow in the grounds of the College. After the war he was at the War Office in London, from 1945 to 1948, until his move to Uganda. We lived in a rented house at Blackwater. The Staff College does not have a GSO1; he held this senior position in the 50th Division, 8th Army, in North Africa and Sicily.

Page 2 His first posting to East Africa was from 1930, after his engagement to my mother, until 1933, shortly before their marriage. He was never in Nigeria. He spent the time in Kenya and Uganda.

Page 4 My father first sailed seriously in Hong Kong; there were many pictures of the open boat, 'Curlew'. My parents were enthusiastic members of RHKYC. They raced and cruised around HK and the South China Sea.

Page 10 For years before he obtained his posting to KAR in 1948, my father had dreamt of returning to Africa and settling there. We used to spend hours planning our house, potentially in Rhodesia, I recall. His retirement from the Army happened at one of the normal career break points, age 42. It was not triggered by ill health. His purchase of a 500 acre farm was under an Army Officer Settlement Scheme. It was not virgin bush, though parts had never been cultivated. It had been farmed since 1933 by Jardine Russell, not very well it must be said. (Jardine was notorious for replacing lost bolts from the machinery with wire. Proper replacement of bolts usually caused breakdowns as the machine had become accustomed to its looseness!) Really, the farm was a rotten buy. It was almost 50% rocky, used only as rough grazing, and too small to be viable. However, it had a very pretty house!

Page 10 My parents were both pretty fit when they bought the farm, or they would certainly never have done so. My mother became ill soon after, in 1949, with an intractable lung infection. (In my view now, her illness in the long term was caused at least partly by living at high altitude, nearly 8000 feet above sea level. Most families managed a holiday at the coast every year. We could not afford it, though Mum and we three children went to the coast once with Uncle

Ben.) MS came later. She had extensive stays in hospital and two spells in convalescence in Reigate.

My father kept fit until his hip flared up in 1951; he then spent 18 months on his back in Nairobi Hospital, where his hip was eventually pinned after a long painful period in traction. (Hip replacements were yet to be invented.). It was then that he first took up tapestry.

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The farm was primarily cattle when we bought it. It was stocked with 'grade' Redpolls, dual purpose dairy/beef cattle. ('Grade' means cattle which had been bred onto native, Boran cattle with the aim of improving the stock, while retaining immunity from local diseases and hardiness. The milk was separated on the farm, and the cream alone was sent to the Eldoret creamery to make butter. My parents tried just about everything by way of diversification: chickens (eaten by mongooses), pigs (seemed to die too often and the bacon factory was 200 miles away by train), sheep (never profitable), pyrethrum (successful but very labour intensive), and a little wheat. My father decided that cream alone would never pay, even if the skimmed milk could be fed to the pigs. The Redpolls were poor milk producers, so Jersey bulls were bought to breed up the herd to produce top quality milk. This was collected daily by the creamery and sent to Uganda in cans, where the traders were said to dilute it. My father was instrumental in getting a 'Tetrapak' plant installed at the creamery so that the milk could be exported and sold unadulterated. Originally milking was done by hand. We all had to learn how! A milking machine came quite soon. In the end, flowers were a much better bet, considering his disability. Some of the first seeds were sent from England by relations, me included. This part of the business was very successful for some years.

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I am sure that Guy never 'wanted' to take on the farm. Apart from anything his return voyage from New Zealand was delayed and he had just one week, new out of college, to take over, with guidance from Christian's brother, Paddy Rattray. The trading situation in newly independent Kenya was dreadful and the result inevitable. The farm was sold off piecemeal, lock, stock and barrel. After the sale Guy worked as a successful manager on a farm at Endebess, and later Nanyuki. He finally left Kenya in 1973. He settled in Western Australia, near Catherine, not in NZ.

Peter Innes, revised March 2020